

GETTING RID OF STUBBORN BELLY FAT

Exercise and healthy eating is a given. Unfortunately there are other factors that affect the retention of fat in the midsection. Higher cortisol levels is one of them. Cortisol is released by the adrenal glands under conditions of high mental and physical stress.

The dangers of excess cortisol are:

1. Reduced growth hormone, and testosterone output.
2. Osteoporosis
3. Reduced muscle and increased abdominal fat
4. Impaired memory and learning
5. Reduced glucose utilization
6. Impaired immunity

Cortisol release cannot be prevented but it can be controlled.

Here is a list of a few ways:

1. Exercise (aerobically and with weight): CrossFit is perfect for this because it kills two birds with one stone. A CrossFit program uses weights in a constantly varied, high intensity format that pushes your aerobic capacity to its limit. More isn't always better. Be sure not to over train because that will lead to the body storing extra fat. One WOD a day following the 3 on 1 off format will be sufficient.
2. Nutrition: Zone/Paleo method of eating aides in release of testosterone. Proteins and mon-unsaturated fats increase testosterone production. A 40/30/30 ration of carbs/pro/fat is recommended for optimum performance and weight loss. Also be sure to eliminate sugars from your diet which release insulin giving you the double whammy because high cortisol levels equal insulin resistance. Meaning your body goes into storage mode and stores extra calories for later. Resulting in fat around the midsection from high cortisol levels.
3. Stress Management: Cortisol is released in response to stressful events, physical or psychological in nature. So stay relaxed, keep things in perspective, and don't overreact to trivial things. Rule number one- don't sweat the small stuff. Rule number two- everything is small stuff.
4. Sleep: Cortisol is at it's lowest and growth hormone is at it's highest during slow wave sleep (deepest stage of sleep). Ensure that this stage of sleep is attained every night. Magnesium supplement may help with that.
5. Limit Caffeine: As little as 2-3 cups of caffeine per day can elevate cortisol.
6. Increase Vitamin C intake: Research has shown that patients receiving 3 grams of vitamin C per day experience lower cortisol levels (Peters, Anderson & Theron, 2001). Take a buffered, sugar free vitamin C like emergen-C before bed, this should help drop nighttime cortisol levels (Robb Wolf, 2009).

Supplements: In addition to vitamin C, glutamine may help to reduce cortisol by supplying cortisol with blood glutamine. Cortisol will not have to destroy muscle to obtain it. Another supplement is Phosphatidylserine (PS). PS is believed to facilitate the repair of the cortisol receptors in the hypothalamus. It's believed that the cortisol receptors get damaged by high cortisol levels reducing the ability of the hypothalamus to sense and correct high cortisone levels. Because Phosphatidylserine helps repair the feedback control apparatus, it is useful in correcting both high and low cortisol levels.

In conclusion lowering your cortisol levels not only improves strength and speeds up recovery, it also helps get rid of love handles and stubborn belly fat.