

In my years of strength and conditioning training, I have learned one constant; people are going to believe, train, and think what they want to think. Enter the proverbial weight scale used by many to determine “physically fit or out of shape”. This is wrong thinking. The scale tells very little about “how much weight” you have really lost.

We have a transformation challenge contest going on right now with 27 teams of five. The winning team that earns \$2500 will have the largest body percent fat loss and the largest muscle percent gain. The idea is to change the scope of people’s view on how to lose fat not “weight” and gain muscle. This is accomplished by training with weights to build muscle, which burns fat. This is *not* achieved by long steady hours of the elliptical, treadmill, or stair stepping.

During the contest, we have 4 measurements in which members will step on an eight point body composition machine that determines skeletal muscle mass and body fat in pounds in addition to percent body fat, basal metabolic rate (minimal number of calories burned at rest) and overall weight. We want to enlighten participants that it is not about the number on the scale, it is how much fat you have lost and how much muscle you have gained.

Several participants have said to me that their pants fit loser but the scale says I gained a pound. Exactly! The scale does not tell you any information other than how much your clothes, necklace, brain, bones, pancreas, heart...etc weighs. We are attempting to change the mindset of his/her opinions about their bodies to look better, feel better and perform better. The scale is one of the worst indicators for measurement and unless you know how to interpret it towards your outdoor activities and workouts, it is useless.

Just understand that how you look and feel and how much you weigh are not necessarily related at all. If you add 10 pounds of muscle and lose 10 pounds of fat, you’re going to look as if you lost *at least* 20 pounds. But the scale won’t move. Don’t focus on the scale. Focus on how you feel, how your clothes fit, and all the compliments you’re getting!

The following has been taken from, “The Female Body Breakthrough” by Rachel Cosgrove.

“The scale: Use the scale as one of your indicators, but do not misuse it. Understand that it is not the whole picture. The best time to weigh yourself is first thing in the morning, before you eat or drink anything, and it’s best to use the same scale every time you reevaluate. The scale can be useful if it’s used correctly. Do not let the scale tell you what kind of day you’ll have today. If you find yourself getting on the scale and it ruins your entire day because it does not display the number your are looking for, do not get on the scale anymore. Do not empower a metal inanimate object to have that much control over your mood and what kind of day you will have.

It [scale] is just one measurement of your progress and will give you only one piece of the puzzle. Use it as information: when your weight is up ask yourself, have I gained strength [muscle] in the gym? Did I eat something with more sodium, or maybe (for women) it’s the week before my period? The scale can be a very useful tool to help you get to know your body and how it responds to different foods and fluctuations at different times of the month. I am not against checking your weight to see if you are moving in one direction or the other, but it is not the whole story.

You cannot rely on weight as your only feedback on whether you are becoming fit. The reason is that you are changing your entire body composition, adding muscle and losing fat, so your body will be made up differently. This will not always be reflected on a scale. Most fit females you meet weigh a lot more than they appear to because they have muscle. Again, do not obsess about the number on the scale or “losing weight.”

The transformation challenge is about lifting weights and getting stronger, which will burn fat. So when the scale does go down a pound or two, you can call it a progress indicator, because you will have been increasing your strength (muscle) at T2BB, so you will know any weight you have lost is pure fat.

The goal in our contest is to only lose fat no muscle. While training hard at T2BB, you will be gaining muscle, and every pound you lose will be from pure fat. This is why your weight won’t change as much as if this were just a weight-loss program. Keep in mind that when you do lose a pound of a fat, it’s equivalent to four sticks of butter off your body! That’s a lot when it’s pure fat coming off.

In general, number on the scale is going down is a good thing, as long as you are getting stronger and building strength and muscle. Building strength and muscle means your are losing pure fat. The scale going up or staying the same IS NOT A BAD THING if other indicators are telling you your body is changing for the better, gaining muscle, changing shape and so on. Got it?