

# Leyla Weighs In: How to determine your healthy weight

written by Leyla Muedin MS, RD, CDN | January 23, 2025



It makes sense that soon after the New Year is designated as Healthy Weight Week. A good time to stay motivated about recent resolutions.

First, here's how we determine ideal weight for height.

The guideline for determining a healthy weight is called the HAMWI method, which is typically used in healthcare to determine ideal body weight (IBW) for adult men and women. As women, we get 100 pounds for the first five feet of stature, then five pounds for every inch above that. For example, a woman at 5'4" should generally weigh 120 pounds. But because we're human beings and not machines, not every 5'4" female needs to reach this weight ideally to be healthy.

Because human beings come in different shapes and sizes, we apply the 10% rule. So using our example of the 5'4" woman, we determine her IBW to be 120 pounds *plus or minus* 10%. This application largely depends on frame size which is either small (think thin wrists as an example), medium or large frame represented by thicker wrists, larger breadth of shoulders. So the actual ideal weight range is 108 – 132 pounds in our example.

For men, they get 106 pounds for the first five feet of stature and six pounds for every inch after that. Due to hormonal differences, men retain more lean body mass than women, and LBM weighs more. The plus or minus 10% rule with regard to frame size applies to men too.

A shortfall of the HAMWI method is that an individual's LBM isn't taken into account. In this regard, optimal weight is underestimated. For example, if you're athletic or regularly strength train, you will weigh more due to higher LBM, which is desirable. Don't be disappointed if you weigh a little more than you think you should.

As far as achieving a healthy weight, here's a tip for starters: *Change your mindset*. Imagine that you've already reached your goal weight—yay! Congratulate yourself and do a jig of joy to celebrate. *Now, eat in a manner to maintain it*. Indeed, this is your lifestyle now, no longer a means to an

end (read: diet).

A qualified nutritionist can assist you in reaching and maintaining your weight goals.

To your health!

Leyla Muedin, MS, RD, CDN