

A diet and exercise plan to lose weight and gain muscle

By Gretchen Reynolds, New York Times

If there is a holy grail of weight loss, it would be a program that allows someone to shed fat rapidly while hanging on to or even augmenting muscle. Ideally, it would also be easy.

A new study describes a workout and diet regimen that accomplishes two of those goals remarkably well. But it may not be so easy.

For most of us, losing weight and keeping it off is difficult. If you consume fewer calories than your body requires for daily operations, it turns to internal sources of fuel. Those sources consist of body fat and lean tissue, meaning muscle. When someone on a diet drops a pound of body mass (a measure that does not include water), much of that pound consists of fat. But about a third or more can be made up of muscle.

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