

## Melt away the belly

Written by Valesia Weeks, Special to the NNPA from the Houston Forward-Times  
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Let's face it ladies...in the summer, we are surrounded with holidays that "require" us to eat bar-b-que, potato salad, soda wada and the works! What does that mean? – more FAT to have to deal with because what do we do for the holiday?

We eat, eat, & eat some more. And we all know that the fat tends to head straight to our mid section and just sit there and wait to spread. How can we get rid of our belly fat? It's really hard to say because our wonderful body's have a mind of its own. Each individual body decides where it wants to burn off the fat and in what order.

The best way to lose our belly fat is by doing cardiovascular exercises like running, biking, and aerobic style exercises. It is very important to spice up and change your abdominal exercises. Make sure you include crunches to keep your core strong. One unfortunate thing is until the excess fat is gone in the midsection, you will not see the muscle definition. Therefore, if you are not doing cardio, crunches will not help your six pack to be seen for the summer.

If it's difficult to run, join a ZUMBA class, or participate in aerobic exercise. Walking is an ideal exercise that nearly anyone can do to help burn that excess fat. The lower belly is a natural holding place for fat and an extremely stubborn spot to tone, so it can be quite challenging to get rid of lower belly fat. Regular crunches and sit-ups won't be enough to get rid of lower belly fat. The key is in targeting the lower abdominals with specific exercises to tone the muscles and erase the fat. The proper exercises, coupled with a healthy diet and cardio routine, will help to conquer that stubborn belly fat. Here a few instructions to help you burn belly fat and tone belly muscles (abdominals):

### **Instructions:**

Add more vegetables and lean proteins and less fat and sugar to your diet. The proteins will help you to build muscles and will burn fat in your lower belly. If you are like me, I loooooove sweets/sugar. In that case, cutting your sugar intake in half will make a big difference in your fight against lower belly fat.

Just 30 minutes of cardio three times a week will work wonders. Pick your choice, either walk, jog, ride a bike or even dancing. Either are great choices. Doing cardio will help you lose that ugly layer of fat that keeps that nice six pack hidden.

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Do a few reps of scissors. These are done by lying on your back with your hands underneath your buttocks. Lift your legs about a foot off the ground. Tighten your lower ab muscles and move your legs in a crisscross motion: first move your right leg over the left; then open your legs apart and move your left leg over the right. Make sure you don't bend your knees. Do this about 10 to 15 times.

Maintaining a healthy diet, and do these exercises about three times a week, or every other day will help you to be able to show off your six pack and enjoy your holiday meal all at the same time. The grilled meals are all good but do it in moderation.