

Friends with Food

Body Types

October 2018

This month I would like to discuss body types and how that relates to style of eating and exercising. A student has stated I have helped him release some body expectations when I compared us to dog breeds and how we should stay within our breed. This comes up for many people.

Let's talk about it!



The Set Up for Failure

TV ads and infomercials pushing gym memberships, diet plans, and exercise equipment can be extremely misleading. They show miraculous changes happening almost overnight. It's an illusion that you can be whatever you want to be if you just try hard enough and have enough willpower (that's not to say you can't be optimum within your "breed").

Myself and so many trainers often get "I want to shrink this, bulk that..." If we could understand and RESPECT the body we inherited, we can stop the suffering. Don't you feel exhausted trying to fit into another body-type? If you have managed to get yourself there, of course it was short-lived and unsustainable. Or, are you the "glory-day guy" saying how fit and athletic you were in High School and how you want to get back to that? What a yucky feeling you drum up inside trying to fit into shoes that are too tight. Are you willing to be as active as you were back then? Do you have the same luxurious time allotment and energy? Probably not. You must see yourself as you are today and work within that framework. Let go of that tight grip and be here now.

Look at Yourself

Below are broad "types" and definitions, but you must first take a good long loving look at yourself in the mirror and (without judgement and body bashing) see your frame. It's also helpful to look at your parents' structure. Describe in objective ways like "shoulders are broad, hips are narrow, rectangle shaped"... no judgement voice allowed, got it?

Somatotype (Body type)

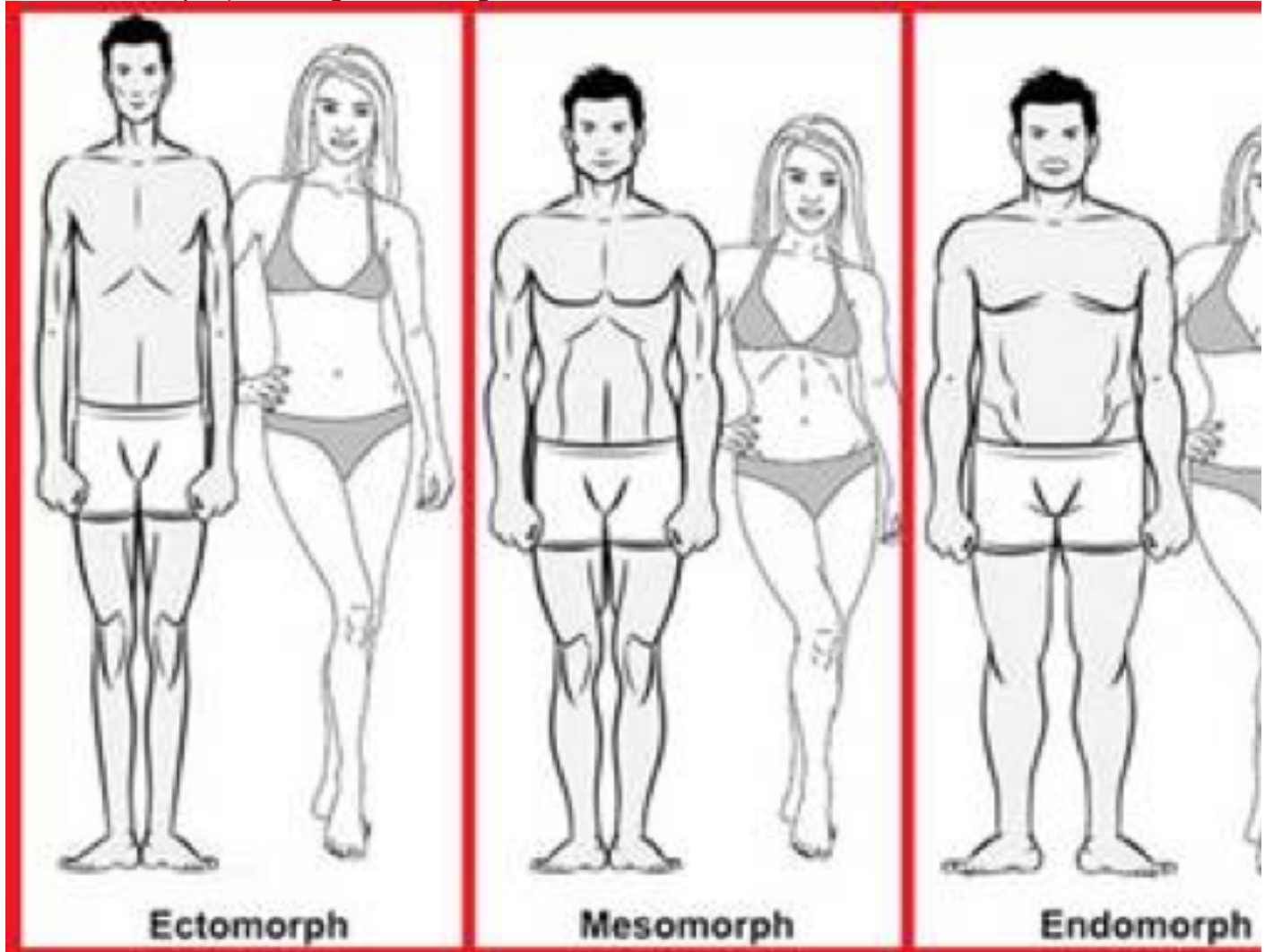
Somatotype is a combination of your musculature, your bone structure, and density. These characteristics are genetically determined and unchangeable. The width of your hips or shoulders, for example, you can't change with exercise. No amount of exercise can transform a short-limbed woman into a lithe supermodel, or a jockey into a muscle-bound linebacker. People are born with an inherited body type based on skeletal frame and body composition. Most people are unique combinations of the three body types: ectomorph, mesomorph, and endomorph. You can call these somatotypes or body types.

Ectomorph body types are long and lean, with little body fat, and little muscle. They have a hard time gaining weight. Runway models and basketball players fit this category. While most of us love to hate these genetically-blessed individuals, some male ectomorphs may not be thrilled with their narrow-chested frames, and some female ectomorphs long for more womanly curves. The grass is not always greener...

Endomorph body types have lots of body fat, lots of muscle, and gain weight easily. Football linemen tend to be endomorphs. They're heavier and rounder individuals and they don't have to necessarily be overweight. Both Oprah Winfrey and Marilyn Monroe are classic examples of endomorphs.

Mesomorph body types are athletic, solid, and strong. They're not overweight and not underweight. They both gain and lose weight without too much effort.

Classic combination somatotypes include pear-shaped ecto-endomorphs with thin, delicate upper bodies and high fat storage in the hips and thighs, and apple-shaped endo-ectomorphs, with high fat storage in the mid-section and thin lower bodies.



What This Means

Seeing yourself fall in one of these categories might give you some peace, or you might fight it. You choose. You also might notice that you gravitate towards eating 3 small meals and 2 snacks per day and doing more HIIT training. Or you might like pushing and pulling heavy weights around and eating 3 big meals per day. NOTICE what feels good in your body for both eating and exercise. Do your patterns work for you? What you can do is learn to eat and exercise in a way that FEELS good and makes you have more:

- Cardiovascular endurance, muscle strength and endurance, and length (that is what [being fit](#) is all about!)

- strong immunity
- cognitive sharpness
- ability to do the daily life activities you wish to do (i.e. running after your toddler)

If you're an ectomorph struggling to put some meat on your bones, first see a doctor to rule out any underlying medical conditions. Then, take a good look at your diet. If you only eat three times a day, try aiming for five or six meals with lots of healthy fats like nuts and seeds. Conversely, if you're an endomorph wishing to lean up a smidge, don't deprive! Check to see if your meals and snacks are balanced (fat/carb/protein), honoring your hunger and fullness signals, and if your movement modality is going to be efficient and consistent, like HIIT training a few days per week (only if you like it). My overall message is finding love for who you are. You've been given one body that will last a lifetime. You should take care of it. You can't resurface and remodel it completely. You need to find acceptance. Ultimately, don't try to be a Rotty when you're a Chihuahua and vice versa. 😊

Peace and love ♥

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