

Fit After 40: Avoiding the Dad Bod

“Help! I’ve turned into my father!”

It’s a phrase heard ‘round the world, and in many languages each year. After your 20s and 30s, physiques can go downhill fast for men who aren’t careful.



The good news is that after dating, marriage, and fatherhood, flabbiness does *not* need to be your next major life transition.

Proud father of a six-year-old, Anthony Musto, PhD, director of fitness programs at the University of Miami Health System, is himself in his 40s. He says that a little extra weight can be fine after your 30s.

“As we get older, our bodies begin de-conditioning. It is paramount, though, that we increase the rate of our cardiovascular activity to help counter this natural process.”

Subcutaneous fat — fat in the stomach area, right under the skin — is not necessarily a major risk, Musto says. Visceral fat, however — fat that you cannot see (around your organs internally) — is linked to diabetes, heart disease and cancer.

“Many adults who have more belly fat are also likely to have more visceral fat,” he says. “And visceral fat is largely a side effect of unhealthy behaviors. Eating too many processed foods and sugars, and having a low activity level, for example, can make a thinner-looking man more at risk than a slightly chubby friend who exercises

and eats better.”

Be aware. Take action today to avoid dad bod.

You can fight the appearance of flab dad:

Food? Keep it real

Stay away from overly processed foods. Stick with “plants, animals, seeds and nuts” as your primary food sources. Eat plenty of protein in your breakfast, too, to boost your energy and keep you avoiding “snacks” you’ll find at the office.

Make time for movement

Don’t avoid exercise because you’re busy. And don’t wait for the perfect time or location. Get spurts of quality exercise — especially interval training—whenever and wherever you can. Planks, squats, lunges, crunches and pushups can get the heart going and keep your belly fat-free.

Treat yourself

A treat is named a treat for a simple reason — it is supposed to be an occasional thrill. So reward your good week-long behaviors with a little fun on the weekend. Friends going out for happy hour Friday? Go for it. But after a beer or two and a slice of pizza, know when to say when.

Get supplement-smart

While you shouldn’t heed infomercials hawking mega doses, there is some science to supplements. Most Americans are deficient in vitamin D, the “sunshine vitamin.” Yet it’s critical to your metabolism doing its job to build muscle tissue (which burns fat). Choose natural vitamin D sources if you can, like salmon, tuna, fortified milk and eggs. Need help hitting the mark? Ask your doctor about a preferred supplement

and dosage for you.

Updated (2019) by Natasha Bright, contributor to UMiami Health News.

READ MORE: [Making sense of supplements](#)