

BodyMetrix Scan Details Level of Fat

How's Your Health?: Software and Ultrasound Combine to Reveal Risk of Stroke, Diabetes and Heart Disease

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For The Chronicle

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On top of losing 30 pounds recently, Dawn Bradshaw on Thursday got a nice surprise at FitScape Health Club in Centralia: she is no longer at risk of stroke.

The 45-year-old was scanned with the latest equipment in lean-muscle and body-fat detecting technology, which charts out in pie fashion a person's "good fat," which is acceptable, "bad fat" and lean muscle mass, and will also indicate risk levels for stroke, diabetes and heart disease.

The equipment is known as the BodyMetrix, a software program that measures fat and muscle levels by ultrasound shot by a hand-held wand that is plugged into the back of a computer.

"I like the fact that we can measure lean body mass with the ultrasound," said Terry Curry, owner of FitScape Health Club, who disdains body mass index as an outdated method for determining a person's physical health.

A former competitive bodybuilder, Curry bristles at the memory of having less than 10 percent body fat but being told she's obese because she weighed 142 pounds and is five-feet 11-inches tall.

"BMI is a pretty crude method," she said.

The BodyMetrix is the newest addition to Curry's gym at 1610 S. Gold St. in Centralia, formerly located at 500 N. Tower St. for eight years. Curry moved the gym in May.

Located in the massage therapy room, massage therapist Lisa Calvin's domain, the BodyMetrix takes ultrasound readings from three optimal fatty and muscle regions: the inner thigh, the midsection, and the tricep of a woman or pectoral area next to the shoulder for a man.

With a light application of ultrasound gel, the BodyMetrix wand is pressed against a body so ultrasound waves can be sent to bone and bounced back for readings.

Height, weight, age and gender are plugged into the software prior to the readings for personal measurement of bodily dimensions.

Whatever fattiness or lean muscle mass is recorded is then up to the person to lose and gain through diet and exercise.

"We'll know if (clients) starved themselves to lose the weight," Calvin said, because less muscle mass will show in the reading. "There's no faking it in our challenge."

Calvin alludes to FitScape's eight-week weight-loss challenge, which for \$25 includes an initial BodyMetrix scan and a follow-up two months later.

Clients don't have to sign up for a gym membership to take on the challenge. However, in that case, gym equipment is off-limits.

FitScape is currently offering a three-month membership for \$99.

Former members who have drifted away from gym exercise can re-sign at special rates, Curry said.

FitScape will begin a new eight-week fitness challenge on the BodyMetrix this Monday.

Bradshaw, whose stroke level dropped dramatically after a BodyMetrix scan in early December, was surprised by the positive reading after being faced with the savory temptations of the holidays.

As for those 30 pounds she lost: half of those were shed since Dec. 21.

"And I'm pretty proud of that," Bradshaw said.

Although the BodyMetrix offers unique functionality, the machine is not alone in Lewis County for reading bodily measurements.

At Thorbecke's Fitlife Center in Chehalis there is a Polar Body Age Machine that detects cholesterol levels, blood pressure, cardiovascular endurance, strength and flexibility.

For those who are super fit, the Polar machine might indicate that a 42-year-old is in fact living in a 27-year-old's body.

"You find out your body's true age rather than its chronological age," said Jenni Bodnar, general manager at Thorbecke's.

Curry at FitScape said she learned about the BodyMatrix through a friend, USA Bodybuilding judge Donald Baker of Olympia.

Each reading by the BodyMatrix is stored in a data base. And the readings come with recommendations of weight loss or lean muscle gain for a person's healthy body type.

"No one so far has argued with that," Calvin said of the recommendations.

Reporter Learns He's Got 12 Pounds to Lose

Editor's note: Freelance reporter Adam Pearson had his own body scanned. Here's his first-person report:

**By Adam Pearson
For The Chronicle**

Notwithstanding those beer-braised ribs I messily dug into the other night, I knew I stood to lose a few pounds before my scanning with a BodyMetrix.

I feared it'd be at least 20.

I was relieved to learn my BodyMetrix recommendation for a healthy body weight is about a 12-pound loss in body fat. I've cooked those ribs only once and I figure before a new moon I'll cook them again.

The NFL divisional-round playoffs sounds like a date.

Anyhow, I learned 12 pounds of excess body fat isn't so bad. I also charted low on the risks of stroke, diabetes and heart disease.

Other interesting factoids the BodyMetrix charted on me: My weight is estimated to be comprised of 111 pounds of water and 41 pounds of lean muscle.

I'll leave it up to you and your calculus skills to figure out how much my fat weighs and true body weight.

Based on my bodily measurements, the BodyMetrix told me I must exert at least 2,417 calories a day to sustain my current weight.

But if I wanted to let it all hang out, and lie on the couch and watch Comedy Central all day, I'd still expend 1,859 calories.

That's got to be at least one serving of ribs.