

In association with

ASHLEY CROOKS FITNESS

TRACKING THE

FEMALE CYCLE+ ASSESSMENTS



SARA SUTHERLAND
FITNESS

ASSESSMENTS

As part of your journey in the elite program, you will need to assess progress weekly.

Whether this is from tracking your sessions, tracking your calorie intake or assessing body composition changes regularly.

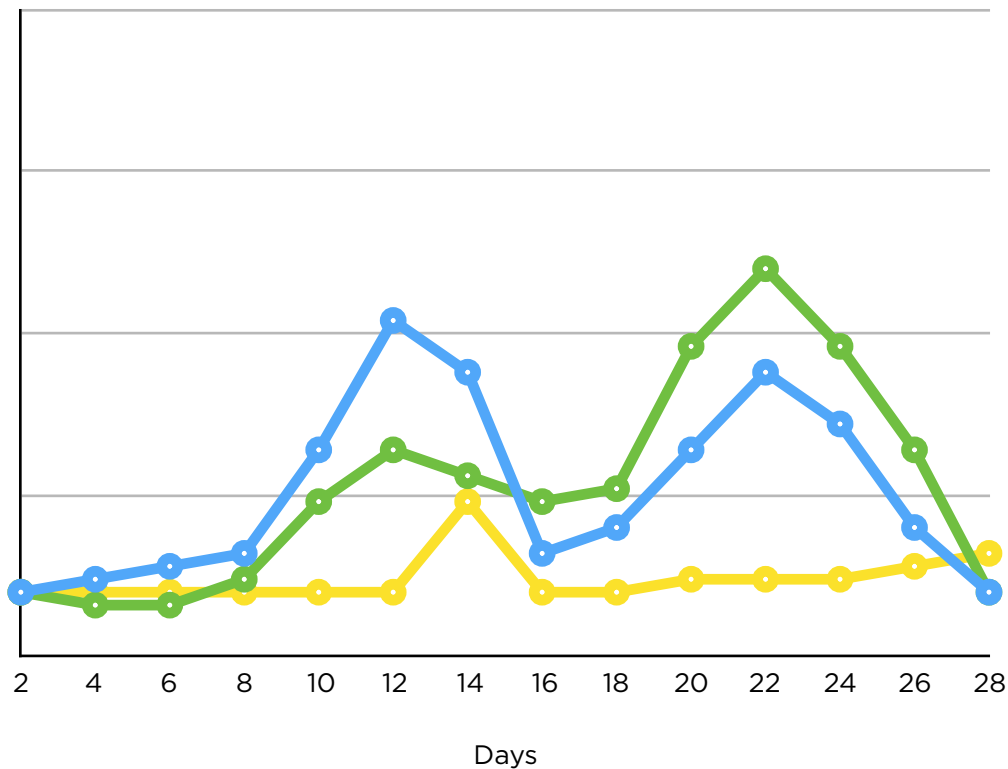
As discussed in the nutrition overview... at the end of each Phase we want to make sure that you have fully plateaued your fat loss progress before moving to the next phase.

Assessments are a key component of the program and without these, progress is based on guesswork.

We simply can't afford to guesswork here - There's a time loss and a money loss.

THE MENSTRUAL CYCLE + ASSESSMENTS

● Estrogen ● Progesterone ● Testosterone



THE 4 PHASES OF MENSTRUATION

WEEK 1

Day 1-7 (Early Follicular Phase)

WEEK 2

Day 7-14 (Late Follicular Phase)

WEEK 3

Day 14-21 (Early Luteal Phase)

WEEK 4

Day 21-28 (Late Luteal Phase)

Throughout each phase, you can expect changes in physiology as below.

	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4
Phase	Early Follicular Phase	Late Follicular Phase	Early Luteal Phase	Late Luteal Phase
Primary Hormone	Estrogen	Estrogen	Progesterone	Progesterone
Insulin Sensitivity	High	High	Lowered	Lowered
Fat Storage	Lowered	Lowered	Increased	Increased
Hunger	Lowered	Lowered	Increased	Increased
Water Retention	Lowered	Increased	Lowered	Increased (Highest)
Muscle Growth	Increased	Increased	Decreased	Decreased

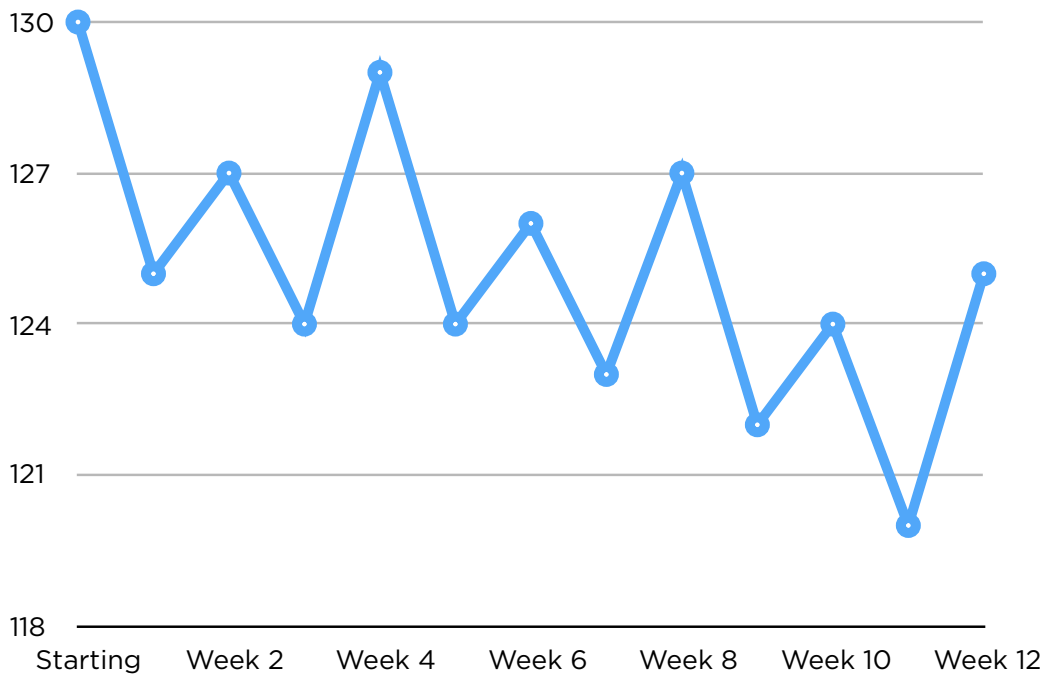
Things to look at in particular include, hunger, water retention, fat storage and muscle growth.

With regards to body composition assessments - week 2 and week 4 - we have to take into consideration extra water retention when looking at body weight.

From the above table, your most productive weeks in the gym are going to be week 1 and 2. Week 4 will be when you are at your weakest and most fatigued.

DON'T be expecting any new personal records that week!

● Weight



The above chart is how female weight loss may look when we look at this in line with the menstrual cycle.

Any peaks and dips take into consideration extra water retention that may show on the scales during week 2 and 4 and in particular week 4.

Assessments need to be looked at on a monthly basis. If you look at assessments on a weekly average, you can expect to see the peaks and dips. However when we look at weeks across the months, you can start to accurately track and monitor your progress. This is what it might look like below. If you judged your progress on month 1 alone, you may think that you have taken two steps backwards. Hence it's important to look at the bigger picture.

Also, every single female is different.

I think it's important to note here that every single person is different. There will be variances.

PHASE	MONTH 1	MONTH 2	MONTH 3
Early Follicular	130	127 (-3)	124(-3)
Late Follicular	132	129(-3)	126(-3)
Early Luteal	128	125(-3)	122(-3)
Late Luteal	134	131(-3)	128(-3)

MENSTRUAL CYCLE DISRUPTION

Unfortunately, we've got to talk about it. But it's really important for your health/wellbeing. If you've been on a low calorie, low carbohydrate diet for a long time, combined with an excessive and intensive exercise regime... then you may be experiencing some disruption to your cycle.

This can range from oligomenorrhoea (a longer-than-usual cycle), through to amenorrhea which is the total loss of the menstrual cycle.

Unless you are in the last stages of a competition prep - where you can expect to lose your cycle for a bit, then this is not something that should be overlooked.

The effects of disruption can lead to loss of bone density, increased stress fracture risk, impaired immune system function and impaired training and recovery.

Stress can also be a contributor to include stress from dieting itself, stress from intensive and excessive exercise, along with the stress of perfectionism from wanting to look a certain way.

With regards to energy availability, the critical threshold is 30kCal/kg LBM. Below this, you will lose your menstrual cycle, and the length of time under this will determine how long it can take to repair.

CALCULATING EA

ENERGY AVAILABILITY

Example:

Female with 40kg LBM and consuming 1200 calories (which is hugely common) and performing exercise per day that relates to 500 calories of energy expended.

$$EA = (1200 \text{ Kcal} - 500 \text{ Kcal}) / 40 = 17.5 \text{ Kcal/kg LBM}$$

To achieve the minimum threshold of 30cal/kg LBM, she would need to be eating 1700 calories per day.

If this is you, then you need to go back to the top of this document and take a pre-diet phase to bridge the gap.

Bring your calories back above the threshold as much as possible, before entering any diet phase.

HORMONAL MODIFIERS + BIRTH CONTROL

TYPES

- // Oral
- // Patch
- // Shot (Depo)
- // Implant
- // Cervical ring
- // IUD

Most of these have generally minimal effects on weight, except for depo provera, but there can be a huge variability between females.

There is also little research on the effect of these on fat loss, but ultimately it's not an issue.

A recent study on physique athletes showed that **they all reached contest shape** while using birth control.

All birth control eliminates pre-ovulatory testosterone spike, which could be a potential negative for training.

Hormonal modifiers (mostly) eliminate the issues shown above with scale weight.

ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Detailed below are some of the key assessment tools you will use on a weekly basis.

- // Photographs
- // Weight
- // Tape measurements
- // Skin fold readings

PHOTOGRAPHS

When taking weekly photographs:

- 1 Stand in the same spot.
- 2 Wear the same clothes (we recommend underwear OR sports bra/hotpants).
- 3 Under the same lighting.
- 4 First thing in the morning.
- 5 Take front, side and back profiles.
- 6 No selfies, if possible have somebody take full length shots. (Set up a timer otherwise).

We can also group 'clothing' under this or your dress size. To measure or assess progress via photographs or clothes may take 4-6 weeks before visible change can be noticed.

WEIGHT

Honestly? It's the golden measurement, but it can be anything but...

Within the BluePrint we measure more than what's on the scales... (how you feel, measurements, strength gains).

By no means is weight a gold standard of measurement, it can be anything but. Key points when measuring body weight:

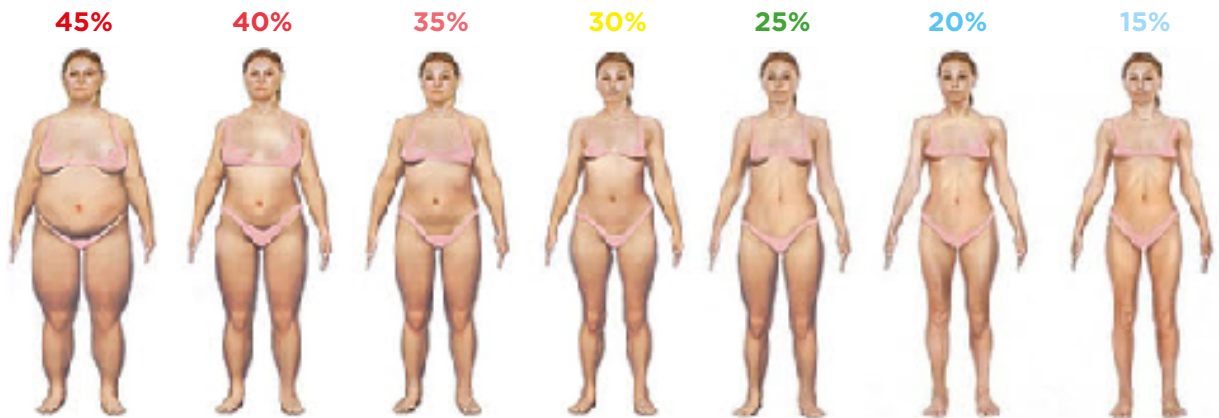
- 1 Weigh first thing in the morning.
- 2 Have an empty stomach, do not eat before.
- 3 If possible, go to the toilet first.
- 4 Don't wear any clothes.

Weighing yourself at any of other time of the day will cause fluctuations. You'll weigh heavier at night... perhaps as much as 5-7lbs - I promise you this is normal! Just remember you've had an entire day's food and water intake.

I want you to be prepared for daily fluctuations. For even better accuracy, we suggest following the above protocol each morning and taking an average across the week.

APPROPRIATE RATES OF WEIGHT LOSS

Scaled to Bodyfat



FEMALES AT 30%+

You can expect to lose 1-1.5% of body weight per week

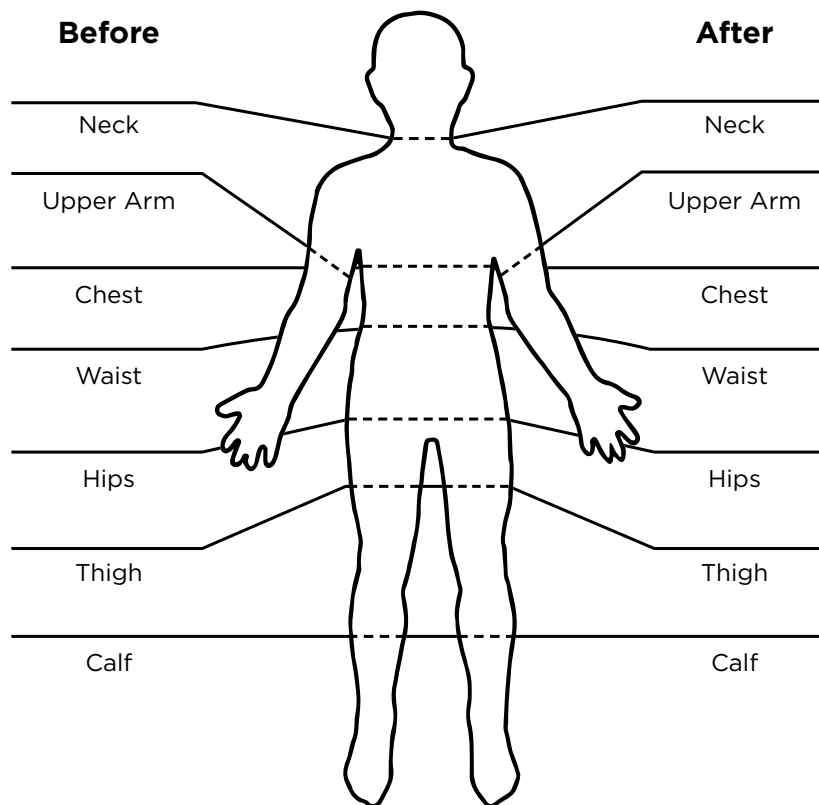
FEMALES AT 20-30%

You can expect to lose 0.7-1.2% of body weight per week

FEMALES UNDER 20%

You can expect to lose 0.5-0.7% of body weight per week

TAPE MEASUREMENTS



Waist

Measure directly around the belly button for an accurate guideline.

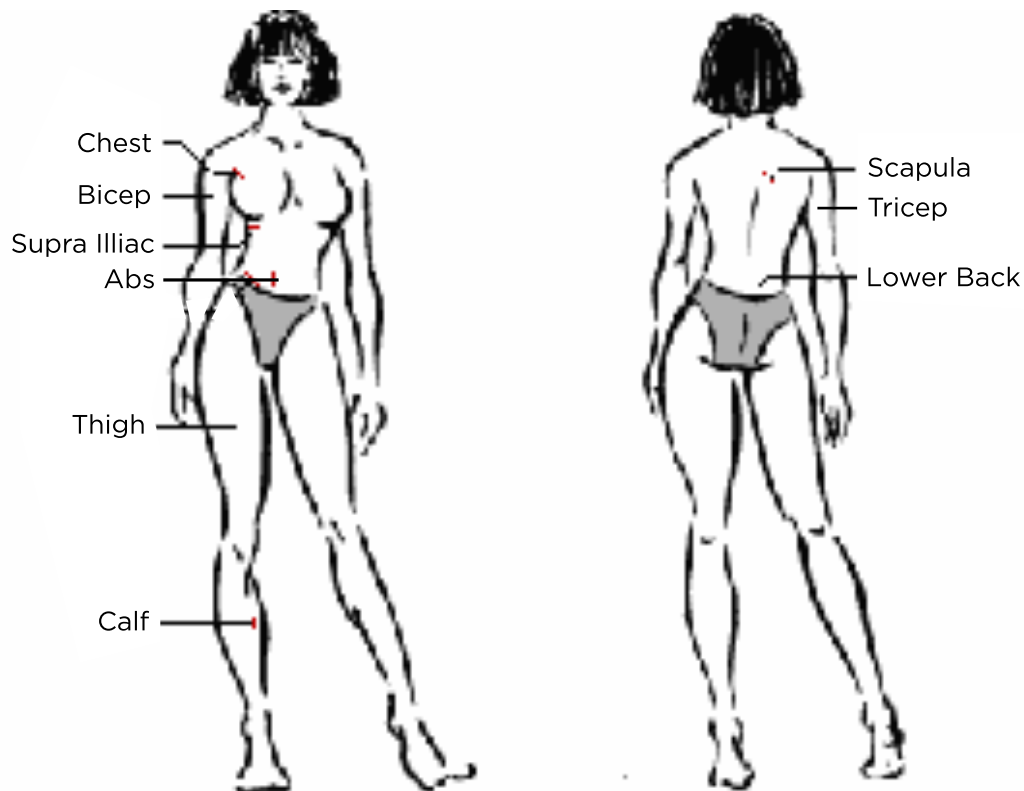
Hips

Measure directly around the widest part of your glutes.

For accuracy, tape measures must be taken in the same spot each time and also down the same side of your physique. If you measure your left side initially, then this needs to stay consistent throughout your assessments.

Try to have the same person each week do your assessments to eradicate any further errors. Remember tape measures must be done first thing in the morning for improved accuracy.

SKINFOLD MEASUREMENTS



Key skin fold sites have been advised above.

Skin folds are a highly useful assessment tool, and must be done by somebody competent for accuracy.

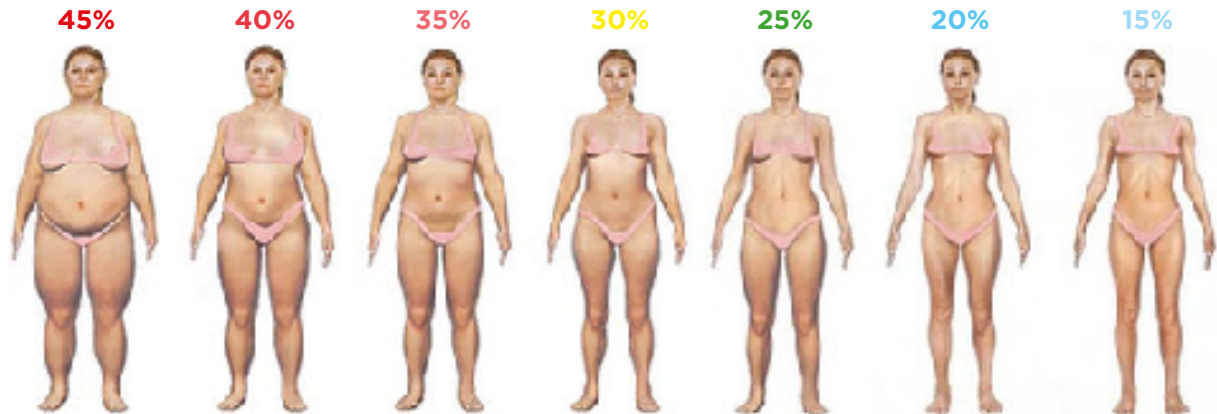
Ask in your local gym facility for a coach or personal trainer who may provide this service.

Skin folds are extremely useful to see exactly where you are losing body fat from. Be prepared for some weeks when body weight may not change. This does not necessarily mean that you have made zero progress.

But more on that to follow.

WHICH **ASSESSMENT TOOLS** SHOULD I USE?

+ HOW MUCH PROGRESS SHOULD I SEE?



35%+

If you fall into the above category, then we recommend you use weight, tape measurements and photos as your key assessment tools. We don't recommend skin folds at this stage.

We do expect weight to be a good indicator of progress although this may not always be linear... Example - You may not lose weight every week or lose varying amounts per week, but over a period of weeks you **should** see a decline on the scales.

It's key to always use **more than one assessment tool**. Don't always rely on weight as your go to assessment.

It's common not to drop any weight on the scales, however your key tape-measurement sites such as waist or hips may have reduced from the previous week. That is a clear sign that fat loss has occurred.

35%>

It's not uncommon for a typical size 8-10 female to have a body fat % upwards to 30%. Remember % is relative to your body weight.

You may be a newbie to training and resistance, and in this case you may have a low lean body mass.

In this case, skin folds are a key assessment tool.

Weight may not even budge for you, e.g 125lb female @ 28%

Your focus is on reducing your body fat, but not so much your weight. As muscle mass increases over a period of time, this will reflect on the scale.

Skin folds must be taken on a weekly basis if this is the case. If weight remains the same, and the skin folds drops... then this is a positive assessment.

From experience with working with hundreds of females, weight **MAY EVEN INCREASE** and skin folds can still drop. This is 100% fine and do not be alarmed if this happens. Embrace your new found muscle.

WHEN **NOT** TO ASSESS?

When is it a good idea not to assess?

// You've had a 'night off' or a social event where you've over-indulged.

You can expect to be a little heavier than normal the next morning if you've had a night off over indulging. Leave assessments for 1-2 days until you are back on track.

// Its 'that time of the month'...

By now, you should be prepared for what's going to happen in the late luteal (the week before!) phase of your menstrual cycle.

I would still like you to assess this week and you can compare this value to previous months of the same week.

Bare in mind, weight, skinfolds, tape measurements will all increase this week. We simply can't fight Mother Nature.

It's really important here to manage your expectations. Trying to fight against your body will only harm your progress and results.