

A RESOLUTION TO KEEP: FLATTER ABS IN 2010!



By: Shabaka Amen

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Are you ready to take action on your healthy lifestyle resolutions for 2010? Do you have clearly defined health, wellness, fitness, and body image goals for the year? What's your healthy lifestyle action plan for 2010? To transform your body, you also need a change of heart. Do you have enough love and passion to win?

A big problem area for most people is the abdominals and it's the area of the body that nine out of ten want to work on most. And why not? When lean, firm, and flat the abdomen can be a center of health, fitness, and sex appeal. For the year 2010, I'd like to prescribe four healthy lifestyle solutions for reducing fat around the abdomen.

Get optimal sleep. How we sleep has a profound impact on our health and well-being and our belly. Research shows that inadequate sleep can cause us to gain extra pounds around the middle due to an increase in the stress hormone cortisol. Studies consistently show that when cortisol levels rise even slightly, an increase in weight gain ensues. In addition, sleep deprivation will adversely affect two other hormones that control appetite: ghrelin, an appetite stimulating hormone, and leptin, an appetite suppressing hormone.

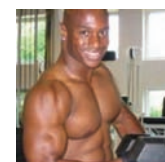
When ghrelin levels increase and leptin levels decrease we consume more carbohydrates and fattening foods. Sleep scientists have found that 'when' we go to sleep is as beneficial as how long we sleep. Sleeping between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. creates hormonal balance, which contributes to abdominal weight loss.

Consume foods from belly-flattening food groups. There are four belly-flattening food groups that contain substances proven to reduce estrogen dominance, the hormonal imbalance responsible for belly fat. These are cruciferous vegetables, citrus fruits, insoluble fiber, and lignans. Cruciferous veggies such as broccoli, spinach, and asparagus help decrease the body's load of "bad" estrogens. Citrus fruits, such as lemons, limes, and grapefruits, contain a substance called d-Limonene, which promotes the detoxification of estrogen. Foods such as brown rice, barley, cucumbers, and zucchini contain insoluble fiber. The insoluble fiber reduces estrogen load by binding itself to excess estrogen in the digestive tract, which is then excreted from the body.

Add MUFAs to your diet. Mono-Unsaturated Fatty Acids are nutrients that have been shown to actually target and reduce both visceral and subcutaneous belly fat by burning stored

belly fat and contributing to overall weight loss. If you add a MUFA to every meal, you'll be saying good-bye to the fat around your waist. Examples of MUFAs include olive oil, walnuts, avocados, sunflower seeds, and dark chocolate.

Learn and master the art of optimal breathing. This is the most important, least understood, and most neglected practice in the effort to be fit! The air you breathe can be a fat-burning force once you know how to harness its power through the use of specific breathing techniques. Both stored fat and dietary fat is burned by oxygen atoms in our body. Most adults are shallow breathers and have no clue about how they should breathe in order to lose weight during exercise. I attribute most of my success in keeping my abdominal muscles firm, flat, and muscular to optimal breath training. 🏆



Shabaka Amen, "The Healthy Lifestyle Trainer", is a certified personal trainer who has been in the wellness and fitness industry for 12 years. He specializes in healthy lifestyle-based personal training services. To schedule a consultation with Shabaka or for more information on how to obtain better abs and get the Body of your Dreams, contact him at 704-449-1476 or shabakaamen@bellsouth.net.