

# Turning into an Uncle? Here's how to avoid it.

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Remember back when you were a teenager, and you were constantly starving? How you would keep eating until the plate (and fridge!) were empty? And yet despite the mountains of food you consumed (a lot of it not even healthy), you never gained weight. Fast forward a few years to your NS days. With all that extra physical activity, you needed even more energy, which of course you were happy to supply by eating more.



Nowadays things are slightly different. You spend your days sitting at a desk instead of sweating it out on the basketball court or outfield, and during the weekends you are so busy catching up on your social life, looking after the kids or doing house chores that there isn't much time to hit the gym. As a result, your waistline isn't quite what it used to be. In fact, you are looking distinctly uncle-like!

There's a simple explanation for this transformation into an uncle-bod. It's called 'energy balance'. Calories come into our body in the form of food and

drink. These calories are then used to fuel basic metabolic activities such as breathing, blood circulation and other bodily functions, including physical activities (exercise). If your calorie intake is greater than the amount of calories you need, you'll put on weight.

And unfortunately, being overweight is a contributing factor to chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes and hypertension. So while in your younger days you could eat as much as you wanted, the drop in physical activity combined with a lowered metabolic rate (another fun effect of growing older) means you're rapidly going from fab to flab!



So what exactly is your body type these days? Are you more 'hunkle' or uncle? Generally speaking, there are four classic male shapes: triangle, inverted triangle, oval and rectangular. Read on to see if any of them sound familiar.

## 4 Classic Men Shapes



*Left to right: TriHunkle (Triangular shape), Hunkules (Inverted triangle shape), Hunkle Slim (Rectangular shape), Hunkle Gao (Oval shape)*

### 1. **TriHunkle (Triangular shape)**

This body type tends to store fat in the lower body, and may be carrying extra weight in the belly area. Again, this might be due to more calories being ingested than are being burnt off. While weight loss can be a bit tough for triangular-shaped men, it is definitely possible by reducing calorie intake and increasing physical activity level. Why not start by going for a brisk walk during your lunch break?

### 2. **Hunkules (Inverted triangle shape)**

Men with this body shape often have a wider, muscular upper body and lower levels of body fat. They tend to be burning off the calories they're consuming. This body type will benefit from regular exercise and intake of lean protein to stay in shape.

### 3. Hunkle Slim (Rectangular shape)

This body type is usually a result of energy intake being matched by exercise levels. Men with this body type are often lean and don't gain weight easily, but they still need to watch their diets and do regular exercise.

### 4. Hunkle Gao (Oval shape)

Men with an oval-shaped body tend to have a rounder physique, possibly due to ingesting more calories than are being burnt off. They store fat easily around the waist area and can find it hard to lose weight. However, oval-shaped men can gain muscle with regular workouts, and eating healthier will help to shift any extra kilos.

## So you know your shape, but what now?

What do the phrases 'eating healthier' and 'watching your diet' mean in practical terms? Here are some tips to simply and easily regulate your calorie intake:

(1) **Choose lower-calorie options.** On average, men need around 2200 kcal every day. To help you stay within your recommended daily calorie allowance, look for lower-calorie meals when you're dining out.

Tip: **Spot this decal shown below the next time you eat out. Those meals contain less than 500 calories.** But if you slip up, don't panic! Just make sure you have a lower-calorie option for your next meal.



(2) **Avoid high-calorie foods.** These include deep-fried food and dishes cooked with coconut milk. In addition, make sure you cut back on gravies which are laden with fats and hidden sugars.

(3) **Have regular meals.** Well-spaced out meals will keep you energised throughout the day, while skipping or putting off meals may lead to impulsive eating and cause you to reach for unhealthy snacks.

(4) **Eat healthy portions.** Follow [My Healthy Plate](#) to get your portions right for each meal. Make sure you throw in a good mix of fruit and vegetables, lean meat, and wholegrains for a balanced and nutritious meal. Fruit, vegetables and wholegrains are all high in fibre, leaving you feeling satisfied, fuller for longer and less prone to overeating.



In addition to controlling your calorie intake, you should also engage in physical activity. Aim for 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity (MVPA) every week. This can be a combination of cardiovascular and

strength training activities. High-intensity interval training (HIIT) is a great way to incorporate both aerobic and strength-training elements.

If you are new to strength training or HIIT, then [QuickHIIT and i-Run](#) would be an ideal platform to start as there are free, guided classes. Playing sports is also a good way to clock your MVPA while having fun at the same time. Alternatively, if you are looking for like-minded people to play football, ultimate Frisbee and other sports with, then Kaki Sports might be the right fit for you.



In summary, no matter your shape, you can get in better shape with smarter food choices and fitness fixes. Follow My Healthy Plate for a varied and balanced diet, and aim for 150 minutes of MVPA per week.

Don't Uncle, Be Hunkle!

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