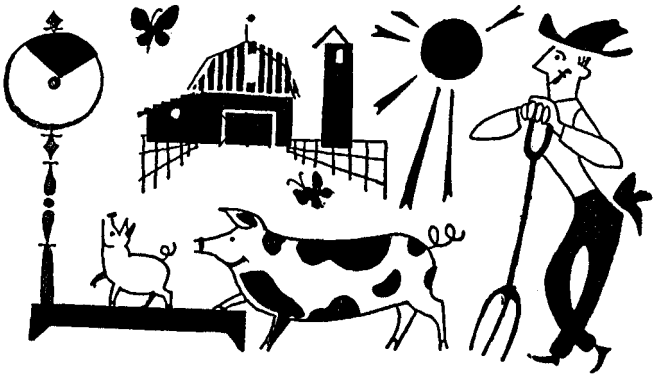


3.

Wise Weight

SOMETHING THAT INTERESTS almost everyone is weight — the problem of taking it off, putting it on, or just keeping it normal. Weight is one of the most talked-about subjects, and rightly so, for it can affect our vitality, our appearance, our personal and public relations, our emotional adjustments, and our length of life.

Weight alone does not tell the whole story of our health, but it comprises a very important chapter. Many

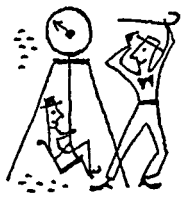
of us who are overweight or underweight insist that we are perfectly healthy. But probably we would be much surprised to find out how much better we would feel if our weight were normal.

WHAT IS NORMAL WEIGHT?

The normal or desirable weight for each of us depends on our age, height, and body build.

Usually body weight continues to increase during the late teens and through the twenties. Although we stop growing in height some time between our fifteenth and twentieth birthdays, the body goes on building in other ways. On a good diet the body deposits minerals inside the bones to make them stronger. It puts protein into the muscles and the vital working organs to make firm, sturdy tissues. It tucks some fat here and there for shock absorbers, insulation, and pleasing curves. Finally it builds up a nutritional savings account for use in emergencies. By the time we are 25 or 30 years old, this growing process is over and so is our need for adding weight.

Our weight should not increase after we reach the age of 25 or 30. When we are 40 we have no reason to weigh more than when we were 30, nor when we are 60 to weigh more than when we were 50. In spite of this, a great many men and women gain about a pound a year after age 30 or 40. A pound a year may seem too little even to mention. By the end of 15 or 20 years, however, that many extra pounds certainly are not too little to notice!



Height is important in determining our normal weight. The taller we are, the more we must weigh to

be well proportioned and well nourished. Each added inch of height means longer and heavier bones, larger muscles, more blood and blood vessels, and slightly larger vital working parts.

BODY BUILD

Body build refers to the size and width of our bone structure in relation to our height. This proportion affects what we should weigh. The larger our build, the more we need to weigh to look and be well. Narrow shoulders and hips and small wrists mean a small build. People of this build are often shorter than average. Wide shoulders and hips and large wrists indicate a large build, and people with such a build are often taller than average. Most of us have a medium or average build, neither extra small nor large.

We can judge our own build by comparing the size of our bones with other people who are about the same height. Here's a warning, though: If we are overweight, we are likely to overrate our body build and decide that it is a large build when it is only medium or maybe even small. We may do this quite unconsciously in trying to justify our extra weight. Our bone structure would look much smaller if we could see it without so much padding. If we are underweight, we may underestimate our build and the weight it should carry.

WEIGHTS FOR HEIGHTS

We have little influence over our height and build but we can control how much weight we carry on this

TABLE 1

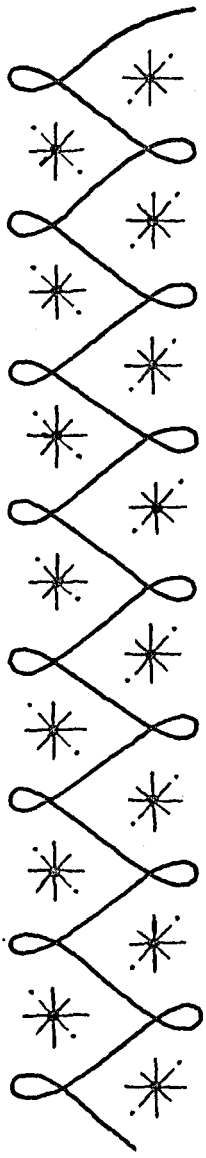
WEIGHTS FOR HEIGHTS OF MEN AND WOMEN*

Height	*Weights for Men*			*Weights for Women*		
	Low	*Average*	*High*	*Low*	*Average*	*High*
Inches	*Pounds*	*Pounds*	*Pounds*	*Pounds*	*Pounds*	*Pounds*
60	—	—	—	100	109	118
61	—	—	—	104	112	121
62	—	—	—	107	115	125
63	118	129	141	110	118	128
64	122	133	145	113	122	132
65	126	137	149	116	125	135
66	130	142	155	120	129	139
67	134	147	161	123	132	142
68	139	151	166	126	136	146
69	143	155	170	130	140	151
70	147	159	174	133	144	156
71	150	163	178	137	148	161
72	154	167	183	141	152	166
73	158	171	188	—	—	—
74	162	175	192	—	—	—
75	165	178	195	—	—	—

Measurements made without shoes and other clothing.

From "Trends in Heights and Weights," Milicent L. Hathaway, *1959 Yearbook of Agriculture, FOOD,* U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D.C.

*If you have a small build, use the low figure. If you have a large build, use the high figure. The figure for the average will be suitable for most.



body structure. Table 1 is a guide to desirable weights for men and women of different heights. The weights are based on part of a nationwide study made by the American College Health Association in 1948–50 of about 160,000 college students — men from 25 to 29 years old, and women from 20 to 24 years old. The low and high figures in the table refer to the range in weights found among persons of the same height. The weights are a little lower for the women than the ones given in most of the former height-weight tables. Adults between 20 and 30 years old have become taller than adults of the same age were in the 1900 to 1930 period, and the women weigh a little less for their height than they did then. Children are both taller and heavier at every age than they were in the early 1900's.

In adapting this table, which applies to all of us, for specific application to yourself, consider your build. If you have a small build, the low figure would be more likely to be desirable for you than the average or high figures. If you have a large build, use the high figure as your guide. The figure for the average will be suitable for most of us.

A range of 3 pounds below to 3 pounds above the figures given in the table is permissible for weights under 140 pounds, and 5 pounds above or below for weights over 140 pounds. Don't abuse this leeway by stretching it!

WEIGHING IN

Remember two things when you weigh yourself.

First, weigh at the same time of day and, if possible, on the same scale each time. Your weight may vary

as much as 2 or 3 pounds during a single day, depending on your water intake and loss and on the number of hours since the last meal. If you have a scale at home, the best time to weigh is when you first get up in the morning and before you dress or eat. If you use scales away from home, try to use the same one each time you weigh. Not all scales weigh the same, especially the ones with springs. Try to wear about the same kind of clothing — especially shoes — each time. Wearing shorts one time and a heavy suit the next or sport shoes one time and light pumps the next will surely confuse your weight record. If you are checking closely on your weight, it is wise to weigh under the same conditions every other day for a week and use the average of these weights as a starting point for gaining or losing.

Second, compare your weight with the desirable weight for your height and build, as well as with how much you weighed last time. Suppose you weigh 140 pounds today and you say, "That's just a pound more than last week. A pound doesn't mean anything because my weight varies more than that in a single day." But wait! Did you say the same thing last week and the weeks before that? You should be saying, "I weigh 5 pounds more than my normal weight. Last week it was only 4 pounds and the week before only 3 pounds. I'd better stop gaining!" Unless you compare your weight with what it should be, you may edge pound by pound toward overweight and the problems it brings. If you are underweight, you could become more so if you compare your weight only with what it was last week or last month instead of with what it should be.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND

What determines our weight? We know it's more than just the food we eat. For comparison let's ask, "What determines our bank balance?" We know it's not just the size of our pay check. No, it's the balance between what we earn and what we spend — our supply and our demand — that determines whether we have money left over, whether we just come out even, or whether we have to draw on our savings. Our weight is the balance between the energy supplied by the food we eat and the energy we spend for every minute of being alive. What determines our demand for energy and how food energy supplies this demand are explained in the next two chapters.