



## Five Facts About Fat

By Matt Brzycki

In order to compete at an optimal level, you should strive to maintain a desirable amount of body fat (or adipose tissue). Indeed, having too much body fat can adversely affect your performance on the mat.

There are several misconceptions about body fat. Understanding the facts about fat will help you to plot an effective course of action to keep it at desirable levels.

**FAT FACT #1:  
Fat has several important functions.**

While muscle cells are very active, fat cells are very inactive. Nevertheless, body fat does have a few important functions.

First, fat serves as a major source of energy during low-intensity activities such as sleeping, reading and walking. Second, it helps in the transportation and absorption of fat-soluble vitamins (namely, vitamins A, D, E and K). Third, fat cushions impact and protects vital organs. Fourth, it provides insulation in cold weather. Be that as it may, having too much body fat is not really beneficial for athletes. In fact, there are probably only two activities in which an athlete would gain an advantage from having an excessive amount of body fat. One is long-distance swimming in cold water . . . and it would be swimming a very long distance in very cold water. The other is Sumo wrestling. So, having a high percentage of body fat is not desirable – unless, of course, you plan on swimming the English Channel (in January) or competing against a yokozuna in Japan.