

EVOLVE

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Understanding Your Metabolic Rate Report

Summary

Resting Metabolic Rate (RMR)

Your resting metabolic rate (RMR) is the minimum number of calories your body needs at complete rest. It typically makes up about 70% of the calories you burn each day — fueling essential functions like breathing, regulating body temperature, and processing food. Your RMR is shaped by your weight, gender, age, hormones, and body composition (the ratio of muscle to fat).

Total Daily Energy Expenditure (TDEE)

Your total daily energy expenditure (TDEE) is how many calories your body burns in a full day, assuming you keep up your usual activities. It's built on your RMR, plus the calories burned through activity and, to a smaller degree, the thermic effect of food (the energy used to digest what you eat).

Activity includes formal exercise — certain types of exercise raise your metabolic rate more than others, and for different lengths of time — as well as everyday non-exercise movement like shopping or cleaning.

Where Your Daily Calories Go

Basal Metabolic Rate (RMR)	70%
Physical Activity	20%
Thermic Effect of Food	10%

Your daily calorie targets are built around this breakdown. They're calculated to show how your calorie allowance changes with your exercise level, since it's common to overestimate how many extra calories exercise actually earns you. The pace of your weight loss comes down to how much you reduce calories relative to your goal — keep the other pieces of the picture above in mind as you think about your daily calorie burn.

A Deeper Evaluation

We rely on resting metabolic rate testing because online calculators tend to overshoot the numbers. Research consistently shows significant variability between individuals based on biological factors — which is exactly why a direct measurement is more useful than a formula.

Many people are concerned that it feels harder to lose weight as they age. A decline in RMR with age is often driven by a decrease in lean body mass (muscle) and a shifting body composition (a lower muscle-to-fat ratio). This shift happens naturally, and is also influenced by hormone changes and reduced physical activity — both formal exercise and everyday movement. Research has found that activity-related energy expenditure drops by about 7.5% per decade on average, with the most significant decline after age 60. RMR itself also declines naturally with age: after adjusting for body composition, one study found a 5% reduction in RMR per decade in women from age alone — typically less than 100 calories per day per decade for most people. Thyroid function can also be a meaningful factor, accounting for up to 15% of the variability between individuals, while sleep and genetics account for roughly another 10%.

If your metabolic rate came back lower than expected for your age, weight, and gender, don't be discouraged — there is a lot we can do to support your weight loss that's tailored to your individual factors, food choices, and lifestyle. Exercise alone doesn't create a large increase in the calories you can eat, which is a common misconception. That said, formal aerobic exercise still supports weight loss indirectly: it can increase post-exercise metabolism, build muscle mass, lower anxiety and depression, and boost energy. Increasing everyday non-exercise activity is especially helpful, and can allow you to work with a somewhat higher daily calorie intake.