

New company distributing handheld product to measure BMI

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With the measure of good health having moved over the decades from body weight to body fat to body mass, calculating a number to determine wellness has become more difficult.

The "body mass index," known as BMI, uses a rather complicated formula that sounds Greek to most Americans -- weight in kilograms over your height in centimeters squared. Yet the BMI is what government agencies use today to determine if somebody is healthy since it takes into the consideration your weight and height.

Knowing that, Matt Chalek, former president of Accufitness, is part of a new company called Sequoia Fitness (www.sequoiafitness.com) that is just releasing its first product this month: A palm-sized calculator that allows even the mathematically and metric-impaired to figure out their BMI.



"We're giving people a tool to help them figure out their health at any time," said Chalek, who is consulting with the new Colorado-based venture. "Anybody can use it."

The Tonus calculator (MSRP \$14.99) will not sell direct to the public but only through retailers. A user toggles a few numbers to enter their height and weight and it takes care of all the division and squaring. If users want to determine their lean and fat body mass, they can input their body fat -- after calculating it with a U.S. Navy system using a tape measure or calipers usually available at clubs or used by fitness professionals -- then let the Tonus do the math.

Next up this fall is another version that will be used to measure a child's BMI, as well as his or her BMI percentile and height and weight percentile -- usually figures a parent only gets

once a year from a doctor. Because of the way kids grow, Chalek explained, the BMI means nothing without being put into a percentile ranking.

"This could put information in a parent's hand anytime they want it," he said. That version, good for children 2 to 16, will have a suggested retail of \$15.99.

Chalek said that there are, of course, charts and online calculators for determining BMI, but most people don't have a computer around all the time to check, let alone in a gym bag or in the bathroom with the scale. (To see a National Institutes of Health calculator and information on BMI, [click here](#).)

SNEWS® View: For a downright affordable price, the public could at least have quick access to the BMI number at anytime and note how it changes as their fitness changes. Of course, this is for the average swath of the public and not for beefy football players or the skinniest of runner types. But it's that huge swath of the public that could gain from knowing one number that, as it changes, could motivate them to even better health. This may be one more tool to help -- as well as something that the retailer could easily offer to customers seeking health and wellness.

Thanks again for reading and for your support of SNEWS®! We look forward to hearing from you anytime.

Cheers,

Michael Hodgson & Therese Iknoian

SNEWS® Editorial Contact Information:

Mail: 101 W. McKnight Way, Ste. B-305, Grass Valley, CA 95949-9613

Phone: (530)-268-8295

General SNEWS® email: snewsbox@snewsnet.com

Press Release and news email: news@snewsnet.com

Michael Hodgson: michael@snewsnet.com

Therese Iknoian: therese@snewsnet.com

Wendy Geister: wendy@gearrends.com

SNEWS® Subscription Sales Contact Information:

Daisy LeDuc: sales@snewsnet.com

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