

# Megalodon body shape disputed

A new study suggests that the prehistoric shark portrayed as a super-sized monster in Hollywood movies may have been more slender than previously thought

*The Meg* ▶  
(2018)

## PREVIOUS BODY SHAPE

Past reconstructions assumed megalodon resembled larger version of great white shark

### Great white shark

(*Carcharodon carcharias*)

**Length:** Up to six metres

### Megalodon

(*Otodus megalodon*)

**Length:** 15-20 metres, estimated

## REVISED BODY SHAPE

Reappraisal of incomplete set of fossil vertebrae discovered in Belgium, found backbone of megalodon too thin to support body shape like great white

Fossil record limited to teeth and vertebrae only – no complete skeleton found

**New reconstruction is slimmer and more elongated**

**Repercussions:** Longer body may have given shark longer digestive canal, making it easier to absorb nutrients

**Slimmer megalodon may not have had to eat so often, reducing need to hunt, easing pressure on other marine creatures**

Slender body suggests megalodon may have been slow-cruising shark with occasional “burst swimming” for capturing prey