

THE SKINNY ON LOSING WEIGHT

The obesity rate has never been higher in this country. And fad diets have never been more prevalent. What does that tell you? You would think when you read about all the “new” information on weight loss in your magazines every day that we’re (the experts) learning more and more about weight loss daily. Well, we’re not. We’ve known for years what works. There is no REAL new information. What is new is a new company here or there trying to turn a new profit. Read this and highlight it: DIETS DON’T WORK. Atkins, Southbeach, The Zone are all diets. These diets simply find a way to manipulate the calorie input so you’re eating less if you follow the “diet”. I’ve worked in weight loss for years and years. I can tell you very simply how to lose your unwanted pounds.

GENETICS

First, you must know your genetic limitations. Not everybody can be skinny. Everybody can get thinner, but not everybody can get thin. Is it metabolism? Not really. Everyone is born with a set amount of fat cells. You don’t lose or gain fat cells, except when women get pregnant. Then the fat cells do multiply, which explains why some women never got back to their pre-pregnancy weight. But outside of pregnancy, you are stuck with the amount of fat cells you have. When you gain or lose weight, the cells get larger (gain weight) or smaller (lose weight). Due to this, you can change your size, but the more fat cells you are born with, the more “fat” you will be. You can’t change that.

The other part is the metabolism. The metabolism is based on muscles mass. The more muscle you have (and a lot of that is genetic too), the higher your metabolism is. Yes, your metabolism may slow as you age, but this is due to losing muscle mass. You lose 10% of muscle per decade after the age of 30 if you do not workout. If you do workout, you will not lose the muscle nearly as much, and your metabolism will stay higher. Simply put, muscles use calories. So it’s not about weight (fat does not use calories). Keep up the muscle and burn those calories.

IT IS THIS SIMPLE:

TO LOSE WEIGHT, ENERGY IN HAS TO BE LESS THAN ENERGY OUT. To maintain weight, energy in must be equal to energy out. Weight loss is all about this energy equation and nothing more. To lose weight, eat fewer calories. Even though they now seem to be out of popularity for weight loss (although they are still by far the healthiest way to eat), why did low fat “diets” work when applied correctly? They worked because fat has 9 calories per gram compared to 4 calories per gram of protein and carbohydrates. So 1 gram of fat has double the calories. Knock out the fat and you’ve cut calories way back. So why do some people swear by low carb diets? Same reason. “They” trick you into eating less by really limiting your food choices. When you take carbohydrates out of the diet, you’ve eliminated a ton of food choices. That basically leaves you with protein, fiber, and fat. And a lot of these diets are also low in fat, so, you end up eating chicken, broccoli and olive oil—How often are you going to binge on that? For most people, that’s very low calorie. I’ve added up the nutrients for the basic Atkins diet, the basic Zone diet and the basic Southbeach diet, and the daily caloric intake is 1200 calories. Well of course you’ll lose weight!

Okay, now you know not to follow these silly diets, and you're ready to bring it back to basics—CALORIES. Here is how to do it: First you should know your Basal Metabolic Rate. Your resting basal metabolic rate is where you are even—Steven. It's how many calories it takes to maintain your current weight at rest. I'm fortunate to have the equipment to measure this. And it makes my job much easier in helping people lose weight, because I don't have to guess anymore. You can, however, find this number without doing a BMR test. You simply track your food intake for a week or so, and find the point (calories) at which you're maintaining your weight. After you find it, you simply cut it back until you lose weight. Doing the test simply eliminates the guesswork, but it's not a must do—it's a can do. After you know your resting calorie needs, you simply cut back your calories and add exercise (if you haven't already, but I think you runners already have!) until you're losing 1-2 pounds per week. A deficit of 500 calories under your BMR per day will grant you a 1 pound loss per week, and 1000 under your BMR per day will grant you 2 pounds per week. It's that simple. The hard part is the application. The reason why "diets" are popular is because they don't teach discipline and control. You can eat all you want of one food if you simply don't eat another. A lot of people like that—and it shows! Discipline is harder work. But learning how to balance your food intake will give you lasting rewards. And once you do, the yo-yo of dieting will be over.

TIPS ON HOW TO APPLY THE RULES SO YOU LOSE THE WEIGHT FOREVER:

- Energy in must be less than energy out, every day, to lose weight. It's common for somebody to create a deficit for 4 days, and then over eat for 3 days, or something to that affect. It doesn't work that way. Every time you eat above what you need, when you cut back you're simply fighting back what you did a few days ago. It has to be day in and day out if you're serious about losing weight.
- Eat nutrient dense foods. This is so critical for runners who want to lose weight. Your body needs nutrients, and runners need carbs. So pick foods that are high in nutrients (protein, vitamins/minerals, carbs, etc) and low in calories. This way, your body is getting what it needs while cutting back. The opposite would be to eat calorically dense foods which are high in calories and low in useful nutrients (sweets, for example). So you're starving your body of what it needs and packing on the pounds—examples of this would be high fat and/or high sugar foods.
- Learn portion control. Why overeat? Your body can only utilize so much nutrition at one time anyway. My simple rule of thumb on this is to eat a decent sized meal, don't overload the plate, and don't go back for seconds. If you need more later, eat it in the form of a productive snack, like a pre or post workout energy bar. Or simply later on, eat another smaller meal. But eating too much at one time may be the biggest contributor to weight gain.
- Eat 3 squares per day. What ever happened to people sitting down and eating breakfast, lunch, and dinner? I've found when people do this, they spread their calories out better and are far less likely to binge on snack foods. Get back to eating the way our grandparents ate. Get out of the habit of stopping at a drive-thru for a Supersized meal (which are sporting about 1700 calories—higher than most people's BMR for the entire day).

- Avoid junk food. I already explained the nutrient dense rule, but also because it's far easier to overeat junk food. It's far easier to eat an entire bag of chips once you eat one. So, eliminate the temptation. Trust me, I've done this for years—get rid of junk food if you're serious. You won't miss it.
- Weight train. Do you want to keep your BMR high or as high as it can be as you age? If so, you better hit the weights. Running does NOT raise your metabolism, despite what you may have read. Again, the only thing that does is adding muscle. Running works the slow twitch muscle fibers, and they do not hypertrophy like the fast, so they will not grow in size. Running burns calories, which is great, but weights keep up the muscle. Do both---that's perfect!
- Don't over restrict. If you cut too far below your BMR (another great plus to actually knowing the number), you'll cut into your muscle mass and lower your metabolism. When your body is pushed too far, it will think its starving and eat its muscle. So again, you do that, and you're lowering your metabolism. Plus, the body goes into flight or fight, which means it becomes shocked into thinking you're starving, so it holds onto all of its reserves, and fat is a reserve. Yes this is a fact. So there is a fine balance you must learn. Cut back some, but not too much.

I hope this helps. This really is all there is to weight loss. The hard part is going out and applying it so it will work for you. If you can find the balance, you'll be happy that you did.