

# FOREVER ACTIVE

PERSONALIZED FITNESS AND WELLNESS FOR MEN 50 +

## Weight Loss: Life-style Management

### Introduction

Losing weight is a billion dollar industry and growing. Every year there is a new “trendy” diet for us to try and ultimately fail at. How emotionally, physically and financially frustrating it has become, but we keep trying.

The problem is that we want instant gratification. We want our weight to go back to where it was five or ten years ago but overlook the reality that it took those five or ten years to put the weight on.

The average time people stick to a diet is 30 days, three months would be a real success story. Big changes don't tend to survive the first high-stress period or family vacation.

What we must do is to get use to the idea of taking weight off slowly, just the way we put it on in the first place. Physiologically, this makes sense. Our bodies fight against low-calorie deprivation diets by going into “conservation mode” and this makes it harder to burn fat. As well, emotionally, there is a limit to the amount of self-denial we can handle. Regardless of our good intentions, our will power is constantly under attack by an abundance of readily available highly processed foods and a constant barrage of “food porn”.



If diets are not the answer, then what is. The answer is simple - YOU are the answer. Weight loss is all about life style management. It is about structuring our lives to avoid situations that result in mindless eating

such as skipping breakfast or lunch and then eating calorie laden snacks because we are hungry or snacking as we binge watch TV.

Changing our eating behaviour does not come easily. We have developed our eating habits over time. It is not something we can just flip a switch and change.

This newsletter is aimed at helping you manage your dietary habits better.

### Did you Know?

#### How to Start Managing your Dietary Lifestyle

A plan for change needs to be based on your individual tastes, needs and limitations such as time and money.

#### 1. Start with an accurate assessment of how you live your life.

- write down what you do and consume everyday for a couple of weeks. Include times of day that you eat, the situation you are having your meals and snacking such as in a cafeteria or in the car. Write down everything, the good, the bad and the ugly.

#### 2. Identify what can be changed / modified and what can not.

- it is important to be realistic in your assessment of what can and can not be changed. This is where a “lifestyle intervention coach” can make a real difference. This could be a life coach, nutritionist or family member or friend who will be honest and supportive of you wanting to make a change in your life. Just like a personal trainer, they can help you get over the hump in making a positive change.

#### 3. Identify one small change that can be made relatively easily.

- after at least 6 weeks, when this new habit is firmly entrenched introduce another new habit. Never proceed to introduce new-change/habit until the previous one is firmly established into your changing lifestyle. Remember, it takes time, sometimes a lot of time to make permanent changes in the way we live and eat. Be patient, positive change will come.

**Key Point** - Make small changes but think about what needs to be done and do it slowly

# Learning about Weigh-Loss

## Slow and Steady Wins the Weight-Loss Race

If you are determined to take extra pounds off for good, you are most likely to succeed if you lose a similar amount each week, especially in the first few weeks when wild fluctuations in weight-loss are common.

In a study published in the journal *Obesity*, researchers followed participants in a one-year behavioural weight-loss program. What they found was that dieters who experienced weight-loss variability early in the program (losing a few pounds one week followed by weight gain the next, with efforts to lose even more the following week) struggled to control their weight by the end of the one year and afterwards. In comparison, participants who lost a similar amount of weight week after week, even if only one pound, were much more likely to have lost more weight long term.

Losing weight steadily and safely and maintaining a weight loss requires a consistent approach. The following are key strategies to follow;

1. **Set short-term Goals** - to maintain motivation, set smaller realistic / achievable monthly goals (ie—four pounds) rather than focusing on a bigger longer-term goal (ie - 25 pounds in a year).
2. **Plan meals in advance** - Our lives are busy so plan meals and



snacks in advance. If time to prepare meals on a daily basis is not possible, batch cook on the weekend. This will help prevent giving into temptation to go to restaurants or order food in, both of which create challenges to control what and how much you eat.

3. **Manage weekends** - People who don't give themselves a day or two off to "cheat" are far more likely to keep unwanted pounds off. You don't have to be perfect. Follow the 80:20 rule.

Eat appropriately with respect to food choices and portion sizes 80% of the time. Don't just designate an "off" day and binge. This approach does not allow you physiologically, emotionally and mentally to adapt to the new life-style changes you want to make.



4. **Be accountable** - To keep you focused and motivated, have accountability systems in place. Track your food intake in a journal or app such as MyFitnessPal or Lose It. A journal is especially valuable if weekends or travel trips are your weakness. Weigh-in weekly but don't become obsessed. If your food selection and portion sizes are appropriate, you will lose weight.

5. **Practise Self-Compassion** - Expect lapses and don't beat yourself up when they occur. This is the value of the 80-20 rule. Remind yourself that a lapse or two is not going to ruin all your effort to lose weight. Your goal is to make lifestyle changes and change takes time. Life is meant to be enjoyed, that is why you want to lose the weight in the first place, so you can better enjoy a healthy life. It is important that the weight loss process is enjoyable too or you will not succeed in the long term. Give your self the same advice you would a friend or family member, "Don't worry about it, move on, tomorrow is another day." Remember, you are making these changes for life, be patient, the process of change is a marathon not a sprint.



# The Hidden Causes of Weight-loss Plateaus

Does this sound like you, **“I have reduced my calorie intake and started strength training twice a week to help me lose weight. I have been at it for six weeks but my weight has not changed. What gives?”**

This is a common occurrence and seem counter-intuitive. You decreased your calorie intake through dieting and increased your caloric expenditure by exercising but have not lost weight. Is it because you have lost fat but gained muscle so there is no change in your weight? Maybe, but probably not.



First the good news. Resistance exercise is good and the right thing to do. There are plenty of studies that have shown that resistance exercise done at an intensity so the last repetition is done at fatigue, protects against muscle loss that typically occurs with dieting alone. Research suggests that as much as 25 % of weight lost by cutting calories is from muscle vs fat. This is not good, since as you grow older you already are vulnerable to muscle loss due to hormonal changes. Muscle loss leads to joint injury, arthritis and loss of function. As well, the amount of muscle you have is the biggest contributor to your resting metabolism (the number of calories your body burns at rest). Less muscle results in less calories burned which is not what you want if your goal is to lose weight.

It is estimated that, done at a high enough intensity, resistance training can lead to the development of between 1-4 pounds of lean muscle mass over a 4 to 6 month period, in other words, a maximum of 1 pound a month. If you have restricted your caloric intake by 500 calories a day, theoretically, you should lose one pound a week since one pound contains 3500 calories. Therefore, the lean muscle gained from resistance training would not equal the amount of fat you should lose from your diet.

Now the bad news. Often when someone increases the amount of exercise they do, they commit “Diet Blunders.”

1. Because you are exercising you justify a second helping or a cookie after dinner.
2. In your efforts to improve the quality of your diet you forgot that portion size matters. Too much of a good thing, is never a good thing.
3. Consuming too many calories from shakes and protein bars in an effort to recover from workouts. There is no need to have a protein shake after a workout if you are eating your next meal within an hour or two of stopping exercise.

## Diet vs Exercise for Weight Loss

Resistance training is good and necessary but if weight loss is your goal, be diligent about what you put in your mouth. Don't rely on exercise to make up for your diet blunders.

It takes a lot of daily exercise to generate a caloric deficit large enough to create weight loss. To burn 500 calories a day with a goal of losing one pound a week you would have to run 40 minutes a day at a moderately intense pace, briskly walk for 70 minutes or do one hour of intense weight lifting. Cutting 500 calories a day from your daily diet is easier to do.

## Summary

Losing weight and keeping it off requires a change in lifestyle. It requires changing years of bad habits into new healthy ones. To do so requires identifying where your lifestyle weakness are, identifying what small steps you will take to correct them and finding a support group, coach, family member or friend who will assist you along the way. It requires disciplines and patience.

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### Resistance Training and Diet: What Drives Fat Loss?

Study: 40 women. RT only, Diet only or RT + Diet.  
Protein = 1.4 g/kg/d. 4-month treatment

Results

- Diet ↓ 5.5 pounds of fat mass
- RT no change in fat mass
- RT + Diet ↓ 7.3 pounds of fat mass

Conclusion

- Diet is THE key driver to fat loss.
- RT alone has no effect.
- RT plus Diet maximizes the effect on fat loss.

Reference: Mike T et al. 2017. Int J Sport Nutr Exerc Metab