



A STEP ABOVE

personal training concepts

ENHANCING THE COMPONENTS OF THE GENERAL, HEALTHY POPULATION

JULY 2013 ISSUE



EASIER STEPS TO CUTTING CALORIES WITHOUT ALL THE HASSLE

As a personal trainer, I strive to address weight loss goals with my clients. I work with each one of them to assess their needs and goals ... and each one usually has a different reason for being there. One may be there to tone up and get in shape; another might be preparing to compete; still yet another may have just made it a life goal to simply continue their physical fitness levels. Nevertheless, I find it very difficult, albeit challenging, to convince my clients to heed the importance of these goals as a means of obtaining a better quality of life.

Generally, when most clients begin working out, they are stimulated to focus on healthier choices. Before long though, as they begin to feel stronger and their muscular and cardiovascular endurance increase, a higher percentage of these clients will begin slipping back into old habits once again. Then, before they know it, their once long-term goal has become yet another short-lived accomplishment again ... not to mention their personal training investment slowly disappears. In order to obtain weight loss, activity must be a regular part of an individual's everyday life. (*Controlling Calories: Helpful Reminders, National Council on Strength & Fitness, NCSF,*

2012).

In her article found in WebMD Health News entitled, "30 Minutes of Daily Exercise Enough to Shed Pounds," Jennifer Warner states, "30 minutes of exercise a day may be the magic number to lose weight." When it comes down to weight loss, some people find it very hard to exercise a minimum of 30 minutes most every day of the week. Yet, it IS possible to change the types of foods you eat, making it easier to eat healthier and lose weight in a short period of time. The greatest challenge is modifying caloric balance. When we understand that caloric balance is the key (calories in vs. calories out), it becomes clear that in order to burn 100 calories it would be easier to skip that coca cola or fudge brownie than it would be to run a mile -- especially for those individuals who are not runners. That's a lot of work.

According to an article by NCSF (2012) entitled, *The Reality of Long-Term Weight Loss*, research shows that "dietary change without physical activity has less than a 2% success rate for long-term weight loss." Also, "aggressive change rarely can be maintained as a lifestyle habit." What most people don't realize is that "fruits, vegetables and fiber-rich whole grains are all carbohydrates and

are the key elements to weight loss and the maintenance of a healthy diet ... NOT protein content." The author of this article makes the point by saying that "if one particular diet strategy actually worked, there would exist no other, and all the self-proclaimed fitness gurus, celebrity personal trainers, and diet-of-the-week books would go away." However, this not being the case, in order for them to reach desired weight-loss goals, clients have to be dedicated to working out and making behavior modifications on their own. "The average American diet is low in fruits and vegetables, high in processed sugars and grains, high in saturated fat and total fat, and well above the daily needs of the body based on voluntary caloric expenditure and resting metabolic rate." In order to achieve a negative caloric balance needed for weight loss, it requires both total daily calories and the intensity of the exercise sessions. Furthermore, "building up to 300 kcal a day of physical activity yields the greatest health benefits."

In general, most personal trainers (PTs) see their clients, at best, 3 non-consecutive days a week for only about 60 minutes per session. If it were affordable, and PTs were able to see their clients most

every day of the week, then it would be much easier to manage a client's weight loss goals. When clients ask me about nutrition, I refuse to write out meal plans since I am not a certified nutritionist. However, I do make recommendations about healthy food choices and have even taught clients to read food labels to help them better understand what they are putting into their bodies. Several years ago, I even took a client grocery shopping, showing her how to make quick, easy, and healthy lunches ... avoiding the processed foods. What are some helpful tips to becoming more aware of what we are eating? When I was reading up on nutrition, I stumbled upon this article, *Controlling Calories: Helpful Reminders*, National Council on Strength Fitness, NCSF, 2012. This information was so helpful that I wanted to share it with you in this newsletter.

- Make less food when planning and preparing meals. We've all cooked too much food when preparing a meal; and, in general, we tend to eat what is cooked. We've all heard at one time or another, "**There's just a little more ... don't let it go to waste.**" However, if the amount of food prepared is of proper proportion and appropriate for the number of consumers, then the calories are easily managed and over consumption does not occur. Overeating is the number one contributor to weight gain.
- Avoid eating out. Yes, it's convenient with today's hectic schedules ... especially if children are a part of the equation and have activities after school, etc. It's not uncommon for many of us to find ourselves in a restaurant-type setting 3 to 4 times a week. The problem is that we can't control the preparation or cooking process of the food, the hidden and large quantities of calories within the food, the tendency to over eat due to large portions, and the increased likelihood of social eating ("**I'll get dessert if you do**"). When trying to lose weight, people don't realize they are over-consuming calories when they use drive-thru fast food chains, or even

when choosing the healthier choice meals at restaurants.

- At social gatherings, food and drinks are unavoidable. But I have found that eating before attending a social function where I know hors d'oeuvres will be served (consuming controlled calories) reduces my hunger and keeps me from filling up on unwanted calories at the party, keeps me from splurging on many appealing foods (full of calories) and drink selections at the party, and keeps me from feeling bloated by the end of the night.
- Some other helpful hints might be to snack on fruits and vegetables. By replacing sweets (candy bars, cookies and pastries) with an apple or other more nutrient-dense foods, you have decreased the calories consumed from 210 to approximately 75. Wow, what a bonus! Plus you're getting added fiber and vitamins. Recommended fiber intake is up to 20-35 grams per day. Because fiber increases the level of fullness, individuals may likely eat healthier foods. Not to mention that fiber-rich foods reduce absorption rate and insulin response, thereby preventing hyperinsulinemia.
- Avoid convenience eating ... foods that require minimal preparation or foods that are of close proximity ... because it could lead to unhealthy eating patterns and excess calorie consumption. Examples are the pre-made foods that you just heat and eat, or foods that come from a can that you stir, simmer, and are then ready to eat. Time-saving foods do not curb your appetite for long periods of time; therefore, you may find yourself once again eating sooner than you need to.
- Finally be conscious of drinking calories. Most drinks (other than water and diet drinks) contain more calories than you might expect -- often from sugar (sometimes an astonishingly large amount). Breakfast drinks (orange juice, apple juice, etc.) have approximately 100-200 calories per 8 oz. serving. A 12oz. can of soda contains 150 calories or more. Drinks

such as Powerade and Gatorade contain about 50-80 calories per serving from sugar, and the individual-size bottles often reflect 2-3 servings. So, if you're really hot and drink the whole bottle, you are looking at about 240 calories ... or a 2.4-mile run instead. The biggie is that if you're trying to lose weight and you consume alcoholic beverages (but don't want to eliminate them from your program), drink in moderation if you are trying to lose weight -- alcohol consumption can quickly lead to increased caloric intake. The problem is that when you drink, you start craving food; then, before you know it, you have over consumed calories. Wine and beer contain approximately 90-180 calories per serving. Most liquor contains fewer calories per serving, but mixers are high in sugar. A mixed drink can reach a "**caloric expenditure**" from the glass to your body of about 200-400 calories when you add soda and juices. Those strawberry daiquiris are good aren't they? Yes, but they're loaded with sugar by the time you add the mix and whip cream. It might just throw your training program a little bit behind in meeting your weight loss goals.

Overall, helpful hints or reminders are very useful. But let's not forget -- when shopping, it's better to make a list. And make sure you get groceries on a full stomach -- it will help keep you from buying things you don't usually buy or don't need. I don't believe in restricting our lifestyles, but I do believe that through the true desires of our heart, the willingness to want to be healthy (without being obsessed with diet and exercise) will produce a long-term effect and a comfortable weight for anyone who makes exercise and eating healthier a part of their everyday lives. It's OK to splurge every once in a while -- have that drink, eat that cake -- but most of all, smile and enjoy it because life is far too short not to do something about the way you feel.

Strength doesn't come from what you can do ... it comes from overcoming the things you once thought you could not.
 ~ Rikki Rogers



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