

Here's the deal when it comes to fat loss

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It's that time of year when the poor-eating, exercise-loathing, and unmotivated crowd may give an iota of thought to reversing those traits by - *here we go* - cleaning up their diet and committing to an exercise regimen! Yeah, right. One look in the mirror and those sedentary calorie hoarders know they *should* do something about their bodies but then fail to act.

It's also that time of year when "exercisers" and gym denizens seek new training ideas and/or initiate the latest and greatest diet to look better at the local discotheque or enhance their sex appeal when donning swimwear. Not to denigrate anyone, but there is a host of "I go to the gym five days/week" or "I do my 30 minutes of cardio four times/week" people who think they're doing the right things, but in truth are squandering valuable time training with the intensity of a dead cat, usually too often and with little effort.

For the former group (the sedentary), it's a torturous endeavor: 1) give up the intake of delicious and addicting processed food & drink and 2) get off their ass and start exerting physical effort. That is a complete 180 from their current behavior and why it usually never happens. If they do commence exercising and eating better, within a few weeks they are back to hoarding calories and giving the middle finger to physical activity.

For the latter group (the active, at-least-trying-to-eat-right people) there is more hope. They understand the time commitment for weekly exercise. And likely they are cognizant of the chemicals they consume, trying to minimize the readily available unhealthy calories and opting for the good stuff. They are at least making the effort and

obtaining some results. However, they could do better if more attention were paid to even a cleaner diet and more time-efficient exercise.

So, let's get this out of the way and move on:

1. One can lose body fat through dieting alone. Over-fat humans can lose excess fat by simply altering their poor food and drink intake without running on a treadmill or taking a boot camp class. The body is a chemistry set and assuring certain chemicals go in and certain chemicals are avoided will alter one's biochemistry resulting in relevant changes internally (i.e., less fat is stored, and more fat is metabolized).

2. If one chooses to exercise, the best option to maximize fat loss is high intensity strength training. No, it's not conventional "cardio" as per walking or jogging three miles, or 40:00 on a treadmill at a modest pace (and able to read a magazine or check their Myspace page). And God forbid it's not a Yoga, PiYo, or Pilates class where there is minimal muscle overload, minimal in-session calorie burn, and minimal post-session recovery demand. You might improve joint mobility and get in touch with your inner self, but those activities won't do diddly poo to improve fat burning potential.

More logical details are forthcoming but get it in your head right now: if you choose to exercise in the attempt to lose body fat there is more bang for the buck from high intensity strength training compared to the reality of the other activities noted (I could place a string of footnote references here, but I have too many).

Let's dig a little deeper.

Proper dietary intake – the most significant factor in fat loss - is going to be A DAILY CHALLENGE. Broken down into importance and time commitment, the two components of proper fat loss are diet at 90% and exercise at 10%. Yep, that's the ugly truth. Those

serious about losing fat need to understand that if you eat lousy food often, the desired results gleaned from any workout session will be diminished.

I have a list of 70+ different diets that have been used over the years. If 70+ diet plans are out there, either users have been hoodwinked or biochemists have been wrong all along. It's partly the first point because we know the science of fat loss and several diet plans do work. However, failure to expunge body fat is mostly due to a lack of discipline in avoiding unhealthy chemicals and not consuming healthy ones. Compound that with living in an environment replete with a wide variety of lousy food options on every street corner (READ: bad carbohydrates) and the need for discipline becomes even greater.

Thus far I have been a bit Grim Reaper-ish with all those negative points. But it is true that it does take discipline to eat better in a world loaded with processed food everywhere, and time to commit to *proper* exercise is required. Add to that current technology that makes us less physically active (READ: computers, cell phones, and automatons) and it becomes even more overwhelming.

Speaking of discipline:

“The temporary pain of discipline or the long-term pain of regret. It’s your choice.”

All negative talk aside, it's time for some optimism. The following three points are enlightening because they offer solid proof anyone who commits to proper dietary intake and *proper* exercise can do it if they genuinely want it, especially if they have been doing nothing in those two areas. Here we go...

1. Proper food consumption – the toughest task facing most – can be realized IF that discipline is adhered to. Eating is a 16-hour task each day for all seven weekdays (assuming you sleep eight hours each day). There is no vacation from that endeavor. It's the entire time from crawling out of bed to turning in at night. When you rise in the morning you must decide what to eat. Then mid-morning. Then at lunch. Then mid-afternoon. Finally at dinner. Add to that the temptation to consume poor chemicals in the late evening. It's literally make or break, hence that discipline thing must be followed throughout the day.

What is the solution? Start with one or two changes initially. When that is accomplished, aim for the reasonable goal of SEVEN OUT OF EVERY 10 MEALS being good (temptations are constantly in front of us, so 70% gives wiggle room to go astray). Think about it: if 80% of your meals have been chock full of bad calories, the 70% good goal will be a noble reversal of that damaging behavior.

2. There are 168 hours in one week. Commitment to proper exercise requires less than three of those 168 hours, or 1.8% of your time. Practically speaking, you only need to find 30 to 45 minutes on two non-consecutive days each week (i.e., Wednesday and Saturday or Sunday and Thursday). Could you train for a third day? Yes, but the bare minimum of two days is 100% better than NOT finding 30 to 45 minutes twice per week. No excuses considering that is a minimal time commitment for reversing your current condition to improve your health and physique. On that, it's time for one of my favorite quotes:

“The great diving line between success and failure can be expressed in five words: I did not have time.”

3. For the average person in general - a beginner or even a seasoned workout veteran - the harder one works, the less total workout volume one needs. Analogous to taking

medication, a specific dose should be applied, no more and no less. And think about this: the less exercise performed, the more time one has for other life ventures. No need to go to the gym four+ days per week and no need to perform a ton of exercise for a ton of bouts (sets, runs). Less exercise and more free time? Sounds like a heck of a deal to me.

But there is a significant proviso: one must train HARD (with 100% effort/intensity). Whatever your 100% effort is, give it each training session. Whether you're just starting out or have been training for a while – give it your all. Again, like medicine, one needs the right dose (challenging work) followed by time away from that dose (non-training "recovery" days) to realize the best results from their efforts. Put another way, apply a coat of paint to an object and time must be given for that paint to dry before applying another coat. Applying the second coat before the first application has dried will disrupt the process. In human biology, that may require 48 to 72 hours (two to three days) between training sessions for gains to occur due to the elevated level of effort exuded in each training session. If the work is not hard – especially a large volume of low-effort work – it will not elicit the proper signal for the muscular system to change.

So, proper exercise – in this case high intensity strength training - must be physically demanding. It must challenge the system, and the system will then adapt and improve from the applied exercise stress. The deeper the hole you dig, the greater the amount of time and resources you'll need to fill it. That means when you eat the right chemicals and a relative number of calories, your body will build metabolically active muscle and dig into your fat stores to keep it running during the recovery, repair, and growth process. Another timely quote:

**"Very few individuals train too hard.
Most train too much and/or too often."**

For those who have successfully decreased body fat with lower effort exercise, good for you. Results have occurred by virtue of “doing something” on a regular basis. But think about this: could it have been achieved even better if you had trained less often and with more effort? That may seem contradictory to what most believe: that more is better: “The more often I train, and the more exercise I perform, the more calories I will burn, thus the more effective it will be, right?” But more is not always better when it comes to proper exercise for fat loss. In truth, the more prudent exercise for fat loss is not that lengthy, low-effort conventional “cardio” as we have been led to believe. It is that higher-effort strength training that creates a huge post-workout recovery demand and the need for prudent food intake to repair and build muscle tissue. Further, the demanding nature of hard strength training necessitates more recovery time between training sessions. That rest time between training sessions is often overlooked, but it’s a necessary biological timeline that must be respected if one wants to realize excellent results without overtraining and becoming injured. It also leaves more time for other daily commitments, allowing exercise to NOT overwhelm your weekly schedule.

So, to condense all the previous discussion into practical guidelines:

1. If your current diet is horrible – or if it’s not too bad but could be better – start making one or two changes (don’t bite off more than you can chew, pun intended). Over time as you realize you can do it and are doing it, get to the goal of eating good stuff in seven out of every ten feedings. That is reasonable and does allow for those inevitable times of sub-par food intake.

2. To get results and see improvement, only a minimal weekly time commitment is required for exercise, whether you are a beginner or experienced trainee. A minimum of two high-effort strength training sessions each week at no more than one hour for each will work if you train hard and train consistently.

3. If you REALLY want it, you will do it. Make time for yourself because your health is important to not only you, but others around you. Exude discipline when you are faced with temptation. No one else is forcing bad chemicals down your pie hole. And find that minimal training time on your calendar (that 1.8% of your total week). Over time it will be so much easier as you develop better habits. Eventually you will realize "Gee, I could have been doing this a long time ago." On that point:

"There is a very real difference between thinking that you want something and actually wanting it.

If you think you want it, you'll talk about it, think about it, and even do a number of things to get you closer to your goal.

If you really want something, you'll do absolutely anything necessary to achieve it with no excuses.

You'll always find reasons not to do something, and those who think they want it always have them."

For specific diet and nutrition information consult a registered dietician. Assure they are well-educated in:

1. Macronutrient ("Macro") types; carbs, fat, and protein.
2. The metabolic breakdown in the digestion and absorption processes of each macro.
3. Each macro's impact on hormone release relative to fat storage and breakdown; the release of insulin, glucagon, leptin, and ghrelin.

Regarding more information on strength training for fat loss - and to obtain effective high intensity strength training workouts - go to these links for more practical insight and a lifetime of workout options to choose from for any situation you will have (i.e., commercial gym, at-home, minimal equipment, body weight-only, etc.)

www.777workouts.com

[Strength Training for Fat Loss](#)

[Muscle and Strength: All About It](#)

["What's Going on In There?" The Anatomy of a Resistance Training Set](#)