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"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"

Is Losing Weight Your New Years Resolution?

This is the time of year many people make new years resolutions. Unfortunately, whether it is to lose weight or quit smoking, many of these resolutions will not last. Today we will discuss the most common resolution ever made, and probably the most common one never kept –losing weight.

When it comes to losing weight, you have to accept the fact that there is no easy method or magic pill that will do it for you. If you are told that a particular system is “easy” or “works with no effort at all”, it is almost always a scam and it is definitely not going to work over the long-term.

If it is a over the counter supplement or drug that you are going to use to try to lose weight, just remember that there is no “regulatory organization” out there that makes sure the stuff actually works or that it is not harmful to you. Last year, some of the most popular ones that did actually increase your metabolism, which does make you burn more calories during the day, were found to have potentially nasty side effects – perhaps even causing cancer. To be safe, ask your pharmacist what exactly each of the ingredients are and will they actually do what they claim to do.

If you think that the newest fad diet out there is the one that will help you lose that weight, think again. If it is high protein/low carb, high carb/low protien, or any other odd assortment of foods, do you really think that you will still be eating this restricted diet five years down the road? Probably not. As well, do you think that the weight you lost while on the restricted diet will still be gone once you return to your regular diet? Unlikely. The reality is that you may lose weight while on the diet, but you will likely gain the weight back once you get bored with the restricted diet.

The only way to lose weight in a healthy manner is to simply burn more calories in a day than you eat (you do this by having a healty diet and exercising regularly). It is simple mathematics. As an example, 5000 calories consumed with 4000 calories burned during your daily activities means that you will have 1000 calories of fat stored on your body. Even if you burn 5000 calories that day, you still have not lost any weight. You have to burn more than 5000. In order to have a net loss of calories each day, you cannot

be eating fatty or high sugar foods. This is a lifestyle change you will have to make. There are simply too many calories in these types of food for you to ever reach a net loss of calories each day.

When it comes to any form of exercising, you have to work out hard enough to increase your heart rate and keep it that way for at least 20 to 30 minutes, three to five days per week. Check first with your doctor to make sure your heart and lungs can handle this. Always start slowly for a few weeks and build up to the level of exercise you should be doing.

I attend the gym regularly and see many people who are there even more than me that complain that they are not losing body fat. But, if you watch how hard they are actually working out when they are there, it is not difficult to understand why they are still not having a net loss of calories each day and losing body fat accordingly.

An old and simple method of calculating what your heart rate should be while you exercise is as follows: take the number 220 and subtract your age. On average, the result would be your “maximum heart rate” (heart beats per minute), which is the fastest your heart could ever go and it is much too high for you to strive for. With your doctor’s permission, you should likely strive to exercise at 65% to 70% of your “maximum heart rate” (this is called your “target heart rate”). Like I said earlier, start off slow (50% of maximum heart rate) and build up to your “target heart rate”.

To find out what your heart rate is while exercising, stop whatever exercise you are doing, and quickly find your pulse on your neck or wrist. Then, count the number of heart beats in a ten-second period and multiply that number by six (to give you the number of beats in sixty seconds). Then, divide your number of beats per minute while exercising by your maximum beats per minute. Take the result of this calculation and multiply it by 100 to give you the “percent of your maximum heart rate” that you are exercising at. Once you are accustomed to exercising, you should try to have your “percent of maximum heart rate” at 65% to 70%.

I will use myself as an example:

$$(220) - (35 \text{ years old}) = (185 \text{ beats per minute, my maximum heart rate})$$

If I am exercising at an intensity that makes my heart rate 150 beats per minute, I then divide 150 by 185, then multiply the result by 100 to give me the percent of my maximum heart rate that I am exercising at.

$$\frac{150 \text{ beats per minute (the intensity I am exercising at)}}{185 \text{ beats per minute (my maximum heart rate)}} = .81$$

.81 x 100 = 81% Therefore, I am exercising at 81% of my maximum heart rate.

Whenever I am exercising, I always try to maintain at least 150 beats per minute. This allows me to strengthen my heart, lungs, and muscles while burning the maximum number of calories possible. When I combine this with a realistic, mildly low fat diet, I am able to decrease maintain my body fat at a healthy level. You will achieve the same result if you follow the suggestions above and stick with it.