

# Dr. Colin Gage

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Nicola Valley Chiropractic  
2076A Granite Ave.  
P.O. Box 909  
Merritt, BC  
V1K 1B8

Ph: (250) 378-5456  
Fax: (250) 378-8259  
Email: info@merrittchiro.com  
Website: www.merrittchiro.com

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

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## The Most Common New Years Resolution

Yes, not surprisingly, the most common New Year's resolution is to lose weight. So many people try to do it but so many of them fail. Why is that? Well, mostly it is because the average Canadian is trying to do it through a trendy diet, a "fast", or some form of nutritional supplement. These methods may allow you to lose weight initially, but the chance of the weight staying off is pretty "slim". So, how do you lose weight and keep it off? Check out my two principles that are the foundation of any weight loss program.

The first principle is that if your objective is to lose weight, it is important that the number of calories you burn in a day must be more than the number of calories you consume in a day.

- Exercise should be the first tool used when trying to increase the number of calories you burn in a day. The more you exercise every day, the more calories your body will burn, the more body fat you will lose. Exercise, of course, also plays a role in reducing the risk of osteoporosis and heart disease. However, it must be remembered that increased exercise will lead to increased muscle mass (this is a good thing!). But, the extra muscle will weigh more than the same volume of fat. It is therefore important to base one's weight loss goals on the loss of fat rather than on the loss of weight alone. You should use a scale that measures both the weight and the percentage of fat, not the weight alone.

The second principle to losing weight is to simply reduce your caloric intake (or how much you eat). Research does show that most "restrictive" weight loss diets or "crash diets" do not have a positive long-term effect. As well, people who use a restrictive diet in order to reduce calories may be consuming nutritionally deficient diets.

- For those individuals who wish to restrict caloric intake, I personally believe that a low calorie, protein (not excessive) diet gives the best and safest results. During this type of diet the individual replaces one daily meal with a protein drink. The meal replacement formula/protein drink should be easy to digest, and also supply a variety of nutrients such as extra vitamins and minerals. For example, my protein drink

replaces my lunch. It contains skim milk, low fat yogurt, frozen blueberries, a banana, and whey protein (with no sugar, sweeteners, or artificial flavours). You can buy this protein at the local “Planet Fitness Gym” in Merritt, as well as most grocery stores. This does not allow you to eat junk or fatty foods for the other two meals. You have to ensure that your other meals throughout the rest of the day have a portion of healthy, low fat, protein rich food, in conjunction with other fruits, vegetables, and some carbohydrates.

In closing, you have to understand that long-term weight loss cannot be achieved by “miracle pills”, “magic bullets”, or by simply purchasing that new piece of exercise equipment. It requires a healthy lifestyle over the long term that includes a wholesome nutritionally dense diet, lots of exercise, and a good dose of self-esteem. Good luck with that New Year’s resolution!