

Ten popular dieting myths

THERE ARE many weight loss myths included in diet tips, so take a look at the ten most popular and see what we think of them.

1 Skipping breakfast is a good way to lose weight
Skipping breakfast will make you feel tired and hungry during the morning and encourage you to reach for high-fat, high-calorie snacks. In fact, people who eat breakfast are more likely to maintain a healthy weight than those who don't.

2 The more strict the diet the more successful it will be
If you eat nothing but grapefruits or oranges all day long for a week you will, of course, lose weight. But fad diets that drastically cut calories will quickly become boring and won't be effective in the long run. It's not necessary to starve to lose weight. Making small changes that you can stick to is the key to long-term success.

3 You have to give up your favourite foods
Depriving yourself of all the foods you enjoy won't work. You'll eventually give in to temptation and abandon your efforts. There is no harm in allowing yourself a treat now and again.

4 Eating at night makes you gain weight
It doesn't matter when you eat if you are eating too much – a calorie is a calorie at any time of the day! It is healthier for your digestive system not to eat a heavy meal before you go to bed but a later dinner will not make you any fatter than an earlier one.

5 It is possible to spot reduce, or to lose fat in one part of your body
As unfair as it may seem, we can't pick and choose where we gain or lose weight from. When the body loses fat, it is lost throughout the body. Focusing on one area of the body when exercising may develop better muscle tone in that area but it will not remove more fat.

6 Certain foods, such as grapefruits or celery, can burn fat
No foods can actually help you to burn fat. Some foods with caffeine may speed up your metabolism slightly for a short time but they won't cause significant weight loss.

7 Carbohydrates-rich foods such as bread and pasta, are fattening
It's calories that count, and gram for gram carbohydrate has less than half the calories of fat. But carbohydrate-rich foods can be fattening because of the fillings and toppings commonly added to them – such as creamy sauces on pasta and butter or cheese on baked potatoes.

Some carbohydrate foods, especially whole grain versions, are packed full of fibre which can keep hunger at bay. For example, whole grain pasta is more filling than white pasta and will keep you satisfied for longer.

8 You shouldn't snack between meals
Eating healthy snacks between meals can actually help you to control your appetite and keep your blood sugar level steady. Fruits and vegetables are a great choice.

9 Low fat means low calorie
Replacing fat with other ingredients can still result in a product with a high calorie content. Don't be fooled – check the label. Quantity is also important – you won't cut back on calories if you eat twice as much of a low fat product as a full fat one!

10 You have to exercise intensively to burn fat
Even low intensity exercise will burn fat. Walking, gardening or doing housework will help you to burn calories and lose weight.



A HEALTHY DIET and exercise go in tandem and will help you achieve optimal results.

How to begin an exercise programme

ASSESS YOURSELF

If you answer "yes" to any of the following questions, consult your doctor before beginning.

- Has your doctor ever said that you have a heart condition and recommended only approved physical activity?
- Do you have chest pain brought on by physical activity?
- Have you developed chest pain at rest in the past month?
- Do you lose consciousness or lose your balance as a result of dizziness?
- Is your doctor currently prescribing medication for your blood pressure or heart condition?
- Are you aware, through your own experience or a doctor's advice, of any other reason against your exercising without medical approval?

The above series of questions is deliberately inclusive. Answering "yes" above does not mean that you cannot exercise, only that it is advisable to check with your physician first.

Why should we exercise?

Good health is not merely the absence of disease. It is the capacity to enjoy life and withstand challenges.

Above all, physical activity can give you new zest and energy that adds quality to your life. It does not matter how old you are or how active you have been in the past. Research shows that exercise benefits everyone – old and young, large and small, smokers and ex-smokers.

Plan exercise into your day

- Look at your schedule
- Make an appointment to exercise

Set up a support network

Develop a support network consisting of two sets of people. In the first set, include those who will exercise with you. In the second set, include people who will

support you in your efforts.

Set goals

Make goals that you can chart, because then you can see progress towards them.

Create a short-term plan for the next month and then one for a longer period of time, say four or six months. Set realistic goals, for example, walking five more minutes every week, or losing one pound of fat a month. Do not expect to lose 30 pounds in two weeks.

For optimal physical fitness, work up to performing cardiovascular exercise like walking or bicycling three to five times per week for 20 minutes. Of course, whatever exercise you do will provide health gains, so do not worry if you cannot reach this frequency at first.

What to expect when you start a programme

Exercise will not be dangerous if you start out gradually and build up to more strenuous activities.

You might feel stiff or sore when first starting out a programme, but you should never feel pain. Pain is your body's way of telling you that something is wrong. You also should not feel exhausted at the end of a workout.

If you feel pain or feel yourself getting over tired or out of breath, you should check with your doctor. Muscle soreness (not pain) tells you that exercise is affecting your body, so it is actually a good sign. Do not worry, however, because the soreness will last only a few days.

Have fun!

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