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Long-Term Weight Loss



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How many times have you flicked on the TV to see an infomercial promising that you will lose 10 kilos in just 3 minutes a day on a revolutionary new machine? What next, popping a pill before bedtime and waking up to a 5 kilo weight loss?

Too often we get caught up in a 'magic bullet' approach to weight loss and miss the bigger picture. It pays to be cautious of anything that offers a quick fix solution. As with anything worth doing, it can take a bit of time, dedication and 'know how' to achieve weight loss and start leading a healthier lifestyle overall.

Here are 5 main tips to implement and consider for long-term weight loss.

Habit homework

1 It is very important to look at the habits that you do daily that add up to create the ultimate you. Conduct an experiment on yourself to look at why you got to the weight you are unhappy with and what sort of habits are detrimental to your health and weight-loss goals. Ask yourself: "How can I make exercise enjoyable?" and "How can I eliminate comfort food in favour of a healthy habit?"

Remember that all change takes time. Too often, I train clients who get impatient when they don't see results and become unmotivated. Know that consistent application of exercise and good eating will bring results. It's better to ease into any new changes than trying to change everything at once. Learn what works for you and then stick to it.

Start your day with breakfast

2 Most people are now aware of how important eating this first meal of the day is to overall weight loss and health long term. Knowing this, many of us still skip breakfast or just get by on a cup of coffee due to being in a rush each morning or lack of planning.

A balanced breakfast consisting of protein, carbohydrates and a small

amount of fat is crucial to start your day. Your last meal was at least 8 hours ago, so your blood sugar will be at a low in the morning. It is important to have breakfast to kick-start your metabolism and to get your blood sugar balanced so you can have sustained energy for the rest of the day and aid weight loss.

With breakfast, you may need to experiment to determine the best breakfast for your body. Some of us are happy with cereal and yoghurt, whereas others need more protein like scrambled eggs on toast to see them through the morning. Choose breakfasts that keep your energy levels up for the next 3-4 hours and keep hunger pangs at bay. The less hungry you are, the less likely you are to binge or choose junk food to suppress your hunger.

As a side note, it is equally important to consume 1-2 litres of water for your body to function optimally. Increasing your water intake will aid your weight loss by encouraging your body not to store fat.

Control blood sugar levels

3 As mentioned in the previous tip, it is important to keep blood sugar levels stable. You may not be aware of, or even thought about, how this affects your weight loss, but nutrition is the most effective way to stabilise your blood sugar levels.

Nutrition is so important in the bigger picture of weight loss. You can work out for hours, and intensely, but if your nutrition is not right, you will not reap the rewards from your physical efforts.

It is important to eat approximately five balanced meals of protein, carbohydrates and good fats spread

throughout the day. By eating every 2.5 to 3 hours, you control your blood sugar, keep your energy levels up and reduce the chance of any cravings that can lead to binge eating. Remember to eat smaller portions at each of these meals, so you are not eating *more*, but are spreading the same amount of kilojoules throughout the day. Great snack ideas are 2-3 crackers + avocado spread, a small piece of fruit, small handful of nuts and sultanas or a mini pita pocket full of salad and lean ham.

Weight training

4 How could I not mention burning fat when discussing weight loss?! It's very important to work out with weights at least 2 to 3 times per week on alternate days to increase your muscle compared to fat. Just 35-45 minutes each session is enough to work your entire body. The increase in muscle mass will help you to burn fat and create a slimmer and healthier body, more than cardio alone can ever do.

Cardio

5 Weights and nutrition play an important part in overall weight loss and a healthy body. Cardio also has its place in terms of weight loss and increasing cardiovascular fitness and health. Looking slim is deceptive as many of us can be lean but not healthy.

Start slowly with cardio if you are new to it and aim to increase intensity rather than duration. 45 minutes should be the maximum amount of time for cardio at any one session as too much could decrease muscle along with fat, which can make you look lean but 'soft'.

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