



Exercise: The other half of the balance

Losing weight mathematically is simple: eat less and exercise more. One pound of fat is equal to 3,500 calories. Theoretically, if you were to burn 500 calories a day through exercise for seven days, you could lose one pound a week. (500 calories/day burned off through exercise x seven days/week = 3500 calories, or one pound of fat) If only it were that easy!

In reality, losing weight is not that simple, because weight loss also depends on what you take in for calories on a daily basis. To start losing weight, choose healthy foods and beverages and start moving!

To lose weight, you need to burn fat and build muscle. Muscle burns more calories than fat, which is why people with more muscle mass have a faster metabolism. There are three types of exercise, and all are important.

- Aerobic exercise burns fat and calories, and is good for the cardiovascular system.
- Muscular strength training builds and tones muscle, improves strength and posture, and helps to prevent bone loss
- Flexibility exercise maintains joint range of motion and reduces the risk of injury and muscle soreness.

Aerobic exercise

Aerobic exercise is any activity that can be done for an extended period of time, at varying levels of intensity, using the large muscle groups. When you do aerobic exercise, your heart rate and breathing rate will increase and you will be sweating. To lose weight, do aerobic exercise four or more times a week for at least 30 minutes, with at least one day off. If you currently are not engaging in regular exercise, gradually work your way up to 30 minutes. To continue losing weight, gradually increase the length of time and intensity level of your workout. Here is a list of ways to get aerobic exercise:

- Go for a walk.
- Start jogging.
- Find a hiking trail.
- Go for a bike ride.
- Start dancing.
- Swim laps.
- Take a kickboxing class.
- Jump rope.
- Join an aerobic exercise class or buy a DVD.
- Get on a treadmill/StairMaster/elliptical/stationary bicycle.

Muscular strength and endurance conditioning

Weight training will help to tone and build muscular endurance. This form of exercise involves weight resistance using of all the major muscle groups, including the arms, legs, back, chest, stomach and hips.

Start by using a weight that you can lift comfortably for eight repetitions and work your way up to twelve repetitions. Continue to increase the weight and number of repetitions (maximum of 8-12 repetitions) for increased strength conditioning.

Flexibility exercise

Stretching before and after you exercise is important for reducing muscle soreness and the risk of injury. The proper stretching technique involves holding a mild stretch for 20-30 seconds while breathing normally. To increase flexibility, increase the degree and length of hold time for each stretch. For best results, make sure to stretch all the major muscle groups.

For the best weight loss results, you need to combine aerobic exercise and strength training four or more times a week. For example, you could walk for 30 minutes for aerobic exercise and finish off your workout with 5-10 minutes of strength training. Don't forget to stretch!

If you don't exercise regularly, talk to your doctor before you begin. Then, once you start, keep it up. Exercise makes you feel better, look better and live longer!

More strength. More flexibility. More you.

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