

Top 10 Weight Loss Myths - Don't Fall Victim to Them!

**Arm Yourself With Proper Education or
Be Prepared for Weight Loss Failure!**



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If weight loss is at the forefront of your mind then are you able to separate fact from fallacy? Do you know what you can do to support healthy weight loss? Do you know what works well and what simply will not work at all?

Weight loss myths are everywhere you look and they can be detrimental to your health as well as the goals you have set for yourself.

It is necessary to take the ideas you have about losing weight and turn them on their side. Put your knowledge to the test. Don't fall victim to information that is hazardous to your health.

The sad truth is that Americans are getting heavier all of the time. This is as true of adults as it is of the youth of today. As well, those who are already heavy are getting even heavier.

According to a CDC National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, the number of obese adults has doubled in the past 30 years. It has gone from 15 percent in the late 1970s to an estimated 31 percent today. This is frightening.

How many Americans can be defined as being overweight or obese?

Approximately 64 percent of Americans weigh far too much. This works out to be 129.6 million people. According to the 2001 Surgeon General's Call to Action on Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity, the direct and indirect costs of obesity to society at large, which takes into account lost productivity at work and medical costs was estimated at a national level to be \$117 billion in the year 2000.

What can you do? Read on for the weight loss myths that can sabotage your efforts.

1. Cutting down tremendously on calories means that the pounds will drop off quicker.

This is not the case! If you consume too few calories you will actually send your body into a tailspin that can contribute to weight gain as opposed to weight loss. You will end up in a mode of starvation.

If a message is sent to your brain that you do not have enough to eat and are starving, this will cause your metabolism to slow down a great deal. This does not facilitate weight loss at all.

According to weight loss experts, diets that are as low as 800 to 1,000 calories per day are dangerous, unhealthy and will lead to weight loss failure. If your body thinks it is suffering from a famine, then it immediately kicks into gear to protect you and will not make it easy to get rid of excess weight.

If you starve yourself then you can experience plenty of unfavorable side effects such as lightheadedness, nausea and problems concentrating. As well, eventually you will have to give your body what it needs and it is likely that you will end up overeating to compensate for starving it before. Don't do this to yourself!

2. Being strict and depriving myself of foods is good.

If you choose a strict diet that severely limits the foods you eat, such as eliminating one or more food groups or mainly eating only one or two foods, this will bore you and you will lose interest in the diet before too long. The body likes variety and so do your taste buds. This is also unhealthy as your body needs a number of different vitamins, minerals and nutrients and it can only get these from a variety of food choices.

Don't limit yourself to the point of ridiculousness. This is not an effective means of losing weight and it will not work.

Allow yourself to have dessert occasionally if it is what you desire. Just make sure you have a small piece of pie or cake or one scoop of ice cream, not two. Deprivation will get you nowhere.

3. Say goodbye to all foods that are not deemed as healthy.

This myth is an extension of number two. If you stop eating EVERY unhealthy food that you enjoy, you will be able to shed pounds easier and quicker. This is untrue. You will still remain motivated and on track if you allow yourself to eat an unhealthy favorite food once in awhile.

Moderation is the key to losing weight and to keeping it off in the long term. If you enjoy pizza or a burger from McDonald's then partake of these pleasures now and again and don't allow yourself to feel guilty. You are less likely to fall off the horse so to speak or to binge if you give yourself permission to enjoy "fun foods" when the mood strikes.

4. Eating foods late at night is more likely to pack on the pounds.

This is a common myth that is believed by many. The truth is that if you consume more calories on a daily basis than your body requires, the excess will be stored as fat. The opposite is also the case -- if you take in fewer calories than you burn then you will shed pounds. For this reason, the time of day you eat does not really matter so much as how much you eat and how much you burn off through physical activity.

According to health experts, you should never go to bed hungry, as this will prevent you from having a sound sleep. You are fasting while you sleep after all. That is what breakfast the following morning- break the fast- is all about. Eating something small and light, such as a few crackers and some cheese can actually contribute to a more restful night's sleep.

5. Eating between meals is a dieting no-no.

It is healthier to eat six or seven small meals and/or snacks throughout the course of a day than to eat three meals and nothing else. If you choose a small healthy snack between meals it can actually do you good. The snack will contribute to strong metabolism and it will keep your blood sugar at a stable level. Snacking between meals in a healthy manner also acts as a way to discourage you from overeating at your next meal.

To feel fuller for a lengthier span of time, choose fiber-rich foods such as bran muffins, oatmeal, whole-wheat toast, mixed raw vegetables and sourdough pretzels. If you are not getting enough fat in your diet this can mean your energy levels will be low. To pump it up higher, snack on nuts such as almonds which are an excellent source of protein.

Another healthy snack idea is to combine two snacks together. For example, smear some peanut butter on an apple. Keep in mind that the skin of the apple contains the largest percentage of fiber. Graham crackers and yogurt make for a very healthy snack as well.

Speaking of yogurt, this is a good dairy choice for those who are not so crazy about drinking milk. Yogurt will make you feel full and energized. Look for a brand that contains probiotics such as *L. acidophilus* which is a live bacterial culture that is instrumental in the maintenance of a healthy digestive tract.

6. All fat is bad for my health and for my weight loss efforts.

Fat gets a bad rap and it is bad- up to a certain point. Fat is also good and necessary for the human body. Everyone needs fat in his or her daily diet.

There are certain fats that are good for the body such as monounsaturated fat and polyunsaturated fat. The former is a healthy fat that provides protection against such things as heart disease and a variety of cancers. Monounsaturated fat is found in such things as olive oil, avocados, nuts, olives, nut butters and canola oil. Olive oil is also instrumental in lowering cholesterol. Polyunsaturated fat is necessary for the growth of body cells and it also provides the fatty acids that are needed for the health of the skin.

Another much talked about healthy fat is omega-3 fatty acids, which are found in shellfish and other types of fish. There are three types of omega-3 fats and the body requires them all. These include ALA, DHA and EPA.

In particular DHA and EPA are very important for the healthy functioning of the heart. They reduce inflammation in the arteries; help to lower blood pressure by a small amount; decrease the level of triglycerides in the blood; play a role in keeping the walls of the arteries as relaxed as possible; and help to make the composition of the blood less sticky, thereby reducing the chance that a blood clot could take place.

Other potential benefits of consuming an adequate supply of omega-3 fats:

- May decrease the risk of breast cancer, prostate cancer and colon cancer

- Can be useful in the treatment of Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, rheumatoid arthritis

- Preliminary research studies point to the role this healthy fat plays in treating depression.

To increase your intake of omega-3 fatty acids include more fish in your diet, as well as ground flaxseed and walnuts. One healthy way to add more fat into your diet without packing on pounds is to add a selection of nuts to your salads and to sprinkle ground flaxseed on your yogurt. It is also wise to sauté vegetables in olive oil as opposed to vegetable oil.

7. Skipping meals, especially breakfast, will help me in my fight to drop pounds.

Skipping meals can actually contribute to packing on more pounds! This is not what you want at all! When you go without eating a meal, your level of metabolism drops and you become very hungry as a result of not eating. When you eat again you will be inclined to eat too much. You will also not meet the daily calorie requirement that is essential for your good health (refer back to myth number one).

Breakfast is the worst meal of the day to skip. Your body has fasted for many hours and upon rising it needs to be refueled. Just as a car cannot run without gas, your body cannot run without necessary fuel. Fuel for the body comes from the foods we eat.

People who eat a healthy breakfast are less likely to overeat later in the day. It is easier to lose weight, and to maintain a healthy weight if you start every day with a healthy breakfast.

The fuel that we need for our bodies to function properly comes from glucose. Glucose is a simple form of sugar that provides the body's primary source of fuel. The brain and the central nervous system require glucose to do any type of activity. If you do not give your body the glucose it requires through the foods you consume then it will be forced to use stored carbohydrates as an alternative fuel source.

What makes for a healthy breakfast?

To start your day off right, aim for one serving of protein (which can be found in eggs, milk, cheese, yogurt and peanut butter), two servings of fruit (which helps to give you the recommended daily requirement of vitamins and minerals and helps to prevent constipation) and three servings of grain.

Oatmeal is a bulk dense food that is excellent for people who are trying to lose weight. Oatmeal slows down the digestive process and makes it possible for an individual to feel satiated for a longer span of time. It is also important that you get plenty of fiber at breakfast time as fiber helps keep the digestive process running smoothly.

A nutritious breakfast does not have to be complicated to be healthy. One suggestion that is simple and nutritious is two slices of whole grain bread with a tablespoon of peanut butter and a glass of orange juice. Another excellent meal for breakfast is a bowl of oatmeal or a high fiber cereal, a banana and a glass of low fat or skim milk.

8. Dairy products should be taken out of my diet completely.

Dairy products are a necessary part of every person's diet and should never be eliminated completely, even if you are trying to lose weight. Instead of eliminating this important food group choose low fat and non-fat kinds of dairy products. This is especially the case for women who require the calcium that is found in rich supply in dairy products.

Research has now revealed the fact that getting enough calcium through the foods you eat and the beverages you consume can actually encourage the shedding of pounds. Drink up!

9. Willpower is the most important weapon in the fight to loss weight.

It is a commonly held belief that when it comes to losing weight and resisting the temptation to eat everything in sight that it is simply a matter of willpower. While willpower and a sense of self control, as well as discipline do play a role in whether or not we are able to loss weight or not, there are plenty of other factors at work as well.

What we weigh is based on a variety of factors, such as genetics, the culture we live in, our home and work environments, our lifestyle choices, our medical history, our attitude towards food and the condition of our health, including any health problems we have. If you leave everything up to your willpower then you are likely to fail at the weight loss game.

The good news in all of this is that eating a nutritious diet on a consistent basis and regular exercise can help a person to overcome the factors that may lean towards the negative side of the spectrum.

10. The consumption of plenty of water on a daily basis will help me lose pounds easily and quickly.

The human body needs water on a regular basis to survive. It needs a lot of it to replenish the amount that is lost daily. However drinking water in and of itself will not lead to fast and effective weight loss. Approximately 60 percent of a person's weight is composed of water and muscles are made up of 75 percent water.

If a person is attempting to lose pounds it is smart to start drinking more water. If the person then experiences weight loss the likely reason is because they have stopped drinking sodas and juices that are high in calories and have instead started to drink "Mother Nature's healthy cocktail."

Water is very beneficial to the body in many ways. It should be the drink you consume more than any other. Water consumption is excellent for the digestive system and for chronic fatigue, depression and allergies. Drinking plenty of water suppresses the appetite and it improves muscle tone. It also helps the kidneys and bowels to function more properly. Constipation and diarrhea are less of a problem when an individual drinks plenty of H₂O.

You should aim for six to eight glasses of water per day. You cannot drink too much water, as water is healthy for you no matter how you look at it. Contrary to popular belief, drinking enough water helps to prevent the body from retaining water.

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