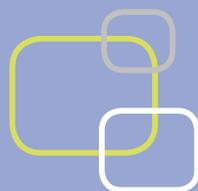


weight loss
advice &
recommendations



RoodlaneMedical

Losing Weight

Some people are naturally thin and can eat more than others without storing fat. Others gain weight easily even when doing large amounts of exercise. There is some credence in the belief held by some people that they have a “slow metabolism”. This is partly genetic and fixed and partly down to factors which you can control.

If you have been given this leaflet because you are struggling to keep weight off then you are probably what is called an endomorph – this refers to your body type:

ENDOMORPH CHARACTERISTICS

- Often overweight with high levels of body fat (> 20% men, 30% women)
- Wide waist and hips with waist predominating over chest
- Tendency to store excess calories as fat (can't get away with overeating)
- Sensitive to carbohydrates (carbs are easily stored as fat)
- Respond better to diets with higher protein and low (or moderate) carbs
- Naturally slow metabolic rate (fewer calories burned at rest)
- A lot of cardio is necessary to lose weight and body fat
- Extremely difficult to lose weight
- Often describe themselves as having a “slow metabolism”
- Tendency to gain fat easily as soon as exercise is stopped
- Respond best to frequent, even daily, exercise

ENDOMORPH DIET AND EXERCISE APPROACH

In order to achieve any health gain like giving up smoking or losing weight you need to shift from the “wishing phase” of simply hoping that something will happen without taking any steps to achieve it to the “really need to do phase” and finally the “doing phase”. The “really need to do phase” might come about because your weight is:

- Pushing your blood pressure up
- Putting you at risk of diabetes
- Giving you a bad back or sore knees
- Making you feel sluggish and low in energy
- Making you feel bad about yourself
- Causing problems with wheezing, shortness of breath / snoring etc

HOW TO LOSE WEIGHT – THE “DOING PHASE”

If you are an endomorph then losing weight will be difficult and will require dietary and exercise changes. Your aim should be to achieve a healthy body fat level as guided by your doctor or other professional. It may be unrealistic for some people to achieve a normal BMI (Body Mass Index). The benefits should be tangible to you and you should agree targets with your doctor e.g. 10 lb weight loss over the next 6 months. If you simply have a target of “losing weight” then you will lack focus and will probably fail. If you always put off doing anything at all because you see the challenge as too great or don’t know where to begin then read on.

DIET:

You will need some degree of carbohydrate restriction with higher protein levels to compensate for this. You should not cut out carbohydrates completely and “no carb” diets are NOT recommended. The basis of a healthy diet would be:

- Unrefined (whole grain) carbohydrates e.g. breads, cereals, pasta and starchy vegetables
- Six daily servings of vegetables / salad (1 serving = 1/2 cup cooked or 1 cup raw)
- Three daily servings of fruit (serving = 1 medium piece, 1/2 cup juice)
- Three daily servings of fat-free or low fat dairy
- Five ounces of lean meat, fish or poultry without skin (1 serving). Red meat less than three times weekly. Fish at least twice weekly. 1 serving is about the size of a deck of playing cards!
- Alternative protein sources could be pulses, tofu and soya-based products
- Olive oil for cooking and trans fat-free margarines (better brands are labelled for this). Ideally use a rapeseed or olive oil based margarine such as Olivio, Benecol etc
- Alcohol is equivalent to a “simple carb” and is high calorie. A pint of beer is about 200 calories or more and a glass of wine about 120 calories. Alcohol also makes the blood sugar fall the next day and makes you crave carbohydrate and sugar. Limiting alcohol is critical to any individual trying to lose weight!

If you would like further information regarding diet then you could discuss this with your doctor, consult a dietician or read one of the plethora of “low carb” diets available such as the “South Beach Diet” and the “GI Diet”. You do not need to follow these but just become familiar with the concept of avoiding sugars and processed carbohydrates in your diet. These will make you fat because they provoke the release of large amounts of a hormone called insulin into the blood when you eat them. Insulin allows you to use food for energy but also causes it to be stored as fat. The fatter you get the more insulin you produce in response to a given amount of food and so the cycle continues.

EXERCISE:

- Exercise burns calories.
- Exercise releases hormones into the blood stream designed to turn fat into energy (lipoprotein lipase).
- Exercise increases the metabolic rate so that you burn more calories even when resting.
- Exercise builds muscle and muscle is more metabolically active than fat so you burn more calories at rest.

The best way to burn up fat is to use large muscle groups in repetitive aerobic exercise. This means using the legs and back by running, cycling, cross training, swimming or brisk walking for example. Dancing may also count but golf probably doesn't although it is better than nothing.

For most people who have not exercised for a while or who may be unfit or overweight, then low impact exercise such as swimming or cross training will be safest.

Resistance exercise (weights) is an excellent way to lose weight. This would entail using small weights. The object is not to "bulk up" but to tone up.

Doing some resistance training will help you to preserve muscle mass if you are restricting calories (the body uses muscle for energy as well as fat).

WHEN TO EAT:

This is a crucial aspect to weight loss. If you skip breakfast and maybe don't eat between dinner and lunch next day, then you are starving the body for up to 18 hours. The effect of this is to produce less of the hormones which help the body to use fat for energy and to slow down fat use. Muscle will also be used for energy in this situation. When food does finally arrive the body produces a massive surge of insulin. At the same time, because the body is in starvation mode, there is a tendency to over eat. The result is that excess calories are stored as fat. Put simply "skipping meals makes you fat." If you want to lose weight and only eat once or twice a day then you are very unlikely to succeed unless you are very strict at calorie controlling. Even then, you will tend to drive your metabolic rate down over time if you diet for long periods. This means that when you go back to eating more normally or if you over indulge, you will tend to gain weight even more easily.

In order to speed up your metabolism you need to eat regularly – a minimum of four times per day and ideally six times per day – i.e. you should eat something every three hours or so. This comes as a surprise to many people who pride themselves on only having one meal a day (although they still get fatter year on year!). So, as well as having three main meals per day you should also try and have three snacks per day. This will mean that your main meals will be smaller.

Ideally:

Breakfast should be a substantial meal with whole grain breads / cereals / lean meats or fish / fruit. Lunch should be bigger than dinner and dinner should not then be a “blow out” when you are starving at the end of the day.

You should try and have a mid morning snack and a mid afternoon snack and even another snack in the evening if dinner is very late.

Snacks might include:

Piece of fruit

Small pot of cottage cheese (150g)

Low fat yoghurt

Unsalted nuts such as almonds or walnuts (handful)

SNACKS SHOULD NOT INCLUDE:

Chocolate bars – if you want chocolate then eat it after a meal when it will be absorbed slower and have less of an effect on your insulin levels.

Crisps – high salt, high fat and “empty calories” i.e. they have no nutritional value! Save them for the occasional blow out.

Too much fruit. Some fruit is good – even more may not be. Fruit contains fruit sugar and fruit juice is very high in sugar. Limit or avoid fruit juices – maybe water them down. Choose apples and bananas as snacks and have sweeter fruits after a meal as a dessert.

Cakes/biscuits etc – again avoid when you are hungry and maybe have after a meal if you are desperate to indulge.

SOME TIPS TO TRY:

Drink water before and with a meal. It will help you eat less. Sometimes when you feel hungry you are in fact thirsty.

When eating out try to avoid the bread basket when you arrive at the table starving. Bread, especially white bread, will push up insulin and make you hungrier so that you over eat. Unsalted nuts, olives and crudités are better.

If you eat out a lot then try and go for fish and low fat options some of the time.

If you like the occasional white chocolate mocha with whip on the top then you should see this as food – a large cup contains up to 650 calories with nearly 30g of fat. This is a meal in itself! See shop bought coffees as part of your daily food intake. Ask for semi-skimmed and you will halve the fat and the calories. A typical large latte contains 350 calories (200 if skimmed milk) and a cappuccino 200 calories (130 with skimmed milk). Skimmed or “skinny” versions are almost fat free. Milk is an excellent source of calcium and protein so keep drinking it – just try and skip the fat. Also try and pass on the muffins and cakes when you have a coffee.

If you are “too busy to exercise” then try burning extra calories in the normal course of your day. Leave early to get to a meeting. If you are going to another building, walk and skip the cab occasionally. If you are meeting someone in-house then leave 10 minutes early and take the stairs. Give yourself 5 minutes to get your breath back at the other end if you are very unfit and worried about arriving out of breath!

FINALLY:

You can get fitter and lose weight without having to revolutionise your lifestyle. Even the smallest changes will pay dividends. If you feel motivated to change your diet or start exercising then please ask your regular GP (NHS or Roodlane) for their advice if you are not sure about the health implications of this.

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