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THE VERY BEST WAY TO LOSE WEIGHT AND KEEP IT OFF

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The Very Best Way To Lose Weight And Keep It Off

Introduction

A positive attitude is very important for successful weight loss and weight management. To lose weight permanently, you must make a commitment to gradually adopt a healthier way of life.

You can control your weight. To lose weight, you must eat fewer calories or burn up more calories than you need. The best way to lose weight is to do both.

Following a very low-calorie diet can leave you feeling deprived and can increase the temptation to binge. Often, very low-calorie diets make you lose muscle instead of fat. You are then left with a body that jiggles instead of one that is smooth and toned. Exercise helps you keep the muscles and lose the fat.

Very low-calorie diets also lack many important nutrients, putting you at risk of becoming malnourished. Most importantly, research shows that people who follow these diets usually gain all their weight back. People who lose weight slowly by eating less and exercising more tend to keep the weight off.

Determine your BMI

There are several ways of measuring your ideal body weight. One of the most popular methods to gauge whether or not you are overweight is the body mass index (BMI). The BMI uses a mathematical formula that measures both a person's height and weight in determining obesity. To calculate your BMI, divide your weight in kilograms by the square of your height in meters.

$$(\text{Weight in kilograms}) / (\text{Square height in meters}) = \text{BMI (kg/m}^2\text{)}$$

For example, a 133kg person at 1.55 would have a BMI of 55.4. People with BMIs of 25 and above are considered to be overweight. Having a

body mass index over 30 places you at risk for developing obesity-related medical conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and coronary artery disease. A BMI over 40 indicates that a person is morbidly obese.

How many calories do I need?

Everyone's energy needs are different, but there are ways to estimate how many calories you need. One easy method is based on your activity level. Decide whether your activity level is low, moderate or high. Pick one of these definitions:

- **Low:** You don't participate in any regular physical activity, or you are involved in recreational activity only on the weekends.
- **Moderate:** Your physical fitness program includes aerobic activity for 30 to 60 minutes at least three times a week.
- **High:** You exercise vigorously for 60 minutes or more at least four times a week.

Next, find your activity factors by using the chart below. Look for the number where your activity level matches your weight status. Multiply this activity factor by your weight to estimate how many calories are needed to maintain your current weight.

BMI Definitions of Weight	Low Activity	Moderate Activity	High Activity
Underweight (< 18.5)	35.2	35 kcal/kg	40 kcal/kg
Normal weight (18.5-24.9)	30.8	30 kcal/kg	35 kcal/kg
Overweight (25-29.9)	24.2	24 kcal/kg	30 kcal/kg

Adapted from Esvelt B and DeHoog S: Clinical Nutrition, Volume I. Enteral and Tube Feeding. W.B. Saunders, 1984.

To lose weight: Subtract 250 calories to lose 0.22 kilograms per week. Subtract 500 calories to lose 0.45 kilogram per week.

Making every calorie count

The USDA's MyPlate resource is an excellent tool for making sure you are meeting your nutritional needs while trying to lose weight. With the proper balance of foods, you can lose weight and improve nutrition. For an online resource, go to www.choosemyplate.gov.

Keeping track

One way to ensure that you are eating healthy is to keep an accurate food journal. Write down everything you eat and drink, including serving sizes/portions. Be honest and accurate, otherwise the journal is not helpful. Keeping a record will help you learn about your eating habits and help you assess the food choices you make.

Putting it all together

In addition to changing your diet, mildly restricting calories and keeping track of what you eat, it is very important to include exercise as part of your weight loss and weight maintenance efforts. Discuss with your physician what the best type of exercise is for you, but make a point to exercise.

Some things learned to date

- Those who have achieved successful weight loss report making substantial changes in eating and exercise habits in order to lose weight and maintain their losses. On average, registrants report consuming about 1400 kcal/day (24% calories from fat) and burning about 400 kcal/day through physical exercise. Walking is the most frequently cited physical activity.
- The average registrant has lost about 27 kilograms and kept it off for about 5 years.
- Two-thirds of these successful weight losers were overweight as children, and 60 percent report a family history of obesity.
- About 50 percent of participants lost weight on their own without any type of formal program or help.
- Successful weight losers appear similar to normal weight individuals in terms of resting metabolic rate.

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