

KEY COMPONENTS TO WEIGHT LOSS SUCCESS

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The holiday season is quickly approaching and this means festivities and gatherings along with talk about “New Years Resolutions”. My safe guess is that “weight loss” is a health conscious resolution that will be a priority on many individual lists. As a health practitioner dealing with structural care, rehabilitation and movement, I understand the practical importance of maintaining a healthy body weight.



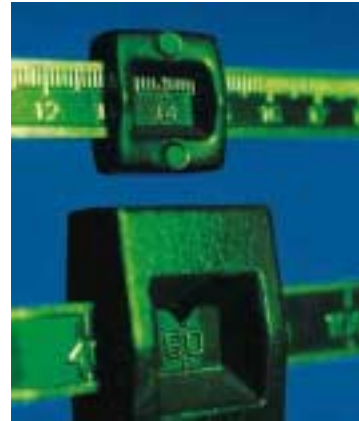
A healthy body weight puts less stress on the muscles, joints and biological systems of the body. It also provides an individual with increased self-esteem, confidence, energy, and everyday productivity. This article helps identify key components that can be implemented for safe and effective weight loss.

1. EXERCISE: Regular physical exercise is essential to maintaining a healthy body weight. Exercise burns calories and increases our Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR) or metabolism. Our BMR represents the energy used by the body at rest to maintain normal body functions. For individuals who do not exercise regularly, this means less calories being used for daily metabolic function. Calories that were previously necessary to perform the activities of daily living now end up stored as fat. Exercise will help increase BMR, improve body composition, reduce body fat and increase caloric expenditure during activity and at rest. Current guidelines recommend 30 to 45 minutes of exercise, 3 to 5 times per week. For weight loss, cardiovascular and strength training are vital. For those currently exercising who have reached a plateau with their weight loss results, it is recommended that changing your workout routine such as the specific type of exercise or the number of sets and repetitions performed may help stimulate the body to lose more weight.

2. DIET: The nutrients you put into your body have a profound impact on the way you look. To lose weight, you must consume fewer calories than you burn. There are approximately 3,500 calories in a pound, and the average individual should be consuming 1,400 to 2,000 calories per day. Extra calories in your diet will contribute to an increase in weight. The goal is to eat a diet that gives you the most nutritional value in the lowest amount of calories. Such a diet should include a balance of complex carbohydrates, proteins, and healthy fats. Individuals looking to lose weight should avoid refined sugars and starches, along with trans-fats. Refined sugars and starches adversely disrupt blood sugar and put your body into fat storage mode, while trans-fats pack many unnecessary calories. Identify unnecessary calories in your diet that can be eliminated. For example, you would be able to cut 400 calories from your diet by eliminating 3 cookies, 20 chips, and one can of soda per day. Excess alcohol intake can also contribute to increased weight. If you drink two

glasses of beer or wine per day, you consume approximately 1,400 calories per week or 73,000 a year – enough to add 20 pounds of excess weight!

3. WHEN TO EAT, HOW AND HOW MUCH: Nutritional studies demonstrate that breakfast skippers actually have more difficulty controlling their weight because they overeat at the next meal. Eating breakfast stimulates your metabolism and replenishes your body's fuel source. As a general rule of thumb, the amount of calories you consume should gradually taper off as the day goes on. In addition, eating 4 to 6 smaller meals throughout the day has been shown to be much more effective in stimulating metabolism and weight loss than consuming 2 to 3 larger meals throughout the day. All meals should be eaten slowly, chewing food completely before swallowing. Those who eat too quickly don't allow enough time for the stomach to alert the brain that it is full. As a result, over-eating can occur and extra calories are consumed. Controlling portion size is absolutely crucial to weight loss. For those who eat healthy, sometimes the only problem with their diet is that they are eating enough to feed a family of four in one sitting! Be careful not to slash too many calories from your diet as this can cause your body to conserve calories rather than burn them.



4. WATER INTAKE: Drinking one to two litres of water daily is essential. It helps flush the body of toxic byproducts that are released when fat is burned. Water also regulates metabolism by assisting with lubrication, digestion, and transportation of nutrients. Sipping water during meals also forces one to slow down eating which helps prevent excessive calorie intake. Water will control appetite and also contains zero calories.

5. SLEEP & REST: Research suggests that people who do not sleep for six to eight hours per night are more prone to weight gain. Sleep deprivation increases glucose and insulin levels in the blood, which promotes fat storage. Lean muscle tissue is regenerated in the final couple of hours of sleep each night, which helps increase metabolism. Regular restful sleep allows for important biological systems to recover and recharge. It also allows for us to deal with physical and emotional stress. The human stress response activates the release of cortisol, a steroid that slows metabolism and is linked to weight gain.

For additional information please visit www.nhwc.ca. From all of us at the New Hamburg Wellness Centre, good luck and seasons greetings!

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