

KEYS TO FITNESS SUCCESS

**How to incorporate
exercise and fitness into
your weight loss strategy**

INTRODUCTION

No matter what type of weight loss program or strategy you choose, a vital component of your ongoing success will involve fitness and exercise. Exercise is important for overall health, and you can make the most of your weight loss by challenging your body through a combination of weight training and cardiovascular exercise.

Many people make the mistake of overlooking the benefits of exercise and fitness. Having success with your long-term weight loss goals can include an element of fitness and exercise to keep you on track. Remember that the more muscle and strength you have, the higher the chances that you will keep the weight off.

You'll need to develop a muscle-building program and healthy fitness program, along with regular intervals of cardiovascular exercise to enhance your weight loss strategy. In order to do this, you'll need to make sure that you're:

- Watching your calories and focusing on healthy proteins to stay lean and build muscle mass
- Taking part in at least 3-4 cardio sessions each week, in combination with weight training
- Eating power meals on a regular schedule for increased energy and healthy weight gain
- Eating natural foods and fats that can help produce the body's natural hormones—these can promote fat loss and improve muscle gains
- Eat enough protein and fiber
- Adding muscle to your frame can help you look healthy
- Increasing bone mass with weight training

Men and women both gain weight differently. The type of exercises, lifestyle, and nutrition program you can stick to in the long term will lead the way to your fitness goals and success.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR METABOLISM

Your metabolism regulates how and when your body burns calories, and understanding how the process works will help you create the best fitness and weight loss program that suits your needs. Your metabolism is the rate that your body burns calories, and increasing your basal metabolic rate (BMR) is essential to burning fat in the long-term. Your basal metabolic rate is the amount of calories you are burning at rest and you can improve this over time when you have more muscle on your body, and your physical fitness improves.

Your metabolic rate can vary depending on the type of activities you are engaging in, and will also vary at different times of the day. Your metabolism is responsible for the following:

- Creates new cells and tissues when needed
- Performs all basic bodily functions
- Manages your blood sugar levels
- Manage thyroid hormones
- Maintains the body's natural temperature
- Repairs injuries and tissue damage

Increasing your metabolism through fitness and exercise is an easy process, and it's a vital component of losing weight in the long term. If your caloric intake is too low, your metabolism will shift to a lower level. It will become harder to lose weight, and this is why a restricted diet is not recommended for long-term weight loss. Exercise can help you boost your natural metabolism, and will also leave you in a better mood.

Understanding your metabolism involves a few key factors: this will include your age, sex, height, family history, and overall eating habits and patterns.

- **Age :** your body naturally slows down and loses muscle mass after the age of 20. You can expect a 2% loss each decade, so it does get more difficult to increase your basal rate over the years.
- **Sex:** men naturally have higher levels of lean body mass, and so women will burn fewer calories over time.

- **Height:** If you're tall, you naturally have a higher metabolic rate and will need more calories than people of average height
- **Genetic history:** A family history of low metabolism will play a role in your own metabolic makeup; genetics are a key factor in overall body composition, and you may need to adjust your lifestyle accordingly
- **Eating habits** are a very strong factor in your overall metabolic rate; if your caloric intake is too low, you'll find yourself with a slower metabolism.

When you're looking for ways to boost your metabolism naturally, you'll need to take part in regular exercise and create lean muscle mass with weight training, resistance exercise, and plenty of cardiovascular activities to increase or maintain your body's circulation processes. Thyroid problems are a common problem for many women, so it's also important that you have a thyroid examination to ensure that it is not affecting your weight or general health.

WHY WEIGHT TRAINING IS IMPORTANT

A restricted diet will help you reach your weight loss goals, but you won't be able to do this in the long-term. As you develop and adapt your diet when the weight comes off, you'll need to balance it with effective workout routine and regimen. Too much weight loss will be detrimental to your health. You'll end up with limited energy to endure heavier workouts and you'll start to suffer from overtraining and fatigue.

This is why a variety in your diet is so important; you'll need just enough energy to increase your metabolism and burn fat, but then adapt to your body's needs as the weight comes off.

When you're trying to reduce fat overall, adding weight training will help boost our metabolism naturally. The body adapts to cardio programs relatively quickly, and you can start to lose effectiveness in as little as two to three weeks. You can increase stamina and endurance over short period of time, especially if you're doing squats, lunges, and other weight bearing resistance exercises.

Intensive weight training can elevate your metabolism for almost 48 hours after your workout. This means that you need to eat properly after working out intensively, but also arrange your schedule so you're not heading into overtraining mode. Just remember; for each pound of muscle that you add

to your body, you'll burn an extra 35-50 calories per day—even when you're lounging on the couch. Staying lean is easy when you have enough muscle in the body that's helping you burn calories around the clock.

Drinking water on a regular basis can help you remove toxins and help your muscles perform to the best of their ability. 70% of muscle is made of water, and you'll need as much as possible to get that strong, lean look. When you have enough water in your system, your body will naturally start losing weight as it readjusts and flushes out any extra materials you no longer need.

Training your abdominal muscles can help you achieve overall muscle strength, flexibility, and build up your body's 'core' easily. Your ab workouts can be included as part of a cardio routine, but you'll need to make sure they are challenging enough to be effective. High intensity cardiovascular exercises such as sprinting, jogging, or running, followed by an ab routine will help you get in shape fast.

When you're looking for a complete bodybuilding and weight gaining program, getting rid of excess fat is an important part of the process. Without removing that layer of fat, you won't be able to see your hard work from the growing muscles underneath. Eating between 5 and 6 healthy 'meals' per day will help keep your energy levels up. You'll also need to drink plenty of fresh water and healthy protein in your menus; intensive weight training over the long-term can help you reach your fitness goals with much success.

Success in gaining muscle and losing fat at the same time is simple, but you will need to plan ahead to make sure you are making the most of each workout. Without the right plan, you'll be less likely to stick with it on an ongoing basis. You'll need to outline your intensity level, stamina, and gauge your endurance. As you get stronger, it's important that you adjust your workout accordingly so that you're maximizing the calories you burn at every single workout.

EXERCISE TO HELP YOU BUILD MUSCLE—AND DECREASE FAT

Don't make the mistake of avoiding resistance exercises and weight training because you're afraid of bulking up. Remember that the more muscle you have, the easier it will be to stay lean and burn calories on an ongoing basis. When you know what exercises to do, you'll be able to plan ahead and make the most of your weight loss program in the process. Gaining healthy

muscles can help you look leaner and become stronger. It's an essential part of fitness success.

You can add strength training to your weekly routine, and increase your metabolism with ease. Extra fat and weight will come off naturally with increased muscle mass. Keep in mind that muscle does weigh more than fat, and you'll probably see a shift in the scale. Still, muscle tissue burns fat with minimal effort on your part; adopting a high protein diet can help you maximize your muscle gains over a short period of time. You'll be less likely to store fat in the long-term, and also more likely to enjoy exercising with a new look.

Strength training can also affect bone mass. You'll need to schedule your meals around your exercise program so that your body is absorbing vital nutrients and calories that can help provide the building blocks for growth. Getting fit is an ongoing process, and you'll need to make the most of the nutritional aspects as well. When you are training for strength and flexibility, it's even more important that you stay consistent you're your food intake.

Cardiovascular exercise will improve your circulation and respiratory system, and can give you many aerobic and conditioning benefits as well. There are plenty of activities to choose from: tennis, jogging, water aerobics or even cardio kickboxing, can help you jumpstart your metabolism and burn calories at a higher rate.

There are many benefits of weight training, in conjunction with cardiovascular and aerobic exercise. Regular exercise can build muscle in the following ways:

- Improving muscle tone
- Increasing muscle strength, flexibility, and power
- Improving stamina
- Preventing damage to joints
- Increasing range of motion in joints and muscle groups

Making sure you drink plenty of water during the session is important for keeping your muscles revitalized and strong; you'll also avoid muscle cramping and other health-related problems as you continue to workout. The post-workout meal is especially important for long-term fitness, since this is the prime time that your body is absorbing calories. This is where meal planning is especially important—make sure you are including plenty of protein and heart-friendly carbohydrates during this meal so that your body and muscles can recover easily.

WEIGHT TRAINING BASICS

Understanding the basics of weight training can help you create the best fitness strategy in the long-term. As you begin your weight training or resistance program, you'll want to keep the following items in mind:

1. Outline the number of days and intervals you can workout
2. Maintain consistency and a regular schedule
3. Train a minimum of three days per week
4. Avoid overtraining, especially in the first few weeks
5. Enjoy your success and progress.

PLANNING YOUR WORKOUT SCHEDULE

Whether you choose to workout at the gym, in the comfort of your own home, or with a personal trainer, managing a consistent schedule will help you achieve results and avoid major pitfalls. Your workout schedule is an essential component of your ideal plan. It's important that you adopt a workout schedule that fits your lifestyle, abilities, and needs. It doesn't make sense to set yourself up for failure by doing workouts that you're not good at, or simply cannot learn.

Setting goals will be a part of your successful fitness strategy. Goal setting is a skill, and you won't accomplish anything overnight. By tracking your progress and maintaining perspective on even your smallest successes, you can build your self-confidence and continue on your journey. You'll build confidence naturally when you learn about your physical strengths and your limitations.

You'll need to be realistic about your current fitness level and how you plan to accomplish each goal. Learning about when the best times for working out are will help you stick with your program in the long term. As long as you can create a fitness schedule around your current lifestyle, you'll have a higher chance of making the commitment work for you in the long run.

Working out with a personal trainer or exercise professional can benefit you in many ways. Not only will you have access to expert advice, but you can

learn more about techniques and good form from a personal instruction. Your local gym or fitness center can pair you up with a personal trainer to help you map out your goals, and learn how to use the equipment, machines, or enlist in classes.

A rotating workout schedule is another important aspect of creating a fitness plan that works for you. If you're not getting enough rest between each exercise session, you could be on the road to overtraining or burnout. As long as you're rotating the types of workouts that you take part in, you'll challenge your muscles and body just enough to burn the most calories.

As you develop your workout schedule, here are a few additional tips:

- Work out with a friend to stay motivated
- Choose a time of day that fits in your regular schedule
- Make sure you are including time to eat and rest after the workout
- Choose a circuit training or cross-training exercise routine for maximum benefits
- Avoid boredom by rotating your days on each machine or type of equipment
- Avoid burnout by getting plenty of rest and adequate nutrition
- Work with a personal trainer when you're unsure about equipment or how to use specific machines

GOAL SETTING AND MOTIVATION

Apart from nutrition and exercise, goal setting and staying self-motivated is an important component of your training program. Goal setting is a skill, and it will take some time to develop the habit to make it work for you. Your success will involve a high level of consistency and self-discipline. You may need to change your lifestyle completely, but slow and progressive change will be your best asset. You will need to commit some time into developing a plan that works for you; this can be difficult at first, but over time, it will become a habit.

Making goals that actually work for you and your lifestyle is so important, that you cannot overlook the benefits. Educating yourself on nutrition and

fitness is part of the process, and you'll better be able to manage other areas of your life as a result.

The key components of goal setting include:

- Committing to the follow through mindset
- Having a reason to motivate yourself
- Having a vision and purpose
- Learning how to hold yourself accountable
- Following your inspiration

A lack of motivation can be a result of many factors. This may include low self-esteem, inability to set clear and specific goals, and simply a lack of vision and purpose. Without these key components, your fitness ventures can become monotonous and ineffective. If you don't know how to create a 'personal mission statement,' it will be difficult to stay on track.

Goal setting and self motivation will become a natural way of thinking for you once you practice. When you can accurately define and clarify your goals, you are on the road to achieving personal power. This is important for your focus on fitness, since it requires a tremendous amount of self discipline and a positive attitude to lead you to success. Nothing can stop you from reaching your goals when you have a commitment to your purpose.

Holding yourself accountable can be challenging at first, but is essential for long-term results. You will increase your self-awareness, and will be much more likely to enjoy success in other goal setting strategies and ventures. When you can track and assess your individual performance, you are taking advantage of your personal power.

Effective goal setting involves being able to prioritize, visualize the end result, and also create a vision of how you expect to achieve these results. Being realistic about what you can do is a part of the process; the more consistent and accurate this is, the more likely that you will be able to realize your success. Doing this consistently will soon make fitness a habit in your lifestyle; your commitment will show as your body becomes leaner, stronger, healthier and more fit.

THE NUTRITIONAL COMPONENT: WHY IT'S SO IMPORTANT

Weight loss success is a balance of nutrition diet, and exercise. When nutrition and diet are a high priority, you'll need to spend a considerable amount of time planning your weekly activities around your meal plans. When you first start out, it's important that you understand how nutrition plays a significant role. Your meals are essentially the raw materials to help you create energy; you'll need to maximize the sources of this energy by eating the right balance of protein, carbohydrates, and sugar. Working out intensively can help you burn off extra calories and increase stamina and endurance in the process.

In order for muscle growth to occur, you'll need to stay well hydrated and supplement your diet with amino acids and protein-building components.

The three macro nutrients involved with eating healthfully and getting enough nutrition include:

- **Protein:** meat and dairy products, soy-based products
- **Carbohydrates:** whole grains, rice, pasta, fruits, vegetables
- **Fat:** oils, butters, and other natural fatty acids

Proteins are made of amino acids that help repair and maintain muscle tissue; this is especially important as you increase the intensity of each weight bearing exercise and are looking to improve performance. If you don't have enough amino acids in your system, it will be very difficult for you to increase muscle mass.

Still, it's important to remember that too much protein in the diet can be harmful to your health. It may even lead to kidney stones and liver problems. A rich source of protein can be from whey protein supplements, egg whites, chicken and other lean meats, and even some soy products. Including these in your daily diet will help you build and repair muscles in the long-term.

Carbohydrates are the most important form of energy for your body on a daily basis. When you are trying to lose weight, you'll need to keep these levels under control so that you have just enough energy to complete your workouts, but not to much that it converts into fat. Carbohydrates readily turn into fat after they reach a certain level in the body; excessive consumption can lead to many health problems, and knowing how your body loses weight will involve incorporating the right amounts of carbohydrate in

your diet. If you're not consuming enough carbohydrates, you'll put your body into starvation mode where it may start to use muscle for energy.

Carbohydrates come in two forms: simple and complex carbohydrates. Simple carbohydrates are quickly absorbed in the body, and are the main components of juice, fruit, and simple table sugar. When you're trying to lose weight, you'll need to keep these minimal since they can interfere with your potential to lose weight. Complex carbohydrates can provide a steady source of energy, and will not spike your blood sugar levels the in same way that simple carbohydrates do. Ideal sources include brown rice, oatmeal, and some forms of wheat pasta. You can incorporate different types of complex carbohydrates in your weekly menu to provide variety, and count on a consistent source of energy that won't lead to weight gain.

Fats should not be removed completely from your diet, but you do need to know what types of fat will help your diet. Fats from fish and natural oils are recommended for a balanced diet, and they are available in both unsaturated and saturated forms. And you'll find them in both saturated and unsaturated forms. Healthy forms of unsaturated fats include olive oil, avocados, and some types of tuna, salmon, and other canned fish. These fats are commonly known as Essential Fatty Acids, and can help with skin health and protein growth.

Other important aspects of nutrition to consider include:

- Calories
- Meal scheduling
- Replacement meals
- Eating at specific intervals

FOODS THAT HELP BUILD MUSCLE

Adopting a diet that meets your needs is an important part of your weight loss strategy. If you're trying to build muscle, it's especially important that you include a high level of protein, fiber and healthy carbohydrates. Eating these meals at the right time will also ensure that you get enough from each meal to provide the necessary building blocks for muscle composition. Constipation and diarrhea may be a result of a quick increase in protein, but this will regulate by itself over time. A list of common foods to help you get started includes:

- Whole eggs
- Simple egg whites
- Baked beans

- Natural yogurt
- Chicken breasts
- Whey protein
- 2% or whole milk
- Soy milk
- Cottage cheese
- Tofu
- Flax seeds
- Peanuts and peanut butter
- Lentils, black beans, and pinto beans
- Soft cheeses
- Egg white substitutes
- Tuna
- Water-packed salmon
- Turkey and other lean meats
- Natural cheese
- Sunflower seeds

Eating these foods in combination with just the right amount of carbohydrates will help your body receive just enough fuel and protein in the long term. Making muscle tissue and enhancing your strength will be a natural result of your hard work. Knowing when to eat these foods will also maximize your weight loss and muscle gaining potential.

The peak times to eat these high protein sources include first thing in the morning, directly after your workout, and right before bedtime. These are the times when your body is most responsive to food and calories, and you will get the appropriate nourishment you need. Eating small portions will help your body digest them fast, and you won't suffer from excess calorie intake with a balanced meal plan.

CONCLUSION

Long-term weight loss involves the essentials of exercise, and you will have a higher chance of success when you plan ahead. Incorporating a fitness routine that you can stick with over a long period of time will help you stay motivated naturally. As your body starts improving, you'll feel healthier, stronger, and more energetic.