

5 Reasons You Are Not Losing Fat

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There are some rare genetic reasons for failure to lose body fat, but in most cases it is simple human error. Poor, or ill-informed, choices are often the cause. Choices about what, how, and when to eat are often the root cause of diet failures. We'll take a look at five of these choices and what you should be doing.

Reason 1: Eat More Often

Many dieters make the mistake of skipping meals, thinking they are reducing their calories and speeding up the fat loss process. In fact, this may be doing just the opposite. Instead, you should be eating five to six small meals spread throughout the day, which for many people is an increase in the total number of meals.

Increasing the number of meals may sound crazy, but it works on a few fronts. First, skipping a meal may reduce the calories that would have been consumed in that meal, but inevitably you end up consuming more in your remaining meals. You will be hungrier in the remaining meals and you will justify the extra helping by convincing yourself that it is still less than you would have consumed in the skipped meal.

To illustrate this, let's look at the traditional three-meal eating plan. Normally, you would eat breakfast, lunch, and supper. It comes time to lose a little body fat, so you decide to skip lunch. In the morning you plan out your day and decide that since you are not eating lunch you should have an extra bagel with cream cheese to get you through until supper. All in all not a bad choice, but it does add as much as 350 extra calories, depending on the size of the bagel and the type and amount of cream cheese. You work all day and come home for supper quite hungry because you skipped lunch. At supper that spaghetti was so good you decide that since you skipped lunch you could have an extra helping. This could add as much as 800 to 1000 extra calories. So, what started out as a plan to cut calories turns out to be no savings at all. The extra helpings could add as much as 1350 calories in the end. How many calories was lunch?

The other issue with skipping meals is a metabolic one. Your body has a set energy need to get through the day. All of the processes going on inside the body require energy. Any extra events require additional energy. If you

walk to work, climb the stairs, workout, or simply clean the house you require additional energy. Eating meals actually requires more energy, as well. The body requires energy to digest and process the foods you take in. So, every time you eat your metabolism must increase for a period of time (about an hour.)

Not only does eating more frequent smaller meals increase the metabolism throughout the day, skipping meals may actually lower the metabolism. The body is hard-wired to protect itself. It does not like to be starved. If it senses a period of starvation it will slow down the energy production in the body to conserve energy for future needs. It quickly shuffles extra energy in the blood stream to fat stores and slows down the processes within the body. If your body is used to getting three meals a day at regular times, missing just one can trigger the starvation response.

Reason 2: The Right Foods for the Job

Choosing what foods to eat while dieting can be tricky. This is one area that is loaded with controversy. Some people swear by the low-fat approach, while others tout the value of low carbohydrate diets. Each type of diet works for some people, and not for others. Lifestyle and activity levels play a role in this choice.

There are certain foods that should be included in any diet. Leafy green vegetables, whole grain cereal or bread choices, lean proteins, fish, and low fat dairy products (unless lactose intolerant) are all good choices and have vital nutrients that the body needs. These foods provide fiber, protein, and vitamins to keep the body functioning properly.

Athletes, especially those involved in sprinting, jumping, lifting type events, need carbohydrates to fuel the muscles during workouts and competition. The brain needs carbohydrates to function, as well. For these individuals, an extremely low carbohydrate diet can be counterproductive, and at times dangerous. A low fat approach may be better. This does not mean eliminating all fat from the diet, there are some essential fats that the body needs to cushion and protect the organs, lubricate the joints, and build and manage hormones. These can be obtained through fish, nuts and seeds, and olive oil.

A person who is sedentary may need to lower carbohydrate intake because the body will not be using as many carbs for energy. Increasing lean protein sources and some of the healthy fats can offset the carbohydrates. The body will need some carbohydrates for short-term energy needs and to

feed the brain. Extra carbohydrates must be stored and the only storage area for these is fat.

Cardiovascular, especially long duration, exercise uses fat for the main energy source. Long-term energy is produced by the aerobic energy system and this system relies on the break down of fats for energy. This was the original basis for the low fat diet, thinking that decreasing the fat in the diet would require more fat to be liberated from fat stores. In reality, this is backwards. Just as in the starvation response explained above, the body will hoard nutrients, as well. Knowing that fat is a potent energy source and can be used for long-term energy needs, the body will protect its fat stores. If there is fat coming in through the diet it will be more willing to let some be taken from the fat stores for current energy needs. This doesn't mean a diet of only fat is a healthy, or wise, choice, but including some healthy fats in the diet, about 20-25% of the daily intake of calories, is a good idea when trying to lose fat.

Reason3: Don't Shun the Weights

Many dieters avoid weight training in favor of cardiovascular training alone. The thinking is often that cardiovascular exercise burns more calories, especially fat calories. While in some cases this is true, weight training has many more far-reaching benefits that the dieter cannot ignore.

The most basic benefit is that weight training, when done properly can burn as many calories as cardiovascular exercise. The intensity of weight training exercises increases the number of calories burned during the activity. While the start and stop nature of weight training reduces the total amount that could be burned, the actual number of calories may still be as high as many cardio exercises due to the amount burned during each exercise.

Muscle tissue is very metabolically active. It requires a large amount of energy each day to maintain muscle tissue. Fat is basically inactive. It is stored energy but requires very little energy to maintain. The more muscle tissue a person has, the more energy they will need throughout the day, and the more calories they will burn. Weight training can help build that muscle.

The metabolism stays elevated longer after a weight workout, also. The body begins to repair the damaged muscle after a weight workout, a process that requires quite a bit of energy. This process causes an increase

in calories burned well after the workout is complete. Weight training also helps with nutrient partitioning in the body. The protein taken in is shuffled to the muscles for tissue repair. The carbohydrates are shuffled into the muscle and liver for glycogen replacement. The fats are used to replace the essential fats in the body and provide for long-term energy during the repair process.

One little known benefit of building muscle in the fat loss process is the increase in calories used during everyday activities. Although everyday activities become easier with more strength and endurance, you actually burn more calories. The muscles used to move the body require energy, and even though you are using a smaller percentage of muscle to move the body, you are actually using more muscle tissue. It requires energy to contract the muscles, this energy varies according to the load placed on the muscle, but each time the muscle fires it uses a base amount of energy. So, more muscle tissue makes everyday tasks easier, but also burns more calories while doing them.

Finally, the added muscle will also increase the shape and contour of the body. As you lose fat the shape will become more defined, but the muscle gives the body a head start. The image in the mirror will begin to improve even before the body fat percentage does.

Reason 4: Lack of Rest Can Sideline Your Results

Yes, rest is a vital part of the fat loss formula. This may seem counter to what you have heard in the past, but rest is essential. Rest in this case is actually two-part. Rest in between workouts is important, as is total rest (sleep.) Both types of rest are important, and lack of either can shut down your fat loss success.

Rest between workouts is important because that is when the body repairs itself. Without this rest period the body would be unable to repair the damage done to the muscles and connective tissue. This can lead to injuries, which lead to down time. It can also cause a condition called “overtraining.” This is when the body is unable to repair the muscles and connective tissue so it begins to lose lean body tissue and actually become weaker. This is bad for the obvious reasons, but also because that loss of lean muscle tissue also lowers the metabolism so fewer calories are being burned each day.

Sleep, or total body rest, is when the body repairs the system and prepares for the future demands that will be placed on it. Many hormones and

immune functions are increased during rest. Robbing the body of this much-needed rest can open the door for disease processes, viruses, and bacteria to attack the body. The body is also unable to regulate the internal processes because many are based on the sleep-wake cycle. Many hormonal responses in the body are based on this cycle, as well. One of those is the release of human growth hormone that is a potent lean muscle builder and fat reducer.

The stimulus for muscle growth takes place during workouts, but the actual growth takes place during rest. Calories are burned during workouts, but they are generally calories that are free floating in the blood stream or tucked away in the muscles. During the rest time energy from fat stores is released to replace this lost energy. So, it is during rest that the body builds new lean tissue, thereby increasing resting metabolic rates, and pulls fat out of fat stores, to replace energy used during the workouts. Skipping the rest will quickly stop any fat loss and may even begin a cycle toward illness and injury that will reverse all those hard earned results.

Reason 5: No, Virginia, There is No Miracle Diet or Pill

You would be better off believing in Santa Claus than a miracle diet or super fat loss pill. Believing in Santa Claus won't help you lose fat any faster, but at least you'll be happy. Millions are spent every year on miracle programs and supplements meant to quickly drop fat from the body. However, the key words in that last sentence are "every year." If millions are spent every year then these miracle formulas must not be working too well, or everyone would already be lean and not need them anymore.

If a program or supplement sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Losing more than 3 to 4 pounds in a week is unhealthy, and is probably water and lean tissue anyway. Four pounds of fat lost in a week is a substantial amount, and when you factor that out over a reasonable period, it can add up quickly. Dropping weight too quickly can lead to hormonal imbalances, vitamin deficiencies, lose skin, and loss of muscle mass. A slow and steady approach is better in the long run.

Relying on a diet pill or miracle diet will, unfortunately, come back to haunt you. If you use something unsustainable to lose the weight, then when you go back to your normal eating pattern, or stop using the supplement, you will regain the weight. This is the classic "yo-yo" diet. And, this type of lose-gain process is actually very damaging to the cardiovascular system. A

quality, sustainable plan that teaches a person how to eat healthy meals will lead to long-term weight loss success.

These diets or pills may help you drop weight quickly, and some have merit in jump starting a sound nutritional plan, but they will not lead to long term weight loss success. If you eat only one type of food, or drink a certain drink, then you would have to maintain that same nutritional pattern for life to maintain the weight loss. This is not practical or safe.

Focus on natural, healthy foods and increased activity to drop fat and improve overall health. This is the answer for long-term, sustainable fat loss. Supplements that support the new healthy plan can be helpful, but don't rely on a supplement as the sole impetus for fat loss.

So, to accomplish quality, long-term fat loss you need to eat more frequent, small meals (5 to 6), eat the right combinations of foods (depending on your lifestyle), hit the weights along with cardio, get adequate rest, and don't focus on miracle diets or pills. These 5 pitfall areas are common diet busters for those looking to lose fat, make the right choices and achieve long lasting fat loss finally.

Where Can I Find Out More?

There are 2 simple and easy ways to expand your muscle building and fat loss knowledge:

1. Sign up for newsletters: Do you want cutting edge, practical, and little-known fitness tips delivered personally to your inbox? Then stay signed up for a newsletter of a website or fitness program in which you have an interest, such as those of fitness programs found at www.BodybuildingAnatomy.com.

Inside, you'll find the latest and greatest information on muscle growth, fat burning, and general health and wellness. It's easily the best way to go from newbie to guru in no time!

2. Check out fitness program: Builtfit has recently put together a groundbreaking and revolutionary new nutrition and fitness program, called The Epic Warrior Diet and Workout Program, found at www.EpicWarrior.NET.

Here are just a small sample of some of the earth shattering tips you'll find:

-How to get your diet on track...no matter how hard healthy eating has been for you before.

-The dead-simple way to know exactly how many calories and grams of proteins that you need in a day

-The real truth about carbs: do this and you'll be able to eat carbs like they're going out of style –and not get fat!

-Which supplements are worth your hard earned money...and which are like tossing your money down the toilet.

-What 5 exercises cause 90% of your muscle growth...and which are a waste of time!

-And much, much more!