



September Newsletter



Weight Loss Versus Fat Loss

So what's the difference? Weight loss? Fat Loss? Isn't it all the same? The answer is an emphatic 'NO!' The problem is the majority of people just want to lose weight, and think by losing weight that they are losing fat at the same time. Again, this is what the majority of people think. And it is drilled into their heads over and over again by media, friends, and co-workers saying a person is over-weight. It's time to change the thinking, you're not over-weight, you're simply over-fat.

So on to weight loss. When you lose weight, the problem is you don't know if it is fat, muscle, or water. It's usually all 3. It's a very big problem with the majority of diets out there. Problem is any amount of fat that you do lose is completely negated by the muscle loss. And you are actually worse off than you were before.

You see the amount of muscle you have plays the biggest role in determining how fast and efficient your metabolism is. Metabolism is basically the amount of calories your body burns throughout the day. When you lose muscle your metabolism slows down, a lot. This means the amount of calories your burning during the day goes down. Muscle is your body's natural fat burning pill. When this happens the food you now consume has a much higher chance of being converted into fat and stored that way.

Why? Your body wants to burn fat throughout the day, but this happens when it is in an optimal state. An optimal state is fueling the muscles with enough calories and nutrients throughout the day. But when you focus on weight loss, not caring if it's muscle, water, or fat you're losing, just focusing on that evil little scale and the number going down, your body goes into survival mode. When it's in survival mode, your body is basically starving. And when it's starving, it holds on to fuel that can help it last the longest in that mode, which is FAT. This is the reason why most diets fail-they simply focus on weight loss, usually short-term, not on body composition change.

Now on to fat loss. When you focus on fat loss and changing your body composition, the scale shouldn't be an issue. You are focused on increasing lean body mass and decreasing body fat. You are more focused on how you look. The mirror should be your judge. If you weren't too far from your optimal weight, you might not even see the scale move that much. Because as you decrease body fat and increase lean mass, and muscle weighs more than fat, it might not move at all. But clothes will start fitting you better, and more importantly you will start moving and feeling better. If you have the opportunity to get your body fat tested do it. This will let you know precisely if everything is working and how much it is working.

With a fat loss eating plan you are eating enough calories to support, maintain, and hopefully increase your lean body mass. This will in turn fuel your metabolism higher, helping you burn more calories and fat throughout the day. I say 'fat loss eating plan' because no diet works forever. If you want a body that you will be proud of for the rest of your life, the food you consume needs to become a lifestyle for you.

I Need More Energy!

You're in the middle of a long workout and you're wondering how in the world you're going to muster up enough energy to finish. We've all been there. It's as though someone has unscrewed the cap and let all the fuel out of our tank.

So what should you reach for to help you comfortably finish your workout? Sports-product manufacturers have come up with all sorts of new items to help you do just that. But are they really any better than the old standards: water, a banana or a bagel?

Before we answer that question, a caveat: There is no single solution that works for everyone. Once you explore your options, you can determine which is the best for your body's particular needs.

Choices, choices, choices: There are few things more essential to maintaining performance than staying hydrated throughout your workout. Water is an obvious first choice, but you may need extra energy in the form of carbohydrates to get through a particularly long or strenuous exercise session.

If this is the case, energy bars or gels and sports drinks may be the answer to your depleted energy supply. What follows is a breakdown of the pros and cons of each.

Water: Water is a calorie-free source of the fluid your body needs to keep going. There is no better way to compromise performance than to exercise while you're dehydrated. Research shows that your heart rate increases eight beats per minute for every liter of sweat lost during exercise. This can occur in as little as 30 minutes of exercise depending upon the environment and your intensity.

This increased heart rate, combined with inefficient cooling, causes your temperature to elevate. This not only compromises performance, but can lead to heat illness as well.

Most experts recommend drinking at least a cup (four to 10 ounces) of water every 15 minutes of exercise.

Sports drinks: Activities lasting longer than one hour can leave your body wanting more than just water. Sports drinks, which typically contain about 50 to 70 calories, plus vitamins and minerals, are an easy answer to both the fluid and carbohydrate drain that comes from prolonged activity. Research shows that runners and cyclists who consume a sports drink during races not only finish more quickly, but rate their exertion levels lower than those who consumed a placebo beverage.

It is important to realize, however, that this was true only during longer-duration activities. You should be able to complete your 30-minute run or 45-minute step class without the aid of additional carbohydrates.

Energy gels and bars: Energy gels are a relatively new alternative to traditional sports drinks or bars. They feel similar in texture to pudding and are easy to eat and easy for your stomach to digest. They typically contain about 70 to 100 calories and may also include caffeine and other ergogenic aids.

Energy bars have been around forever and are eaten more often as a snack than as an energy replacement during exercise. Today, the market is saturated with numerous flavors and types, each with a different ratio of fats, carbohydrates and protein. The key is to find one that tastes good and doesn't upset your stomach. At 110 to 250 (or more) calories each, energy bars also provide extra vitamins, minerals and fiber, which ups their nutritional value considerably. But eating an energy gel or bar is not enough. You must consume enough fluid to replace what's been lost as well as to help speed digestion. How you choose to refuel during a workout depends on your body's reaction to what you put in it. For sessions lasting less than an hour, water is sufficient so long as you consume at least four to 10 ounces every 15 minutes.