

Fads & Myths-Where Has Common Sense Gone?

I've always said that everyone is looking for a new solution to an age old problem. We are too fat and pushing away from the table just isn't very palatable. Exercise doesn't fit into many people's lifestyle; it's not convenient or fun and it's just plain hard work. As a result, many fads and myths abound. Some of them are down right atrocious, lacking in logic and common sense. It's a wonder that anyone would even try these or believe in them. It goes to show what level of desperation many have come to.

Take the magic supplement scam. These include carbohydrate blockers, fat blockers and agents that allege they boost metabolic rate. The blockers claim to magically stop the digestion of whole food groups. Theoretically, you should be able to eat to your heart's content and pop a few of these pills and the extra calories will magically disappear. How on earth could this happen? Probably about as easily as those that believe in 'magic foods'. It is true that some foods take more calories than others to be broken down or be metabolized in the body, but some folks are under the mistaken impression that to metabolize some of these so called 'magic foods' it takes more calories than the food contains. This would mean, logically, that if I ate enough of these foods, I could be in a caloric deficit at the end of the day. The simple logic that whatever I put in my mouth will either be used as energy or stored in my 'trunk' just eludes some people. As far as boosting metabolism, there are limits as to what can be achieved. The most basic metabolic booster is a simple cup of coffee. But add four spoons of sugar, and a generous portion of cream and it's clear that the few calories that may have been burned by raising core temperature has been negated 20 times over. It's a cold hard fact that the best metabolic booster is activity. *The unglamorous bottom line remains; to lose weight, you have to boost your metabolism and simply not replace the calories expended completely.*

Many women shy away from weight training in the fear that they will get big and bulky. It is a proven fact that muscle is active tissue and that muscle burns calories, even at rest. Some who have started a weight training program and have added a few pounds, according to a scale, believe this is due to gaining muscle mass. It follows that they now have license to eat more. However, it's wrongly assumed that all weight gain can be attributed strictly to added muscle tissue. What ends up happening is they train for a time, and gain weight. They then raise their caloric intake further, getting fatter with the added calories to account for the 'supposed' added muscle. Then, finally, they come to the realization that their clothes are getting tighter in the butt and waist and assume that weight training has failed them. They think that they 'bulk up' too much with weight training. Gaining muscle tissue is more difficult than many people think. *Weight training will not 'bulk' up the average person. Weight training and over eating will.* Getting an accurate fat percentage measurement can alleviate this problem and keep a person on the right track.

Then there's the detox diet that many will do come the new year. The thinking with this is that a week or two of bland, whole foods will make up for a year of dietary abuse. Don't get me wrong, I'm not totally opposed to this diet, but I'm only in favor of it if it's

the start of lifestyle modification to change overall eating habits for the long haul. Don't be thinking that all pollutants are from dietary sources either. We live in a world that even the air we breathe contains toxins. Many of these toxins are fat soluble, meaning that they are stored in fat cells. A week of 'clean' eating will not rectify this. Many will lose a few pounds during the detoxification and then go back to potato chips and coke. Basically, nothing is accomplished but someone may have profited with the sale of the diet and supplements to get through it.

The truth of the matter is that there are many people that want to profit from your desire to get fit, lose weight and adopt a healthier lifestyle. They will make bizarre claims that will sell newspapers or headlines to grab your attention. Then many, in desperation, are willing to try anything, especially if it sounds easy. No one wants to suffer. If your aim this year is to become more healthy, think carefully about any product or service that claims to do it *for you*. *If it sounds too good to be true, you know that it is.* Nothing worthwhile comes without a price. The price doesn't have to empty your pocketbook; the price is a little self discipline and self sacrifice. Nothing tastes as good as self confidence and feels as fine as empowerment.

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