

Who Needs to Diet?

Don't you hate it when your mother is right after all? It is true that you are what you eat, and if you look around you can see that many of us are on a strict 'see food' diet. Canadians are increasingly over weight and if not over weight, then we are 'over fat'. This means that although in clothes we may not *look* obese, if we look at body composition; it tells us that we carry too much body fat compared to lean muscle mass. What's a person to do? To answer the above question then, it seems that we ALL need to diet, read on and find out how I qualify what that means.

To combat the overweight/over fat issue, many have the right idea to incorporate some exercise into their lifestyle. This is an excellent start. Unfortunately though, many find that exercise is not enough to get satisfactory results. Exercise must be coupled with modified eating to get the desired aesthetic results. There are many fit and fat people. Many people are exercising regularly and their health is benefiting, but they are unsatisfied with what the mirror is reflecting back at them. Getting into a regular fitness regime is only the start. Dieting alone isn't the answer either. There are those that use diet alone to change their appearance and are still displeased with their reflection. It's only when the two, diet and exercise, work together that you will get your most desirable outcome.

First Things First

Last month I talked about setting yourself up for success by setting moderate goals and starting with small lifestyle changes. It's imperative that you start one thing at a time, making moderate lifestyle changes, and slowly over time, increasing your self discipline. Trying to adhere to a program that is initially too strict is only inviting failure. Your best bet is to add some kind of fitness program to your day and not worry about food intake in the beginning. You'll begin to notice the benefits of fitness: more energy, better self esteem, a feeling of empowerment. You may even notice a slight loss of weight or inches initially. This will taper off though. When this happens, you need to pay attention to diet. Or perhaps you are a long time fitness buff, but are dissatisfied with your overall appearance. This is when you know that your diet needs modification.

'Diet' really is a Four Letter Word

I don't even like to use the word 'diet' because it implies a program that you start and then once a goal is reached, you stop and revert to old habits. For example, many have had excellent results using Bill Phillips "Body for Life" program to get in shape. The majority of clients I see that have used this program have gained back any lost weight and have long since stopped the fitness routine that went along with it. Bill Phillips intention when he developed this program was for people to live this lifestyle - not just use it for the 12 week program. Thus the name: Body for Life. The secret to 'dieting' then is not to 'diet' at all, but to learn livable eating habits that become part of your daily routine.

Common Sense is in Short Supply

Many people don't want to make the effort it takes to educate them on healthy eating. It isn't rocket science. Anyone that can read can become more knowledgeable on food composition and basic nutrition. Be aware that the media contains a vast amount of misinformation however, and you really need to work to separate fact from fiction. Advertisers want to sell you products that will do 'magic': weight loss, no hunger, gain a 6 pack, lose three dress sizes, whatever it is they think you want. Again, your mother was right: if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is! You need to use common sense and arm yourself with a nutrition almanac, or at least become a regular label reader to become better informed.

Awareness is Key

If you are interested in changing your eating habits for the better, it's wise to become aware of what your eating habits actually are. A food journal seems like a lot of trouble, but in the quest for self awareness, it will reveal a good deal about you. Ignorance is an excuse, but not a good one! A good start then, is to become aware of your eating and then work on modifying it.

Sometimes people don't like to admit to themselves that their eating habits are poor; it's easier to turn a blind eye to the handful of potato chips or the scoop of ice cream you sneak. Many people actually KNOW some of the changes necessary to clean up their diet, but they don't like to incorporate them.

Next month, I'll go over some helpful hints that you can use to actually change your eating. Your body is the barometer of your effort. No amount of money thrown at a problem area or poor habits will help. I love the fact that the way I look is totally up to me. I'm in control of this as much as I can control anything in my life. People have been blessed with different attributes, body structures, metabolisms, etc., but when it comes right down to it, I have the power to make a lot of changes with what I've been given and so do you, regardless of the genetic cards you've been dealt.

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