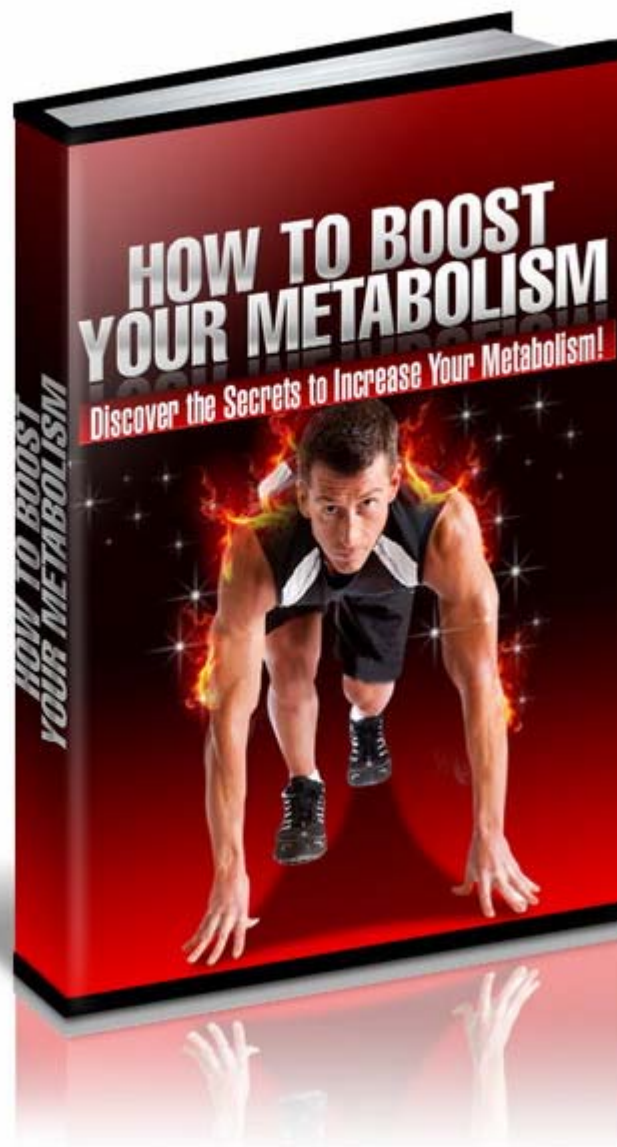


Boost Your Metabolism



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What is Metabolism?

Some people think metabolism is a kind of organ, or a body part, that influences digestion.

Actually, the metabolism isn't a body part.

Metabolism, is the process of transforming food (e.g. nutrients) into fuel (e.g. energy). The body uses this energy to conduct a vast array of essential functions.

In fact, your ability to read this page is driven by your metabolism.

If you had no metabolism you wouldn't be able to move.

In fact, long before you realized that you couldn't move a finger or lift your foot, your internal processes would have stopped, because the basic building blocks of life – circulating blood, transforming oxygen into carbon dioxide, expelling potentially lethal wastes through the kidneys and so on – all of these depend on metabolism.

Although we think of our metabolism as a single function, it's really a catch-all term for countless functions that are taking place inside the body. Every second of every minute of every day of your life numerous chemical conversions are taking place through metabolism, or metabolic functioning.

In a certain light, the metabolism has been referred to as a harmonizing process that manages to achieve two critical bodily functions that seem to be at odds with each other.

Anabolism and Catabolism

Our bodies are continually creating more cells to replace dead or dysfunctional cells. For example, if you cut your finger, your body starts the process of creating skin cells to clot the blood and start the healing process instantly. This creation process is a metabolic response, and is called anabolism.

On the other hand, there is the exact opposite activity taking place in other parts of the body. Instead of building cells and tissue the body is breaking down energy so the body can function.

For example, as you exercise, your body temperature rises and your heart beat increases. As this happens, your body requires more oxygen, so your breathing increases. If your body couldn't adjust to this enhanced requirement for oxygen, you would collapse. And all of this requires additional energy.

Presuming that you aren't overdoing it, your body will begin converting food into energy in a metabolic process called catabolism.

Your metabolism is a constant process that works in two seemingly opposite ways: anabolism uses energy to create cells, and catabolism breaks down cells to create energy.

The metabolism is a harmonizer. It brings together two seemingly opposite functions, and does so in an optimal way that enables the body to create cells as needed, and break them down, again as needed.

Metabolism and Weight Loss

Calories

Calories are simply units of measure, not actual things. They are labels like an inch which really isn't anything, but it measures the distance between two points.

So what do calories measure?

Energy.

Your body creates energy from the food you eat, whether it's healthy food or not. It creates energy from fruits and vegetables using the same process that it uses to create energy from chocolate bars and candy.

While you know it's better for your body to get energy from fruit and vegetables, your body doesn't evaluate the food. It creates energy from whatever you feed it.

It sounds strange, but the body really doesn't care. To the body, energy is energy. It takes whatever it gets, and doesn't really know that some foods are healthier than others. It's kind of like a garbage disposal: it takes what you put down it, whether it should go down or not.

So let's apply this to the body, and to weight gain. When the body receives a calorie it must do something with that energy. If a carrot delivers 100 calories to the body, it has to accept those 100 calories. The same goes for 200 calories from chocolate bars and candy.

The body does one of two things to the energy, it either metabolizes it via anabolism, or it metabolizes it via catabolism. That is, it will either convert the energy (calories) into cells/tissue, or it will use that energy (calories) to break down cells.

When there is an excess of energy, and the body can't use this energy to deal with any needs at the time, it will be forced to create cells with that extra energy. It has to.

It doesn't necessarily want to, but after figuring out that the energy can't be used to do anything (such as help you exercise or digest some food), it has to turn it into cells through anabolism.

And those extra cells? Yup, you guessed it: added weight.

In a nutshell, the whole calorie/metabolism/weight gain thing is really just about excess energy. When there are too many calories in the body, they are transformed into fat.

Sometimes those extra calories are transformed into muscle. In fact, muscles require calories to maintain their mass, so people with strong muscle tone burn calories without actually doing anything; their metabolism burns it for them.

This is the primary reason why exercising and building lean muscle is part of an overall program to boost your metabolism. The more lean muscle you have, the more places excess calories can go before they're turned into fat.

A Final Word About Fat

There's a nasty rumor floating around that fat cells are permanent. Unfortunately, the rumor is true. Most experts agree that once fat cells have been created, they're permanent. But this doesn't spell doom and gloom for those of us who could stand to drop a few pounds. Even though experts believe that fat cells are permanent, they also agree that fat cells can be shrunk. So even if the number of fat cells in your body remains the same, their size, appearance and percentage of your overall weight, can be reduced.

Tips, Techniques, and Strategies for Boosting Your Metabolism

Chances are, you've tried to boost your metabolism at least once in your life. Perhaps you weren't quite certain what a metabolism was, or didn't know how to accomplish your goals.

Maybe you started a rigorous exercise program of jogging and muscle toning. Or you started eating several small portions a day, rather than three large traditional meal-sized portions. Maybe you started taking all kinds of supplements that promised to boost your metabolism.

The thing is, all of these methods can work.

Exercise, eating strategically, and ensuring that your body has catabolism-friendly supplements are three of many generally good weight loss ideas.

So what's the problem?

The problem is, many of us have no real scientific understanding of what, how, or why these methods boost metabolism.

For example, a person may start a vigorous exercise program that includes significant aerobic cardiovascular movement, such as jogging or cycling. After a week, that person may notice a drop in weight.

But is this due to a boosted metabolism? Maybe - maybe not. Could it be due to water loss through perspiration that hasn't been adequately replenished? Maybe - maybe not.

Many people risk their health, because they don't quite understand the tips, strategies, and techniques of boosting their metabolism. The popular and widely respected Internet publication i-Village, highlights 11 key ways to speed up metabolism. To most easily introduce and discuss them here, we've taken these 11 key ideas and broken them down into 3 broad categories:

- 1. Exercise**
- 2. Lifestyle**
- 3. Diet**

As you go through each of the 11 key points, you'll certainly note that there is some overlap between them. For example, it's hard to imagine that introducing exercise into your life isn't, a lifestyle choice.

Don't get bogged down in the categories; they are merely provided to help organize these points, and to help you easily refer to them in the future. The important thing is to understand each of the 14 points, and evaluate how you can responsibly integrate them into your life.

Exercise

Exercise is a big part of boosting your metabolism and burning calories.

Unless you're born with one of those unusually active metabolisms, which allows you to eat thousands of calories a day without gaining weight, you're like the vast majority of us who need to give our metabolisms a bit of a kick.

Cardiovascular (aerobic) exercise is an important part of boosting your metabolism. Increasing your heart rate, blood circulation, body temperature, and oxygen intake/carbon dioxide exchange, all send messages to your metabolic system to initiate catabolism (breaking down cells and using them for energy).

Build Muscle

Many people, especially women, are very leery about an exercise regimen that can lead to muscle building. There is a perception that muscle building leads to muscle bulking, and before long, they'll look like a body builder.

Provided that women aren't supplementing their workouts with specific muscle-building supplements, there is no need to be concerned, because building lean muscle won't make them bulk up.

But why worry about building muscle in the first place?

Because a pound of muscle burns more calories than a pound of fat. So the more muscle you have, the more calories you'll burn. You don't even have to do anything. You'll simply burn more calories, because muscle requires more of an energy investment.

But if you build muscle and then leave it without exercise, over time, the muscle fibers weaken and you'll lose that wonderful calorie-burning factory.

Interval Training

The basic weight loss principle behind exercise is catabolism.

Essentially, if you can engineer your body to require more energy, your body will comply by breaking cells down to deliver it. And the process of metabolism burns calories.

So based on that logic, interval training fits in with the overall plan. Interval training is simply adding a high-energy burning component to your exercise plan on an infrequent, or interval, basis.

For example, if you can jog for 20 minutes every other day, you're boosting your metabolism and burning calories/energy. But you can actually burn disproportionately more calories if, during that 20 minute jog, you add a 30 second or 1 minute sprint.

Why? Because during this 30 seconds or 1 minute, you give your body a bit of a jolt.

Not an unhealthy jolt, but enough that your body has to turn things up a notch. And to compensate for your extra energy requirements, the body will burn more calories.

Interval training only works when it's at intervals. The metabolism-boosting benefits you enjoy as a result of interval training are primarily due to the fact that your body suddenly, needs to find more energy.

While it was chugging along and supplying your energy needs during your cardiovascular exercise, it all of a sudden needs to grab some more for 30 seconds or a minute; and in that period, it will boost your metabolism even further.

If you decided to extend your 30 second or 1 minute sprint into a 20 minute sprint, you simply wouldn't experience all of the benefits.

Yes, your body would use more energy if you extend yourself to the higher range of your aerobic training zone. But your body won't necessarily get that jolt that only comes from interval training.

So remember: your goal with interval training is to give your body a healthy jolt where it suddenly says to itself:

“Whoa! We need more energy here fast, this person has increased their heart rate from 180 beats per minute to 190 beats per minute. Let’s go to any available cell, like those fat cells down at the waist, and break them down via catabolism so this person can get the energy that they need.”

Interval training can last longer than 30 seconds or a minute. Some experts suggest that you can use interval training for 30-40 minutes, depending on your state of health and what your overall exercise regimen looks like.

The reason we’re focusing on 30 seconds to 1 minute is simply to give you a clear understanding that interval training is a kind of mini training within a training program.

And, as always, don’t overdo it with your interval training. Your goal here is to become healthier and stronger, and lose weight in that process.

You gain nothing if you run so fast or bike so hard during interval training that you hurt yourself. You will actually undermine your own health, and possibly have to stop exercising while torn muscles or other ailments heal.

Variety

There are a few easy ways to add variety to your exercise program. In addition to interval training, you can break up a longer routine into smaller parts.

For example, instead of committing to 1x1 hour workout a day, it can be split into 2x30 minute workouts; or even, 3x20 minute workouts.

You can also work in additional exercise into your daily routine by doing things like taking the stairs instead of the elevator. Or starting your day with a brisk walk instead of a coffee and the newspaper. Instead of parking close to the entrance of a building, park as far away as possible and walk.

All of these tips provide two metabolism-boosting benefits.

First, they can make exercising more fun. While it’s important to have an exercise routine, you don’t want to have a boring exercise routine, because then your chances of stopping are that much greater.

So adding these new elements to your overall exercise commitment simply helps encourage you to stick with the program. And since exercising is a core part of

boosting your metabolism, any technique or tip that helps you continue exercising over the long term is a wise piece of advice.

The second important benefit of variety in your exercise program leads us back to the interval training concept, discussed above.

When you add variety to your workout, your body cannot get into a groove. Remember, the body is a remarkable piece of work, and will always strive to do things efficiently.

Naturally, the overall state of your health, which can be influenced by genetics and other factors outside of your control, will play a role in how efficiently your body runs.

But regardless of how your body is put together, it wants to do things as efficiently as it possibly can. So when you start exercising, your body develops an expectation of energy output. It's not doing this to be lazy, it's doing this because it's efficient. If your body starts to predict that you need a certain amount of energy to complete a 20 minute jog, but then you jog for 2 minutes, followed by 5 minutes of walking, 2 minutes of jogging and 1 minute of sprinting, your body may require a great deal more energy to help you achieve this.

As a result, you may find yourself very out of breath or tired as your body strives to meet this increased demand. Naturally, catabolism will be involved and your body metabolism will increase.

But over time, maybe a month or so, your body will simply become more efficient. It will become stronger, and will be able to supply your energy needs much more efficiently. Your health has improved and your body has to work less to provide you with your energy needs.

Ironically, this can actually obscure your metabolism-boosting efforts, because you want your body to start the catabolism process, but if your body is efficiently working, it won't dig into its reserves (e.g. fat cells) in order to provide you with the energy you need.

So the trick is to keep variety in your workouts. Many people choose to cross-train. It targets different muscle groups, but it keeps your body from finding a groove whereby it tried to help you by slowing down your metabolism.

Remember, your body doesn't read books like this. It doesn't need to, and it doesn't care. It has no clue that a speedier metabolism is "good" or "bad".

Lifestyle

Balancing work, family, hobbies, and other commitments often means that our lifestyle isn't so much a choice, as it is a necessity, but we can do little things that help speed up our metabolism.

Get on the Wagon

Do you know people who carefully choose low-fat, low-calorie meal choices, are very disciplined when it comes to resisting the Chef's Special pecan pie for desert, yet order a glass or two of wine with their meal?

These people are undermining their efforts to boost their metabolism.

Studies show that drinking alcohol with meals actually encourages over eating, which means more calories that need to be burned away or transformed into fat. Many people are simply unaware that many alcoholic drinks are laden with calories, almost as much as sugary soft drinks.

A bottle of beer or a cocktail is a few hundred calories. Wine is less, but still adds your calorie count. The tip here isn't to stop drinking alcohol altogether, but to be aware that it's adding to your calorie intake.

Sleep

Most of us don't have as much control over the amount that we sleep as we should. Work, family, education, housekeeping, and so many other tasks can literally prevent us from getting the amount of sleep that we need.

Experts tell us, getting enough sleep actually improves metabolism. People who are constantly sleep deprived, typically find that they have less energy to do regular, daily activities.

As a result, sleep-deprived people often lower their own metabolism. They simply don't have the strength to break down food efficiently, particularly carbohydrates. This is a very difficult issue, because many people can only find time to exercise by borrowing from their rest time.

For example, after a long day of work and dealing with family and home commitments, a person may find the only time they have to exercise is late at night. So what should you do?

Ultimately, it's a question of balance. Naturally, if you're willing to exercise, and your doctor agrees that it's healthy for you, then you're not going to get fit by sleeping instead of exercising.

Yet, if you steal time away from your sleep in order to exercise, you can actually do more harm than good, because the following day, you won't have enough energy to digest what you eat. The answer to this catch-22 lies in balance.

You don't have to work out every night. Or perhaps you can integrate a workout into your life during the day, maybe at lunchtime or right after work.

Most fitness clubs are open very early, some are even open 24 hours. You can also get some fitness equipment for your home and workout there.

If you find you have trouble sleeping, this can also negatively affect the speed of your metabolism, because you won't have enough energy the following day. Insomnia and other sleep disorders are very common problems.

Some non-medical tips to help you fall asleep include:

- Don't eat late at night
- Try drinking warm milk before bedtime
- Don't turn on the TV at night
- Try yoga or other stress-relieving practices
- Try having a warm bath before bedtime
- Don't exercise close to bedtime, your body can become so energized that it doesn't want to sleep.

Relax

We briefly noted yoga in the list of Things to Do above, and that brings us to another key influence of your metabolism, stress.

Experts believe stress can send unwanted signals to our body, signals that lead to slower metabolism. Essentially, when the body is under constant stress, it releases stress hormones that flood the system. These stress hormones actually tell the body to create larger fat cells in the abdomen. The result can be both increased weight and a slower metabolism.

Some easy stress relievers are:

- Walk more
- Listening to relaxing music
- Meditate

- Practice yoga
- Eat non-stimulating foods (e.g. no caffeine, no sugar, and so on)
- Re-center yourself and de-stress

So there's a link between how much stress you experience and your ability to break down cells and lose weight.

If you don't want to relax, because you don't have the time, your stressed-out life is probably playing a role in your weight gain or your inability to lose weight.

Ladies Only

Scientists have determined that the 2-week period prior to menstruation is a premium fat burning time. Australian studies have shown that women were able to burn off as much as 30% more fat in the 2 weeks preceding their period.

At this time, the female body's production of estrogen and progesterone are at their highest. Since these hormones tell the body to use fat as a source of energy, exercising during this time, can really pay off. The body will be inclined to target fat cells for catabolism.

Don't Hate Calories

The word calorie has a bad rap. We constantly come across calorie reduced or low calorie foods.

The calories that come from cake are empty calories, which means there's no real nutritional value that your body can squeeze out and make use of. But in the bigger picture, it's unwise for your metabolism to become calorie-avoidant.

If you suddenly decrease the amount of calories that you eat, your body won't try to do more with less. It won't necessarily provoke catabolism and thus reduce weight and fat cells. Instead, your body will try to keep you alive by slowing down its metabolism. It will simply believe that something is wrong, maybe you're trapped somewhere without food, and it will just begin to become very stingy with energy.

So what's the end result? If your body needs 2000 calories a day to survive, and you suddenly give it only 1000, it won't begin to burn off 1000 calories worth of cells that you have lying around on your love handles.

Instead, your body will slow down its metabolism. It will really try and get as much energy out of those 1000 calories as it can, because it doesn't want to waste anything.

You'll feel more tired because your body is being very miserly with energy, and will devote its 1000-calorie ration to essential systems, like blood and oxygen supply.

Metabolically, you won't be burning off extra calories. In fact, you can actually gain weight by dramatically reducing your calorie intake.

The flipside of this is, you should consume a daily caloric intake that is proportionate to your body size, type, and weight loss goals.

Once you determine the amount of calories that you need, you can provide that to your body via healthy, efficient calories. For example, if your body needs 1500 calories per day, and one slice of double-fudge chocolate cake delivers 500 of those, you can see that eating just one slice will take up a full 1/3 of your daily caloric needs, and that's not good.

On the other hand, you can see that drinking a tasty fruit smoothy made with yogurt and nuts can deliver half as many calories, but provide you with essential nutrients, vitamins, and other elements that your body needs to healthily do its work.

Eat More?

Fresh on the heels of the discussion on calories, it's also helpful to note that eating frequently throughout the day can be very good for boosting metabolism. There are a couple of reasons for this.

The first reason is people who tend to eat throughout the day do considerably less snacking. As a result, they tend to avoid potato chips or candy bars that they might otherwise consume if they suddenly felt hungry.

People who eat throughout the day don't tend to experience severe hunger pains, because they have a steady stream of food entering the body.

The second reason is, by eating throughout the day, you are constantly keeping your metabolism in motion. It's kind of like having a generator run all the time. It will use more electricity than if you powered it on 3 times a day.

If you plan to eat more often, you should keep a food journal that notes what you eat and drink throughout the day.

You should know the calorie levels of what you eat, and the overall nutritional values, too.

Merely focusing on calories is only half of the job. You need to ensure that you're eating enough protein, carbohydrates, unsaturated fats, and other vitamins and minerals that your body needs in order to function at optimal levels.

Eat Early

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day for boosting your metabolism and assisting with weight loss. People who eat breakfast, are much less inclined to snack throughout the morning. Of course, if you're eating more frequently, you can still eat something between breakfast and lunch.

Studies have shown that metabolism slows during sleep, and doesn't typically get going again until you eat. Therefore, starting the day with breakfast is like kick starting your metabolism. You'll actually burn more calories throughout the day, simply by eating breakfast.

Remember, as you eat your breakfast, control both the portions and the contents. You don't want to eat to the point of complete fullness, because you want to eat throughout the day and you won't be able to do that if you're stuffed.

At the same time, beware of high-fat breakfasts. Studies have shown that high-fat breakfasts, such as those that include bacon and sausage, not only deliver lots of calories, but they also make you hungry again, very soon. In addition to having ingested a lot of fat and calories, you'll typically find yourself rather ravenous again in a few hours.

Alternatively, breakfasts that are high in fiber, take longer to digest, and thus, the body won't be hungry again for a while.

This is something to bear in mind; and it may explain why many people who eat breakfast, find themselves painfully hungry by lunchtime. It's not their "overactive metabolism" at work, it's the high fat content, which has been swiftly digested.

Protein and Carbs

Studies have shown that having the proper amount of protein in your system, can actually increase the speed of your metabolism. It requires more energy to break down protein, than many other foods. The more time it takes your body to break down protein, the more calories that it uses.

Different people will require different amounts of protein on a daily basis. Those who exercise and build muscle will typically need more than the average amount. The USFDA Food Guide suggests around 50 grams of protein a day for a reasonably active adult.

Keep in mind that some sources of protein are also sources of fat. Fast food burgers may deliver up to 20 grams of protein, but they also deliver a great deal of fat, which makes them almost nutritionally worthless. Ensure your source of protein comes from lean protein. Typically, protein from some fish and chicken is lean.

If you're a vegetarian, or simply looking for non-meat lean protein alternatives, low-fat cheese, legumes (lentils), and yogurt are all good sources. Simply check the food labels to determine if the source of protein is lean or fatty.

Carbohydrates

When the body digests carbohydrates, it require spikes in insulin. When insulin is released into the system, it promotes the storage of fat and some experts believe it also pushes down metabolic speed.

The good kinds of carbohydrate to consume are those that are high in fiber, and those from fruit and vegetable sources. These sources of carbohydrates don't score high on the glycemic index, so they don't cause a spike in insulin levels, and therefore, they don't promote fat storage.

Conclusion

Congratulations. You know more about metabolism, and how to increase metabolic speed, than most people. You've learned that metabolism is a process and not an actual body part.

It harmonizes two essential bodily functions: converting food into cells/tissues, and breaking cells down to provide energy. We learned that the former process is known as anabolism, and the latter is catabolism.

Indeed, it's this latter process that influences our ability to lose weight, and to keep it from coming back.

And going beyond the biological basics, we also learned the 3 integrated aspects of speeding up metabolism and losing weight, exercise, lifestyle, and diet. And within each of these 3 categories were a total of 11 important, practical, and quite easy ways to boost your metabolism.

Now it's time for action. The next step to boosting your metabolism is up to you. Good luck, have fun, and enjoy your better, leaner healthier life.

A Final Word: Common Metabolism-Boosting Myths

The SparkDiet resource centerⁱ has consulted fitness experts to find the 4 most prevalent myths concerning metabolism and metabolism-boosting.

Since this book has been about reality and not myths, we didn't cover any of them in the actual book. Yet, considering how common these myths are, it can indeed be useful for you to know them; and to know that they're myths.

That way, if you come across them in a magazine, at a fitness club, or just from the well-intentioned but misguided advice of a friend, you can confidently say (or at least just think): sorry, but that's a myth; I'm not going to fall for that one!

Myth #1: Diet Pills

The general consensus on diet pills are contained in two powerful words: BUYER BEWARE.

The problem here is that many makers of diet pills offer claims that simply aren't realistic; and if you read the fine-print of most of these advertisements, you'll see that they're really too good to be true. Little notes like the claims made in this advertisement are not typical should be enough of a wake-up call to realize that there's more to the story.

In some cases, diet pills can help boost metabolism temporarily. This, however, can be risky and generally shouldn't be done without a doctor's say-so. Unfortunately, people can become somewhat addicted to diet pills, and this can lead to disaster.

And before we go onto myth #2, remember that some diet pills are water loss pills. That is, they are diuretics that promote water loss, usually through excess urination. The jury on water-loss diet pills is somewhat less open-minded than diet pills in general: THEY DON'T WORK!

Seriously: water loss diet pills are built on the premise that you'll lose weight through water. And, yes, that's true: if you urinate 15 times a day, you're physically going to weigh less.

But this is not actual weight loss! This is merely unhealthy temporary weight loss, and it will come roaring back the minute that water stores are replenished through diet.

Or, even harder to comprehend, if a person taking these water pills fails to restore their body's fluid needs, they can actually suffer dehydration; which can, and has, led to coma and death.

Myth #2: Drop Caloric Intake

As we discussed earlier in this book (but it's so important that it deserves an encore here at the end), trying to lose weight by drastically cutting down calories doesn't work; in fact, it's unhealthy.

The thing to remember is that the body's ability to lose weight is not controlled by calories. Calories are the input. The real control mechanism is that famous concept that you've become very familiar with: metabolism.

Calories are merely units of energy. It's how your body deals with that energy that determines whether weight is gained or lost.

So with that being said, cutting down your caloric intake to, say, 1000 calories a day isn't necessarily going to help you lose weight; because it doesn't necessarily change your metabolism.

Indeed, as you know, if you slow down your caloric intake, your body – which is always trying to help you in the best way that it knows how – will slow down its metabolism.

Really, it makes sense: the body says that something has gone wrong; instead of the 2000 calories that it needs, it's only getting 1000. The body doesn't know why this is happening; it doesn't know that you want to lose weight.

It just senses that something is wrong; perhaps you're trapped in a cave or something, or stuck in a snowstorm. So the body, trying to help you, will slow down its metabolism; it will do its best to slow down the conversion rate, so that you have as much energy on hand as possible.

Now, if your body was able to read this book and you could say: look, please just do what you normally do, but do it with 1000 fewer calories a day for a while, then we might actually get somewhere.

But the body doesn't work that way. It won't help you lose weight if you dramatically cut down on calories.

It will slow down metabolism, and (here's the worst part), if and when you ever increase calories again, your body will have to deal with that via a slower metabolic engine. So you can actually gain weight if, after cutting down your calories for a period of time, you find that you consume extra calories (say while on vacation or something).

Myth #3: Low Intensity Workouts

It's fair to say that any exercise is better than no exercise. So if you lead a sedentary lifestyle, then even walking around your block for 10 minutes a day is going to do something positive for your body and its metabolism.

True, that difference may be imperceptible to the naked eye (or it may not?), the bottom line is that exercise is good.

Yet with this being said, some people believe that they should perform low-intensity workouts even when they could be performing more high-intensity workouts.

That is, instead of jogging for 20 minutes with their heart at the top end of their aerobic zone, they opt for low-intensity jogs that barely break a sweat.

Low intensity workouts simply don't lead to a faster metabolism; they can't. Remember, as we discussed very early in this book, metabolism is a process.

And that process is really one of two types: taking energy and making cells (anabolism), or breaking cells down to make energy (catabolism).

If you don't achieve a high-intensity workout, your body can't tap into catabolism; it won't need to. And the only way your body is going to go and break down existing cells is if it needs to.

So keep this in mind as you exercise, either at home or at a gym. Low intensity workouts are better than nothing at all; and they may be necessary if you're recovering from injury, or just starting out on the exercise journey.

But once you reach a level of basic fitness, only high intensity (aerobic) workouts will make a difference in terms of your metabolism. High intensity workouts force your body to find energy to help you maintain that level of exercise; and it does so through catabolism.

Myth #4: Too Much Focus

Speeding up your metabolism and achieving your weight loss goals involved a certain degree of focus; after all, there's a lot of things competing for your attention (including that delicious Chef's Special pecan pie!), and you certainly need to be able to keep your eye on the goal in order to maintain your program.

Yet sometimes too much focus can be a bad thing; and some dieters understand this all too well.

Remember: speeding up your metabolism is a holistic effort that includes exercise, lifestyle, and diet changes.

Focusing on only one of these at the expense of the others (either one or both) can be detrimental. In fact, in some cases, it can be counter-productive.

So the myth here is that you shouldn't go all out and focus on becoming an exercise guru, and then move onto lifestyle, and then to diet.

You have to integrate all 3 aspects into your life at the same time. True, based on your unique situation, you will likely emphasize one more than the others. That's fine and normal. But it's a myth – and a mistake – to ignore any one of these.

It takes all three to speed up your metabolism, and to get you to your weight loss goals for the long-term.

SOURCES USED IN THIS BOOK

ⁱ SparkDiet. http://sparkpeople.com/resource/nutrition_articles.asp?id=476