

Introduction

Be Fit, Not Fat

Our population is much more educated about fitness and nutrition than we were a few decades ago. We know that we should be exercising and eating well. And healthier food is much more accessible. So why is our population, both adults and children, continuing to get fatter? According to the National Center for Health Statistics, the average adult in 1994 weighed eight pounds more than they did a decade previously. Did you know that 32 percent of men and 35 percent of women are considered obese – not just overweight – but obese?! Here is another scary statistic. The average 154 pound male gains 22 pounds of fat in 20 years – that is a pound a year! We're not going to look so hot at the high school reunion, are we?!

These statistics have to concern us. Obesity is associated with an increased risk of hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and many cancers. And of course, we have to consider its effects on our joints and our backs. And what about the psychological effects on our self-esteem and confidence!

For as long as I can remember, I have noticed that people who were active or played sports always seemed to be able to do more things, always had more fun – they just seemed to be able to enjoy life more than their sedentary, unfit counterparts. Of course, fit people generally do not smoke, so they are less likely to get cancer than smokers.

They generally don't carry a lot of excess body fat so they suffer fewer heart attacks than those unfit. Fit people have stronger lungs, muscles, joints, bones, immune system, and healthier hearts. Their cholesterol levels and blood pressure measurements are better. At this rate, you can see how passionate I am about the benefits of exercise. I think I honestly believe that if our entire earth population was exercising regularly we could expect to enjoy world peace! Well think about it. If people were exercising regularly, they would probably have less time to get into fights. I also find people who exercise regularly are not as upset about the little things – it is almost as if the energy they are expending helps to burn off excess anger or frustration. I think we should consider writing to our politicians and suggesting they cut the defense budget and spend the money on getting the 80 percent sedentary population hooked on exercise. I think we would notice a huge difference in so many of our societal issues!!

Our growing weight problem can be attributed to many factors. One, we do not move as much as we used to. The International Journal of Obesity estimates that we expend 500-800 calories less per day than we did 30 years ago. The age of technology, modern transportation, escalators, elevators, computers, and remote controls are all helping to pack on the pounds. Secondly, the majority of us still have not gotten the message about the importance of exercise. Eighty percent of our population does not exercise regularly or vigorously enough to obtain any health benefits. And finally, our portion sizes have increased dramatically. We are suffering from the trend of "supersizing". Oversize cookies, fries, shakes, muffins and bagels are adding on calories without us noticing. These three factors have caused the rate of obesity to dramatically increase. It is quite

visible on our streets. Spend an afternoon people-watching in a major North American city and you will quickly see the effects of our new culture.

If one of us does decide we would like to lose some weight, we know pretty much what we need to do. The information is out there for us in abundance. It is not like we would think "Exercise?! Is that what I need to do to lose weight?" or "Eat healthier to lose weight?! Why didn't I think of that?" No, we know exactly what we need to do! In fact, we have no problem initiating the process. We have done it numerous times. We tend to lose fat over and over again. The problem and our struggle lies in the challenge of keeping the weight off. Most people who undertake a fat loss program have not really taken the time to fully understand the complexity of the process. They have examined only the physiology or the science of fat loss and have neglected the psychology and the behavioural change aspects. If you are going to be successful at initiating these major changes in your life and more importantly, maintaining the changes, you are going to have to establish a very strong foundation for success. You will have to do your homework.

Once you decide you need to lose body fat, you generally have a few options. You might decide, like most people, to diet. Unfortunately, the research is conclusive and indicates that diets do not work with 98 percent of people gaining the weight back. Or you might decide to exercise. While exercise on its own is definitely a very healthy choice, most people find it too slow a process and will eventually give up before they start to experience the benefits. If you were to start an exercise program now without modifying

your diet, you could expect a 2 percent change in your body fat over a 12-18 week period. This would equate to 3 pounds of fat lost and while this is a significant change, when most people want to lose 10 pounds by the weekend, the process is painfully slow. Generally, most people would start to measure their effort and compare it to the results. Many have a difficult time justifying their 5x/week exercise program when the end result is a pound lost per month. In fact, studies demonstrate that 7/10 people who start an exercise program quit within the first 3 months. And most, because they have not seen the results they were expecting. There is also of course, the real quick approach to fat loss –liposuction. And although liposuction works to remove some of the unwanted fat cells, if you do not change your lifestyle habits and start exercising and eating well, the fat cells that you still have will just get bigger and you will not be any better off – just a few thousand dollars poorer.

There are hundreds of fat loss books on the shelves. I remember my publisher asking me "What is going to be so different about your fat loss book?" I answered confidently, "This book is going to make a difference. People are actually going to get results!" You see, with most books, you read them and then they go back on the bookshelf. By the time you start to initiate any of the changes, you have forgotten what they were in the first place and you have probably lost the motivation anyway. This book is an interactive book. You will regularly be asked to take action towards your goals. You will be asked to answer questions, complete homework drills and keep a daily activity and nutrition log. This will force you to implement the information immediately and keep your goals at the top of your priorities. This workbook will enable you to examine the physiology of

fat loss - the cold, hard facts. You will be given the tools to understand how the physiology and the psychology of fat loss work very closely together in ensuring your success. You will examine your thoughts, feelings and negative patterns. You will establish realistic and positive goals and outline obstacles that may surface and strategies for overcoming them. And of course, you will learn the most effective exercise and nutrition tips for maximizing safe, effective and permanent fat loss. You will be your own personal trainer – designing your own program, monitoring progress and modifying and adjusting the program along the way. You will be captain of your own ship. I will only be the guide.

The health and fitness industry is now quite convinced that the safest and most effective program for permanent fat loss is a program that combines exercise and a healthy diet. This workbook will focus on that combination. I am a firm believer that there is no quick-fix solution. If you want something bad enough, expect to put forth a bit of effort. You know what they say - if anything is worth getting, it is worth working for! So, it is not going to be a cake-walk but I can guarantee you that it is probably not going to be as difficult as you would imagine. Every drill in this book will take you closer to success. Every homework assignment you complete will give you the confidence and self-esteem to know you can accomplish the next goal. It is all about "Results Momentum". If I ask you to do something – even if it is a real small task – if you do it, you have succeeded. This will give you momentum so the next goal becomes that much easier. If you do not do the task – no matter how insignificant, it makes it easier to skip out on other tasks – maybe ones that are much more important to your success. So, think of this process as a

series of very small baby steps and each one takes you closer and closer to permanent fat loss.

Well if I have not convinced you yet of the merits of a healthy diet and exercise, let me ask you this. When you are 70 years old would you rather be confined to a rocking chair in a nursing home or out hiking the mountains, cross-country skiing through the woods, kayaking the oceans and playing with your grand-kids? It is your choice. If you are not enjoying the life or the body you want now or when you are older, you have no one to blame but yourself!

Let's get started right away. Why wait till you finish the book? Good luck! Remember, I have full confidence that you can do this because I know "If you think you can, you can!"