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Ten Common Mistakes Individuals Who Are Trying to Lose Weight Make

1. Severely restrict their caloric intake. A starvation diet (*i.e.*, reducing your caloric intake to less than 50% of what your body requires) presents a number of problems to people who are trying to lose weight. First and foremost, it doesn't work. Any weight that may have been lost is subsequently regained because most individuals cannot maintain such a restrictive eating plan over the long haul.
2. Have an unduly narrow perspective of the problem at hand. Too many people view losing weight as simply a matter of cutting back on what they eat. In reality, it's an issue of basic physics—balancing energy in with energy out. As such, if you really want to lose weight (and keep it off), you need to increase your level of physical activity and eat in moderation.
3. Ignore the need to maintain their level of lean body mass. A common tendency among individuals who exercise is to focus their activity efforts solely on aerobic exercise. In the process, they lose muscle mass, which is replaced by fat when they inevitably regain whatever weight they lost. In turn, their metabolic rate as well as the number of calories that they need to maintain their current weight, is diminished. This adjustment creates a cycle that is counterproductive to sustained weight loss.
4. Misinterpret what some food labels are actually telling them. It is extremely important for individuals who want to control their weight to be aware of the fact that labels that state that a particular foodstuff is either “no fat” or “no sugar” does not mean “no calories.”
5. Try to lose too much weight too rapidly. Research shows that a weight-reduction program that involves a slow and steady loss (*i.e.*, approximately 1 lb or less per week for women and 2 lbs or less per week for men) has the best chance for success, particularly when it is combined with an effort to change any inappropriate lifestyle habits.
6. Believe that spot reduction is possible. The concept of spot reducing is a complete myth. No exercise will eliminate fat from a specific area of the body, just as no change in your level of caloric intake will guarantee that the fat will melt away in the area of the body you most want to address. As a rule, the pattern in which you lose body fat is genetically predetermined.
7. Mistake water lost through sweating for actual fat and weight loss. Your body has millions of sweat glands that cover your skin, excreting water and electrolytes. When you exercise, the amount of water (sweat) that is perspired increases in an effort by your body to help keep you cool and regulate your body temperature. The water you lose from perspiring can mislead you into believing that you've lost more fat and body weight than you may have actually lost. Such water weight is replaced when you subsequently consume fluids.
8. Buy into the “magic beans” theory. Selling supplements and related pills, powders, and potions that purportedly will somehow facilitate a person's efforts to lose weight is a multibillion-dollar-a-year industry. Other than being a waste of money and a purveyor of false hope for individuals who are looking for an easy and quick-fix approach to losing weight, such items also can have negative health consequences.
9. Follow unproven and spurious dieting advice. The number of unsound diets that target unsuspecting individuals with undocumented claims and unhealthy practices seems to grow exponentially every year. Truth be known, these diets share at least two traits—they don't work, and they may actually be harmful (physically and financially) to a person who tries them.
10. Consider a surgical solution to their “weight” problem. Some individuals consider a surgical option for losing weight. In this regard, two procedures tend to receive the most attention—liposuction and gastric bypass surgery. Liposuction involves the removal of fat from specific regions of the body. Gastric bypass surgery, on the other hand, is a procedure that makes the stomach smaller and allows food to bypass part of the small intestine, resulting in fewer calories being absorbed. Although guidelines vary, gastric bypass surgery is generally reserved for severely obese individuals.

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