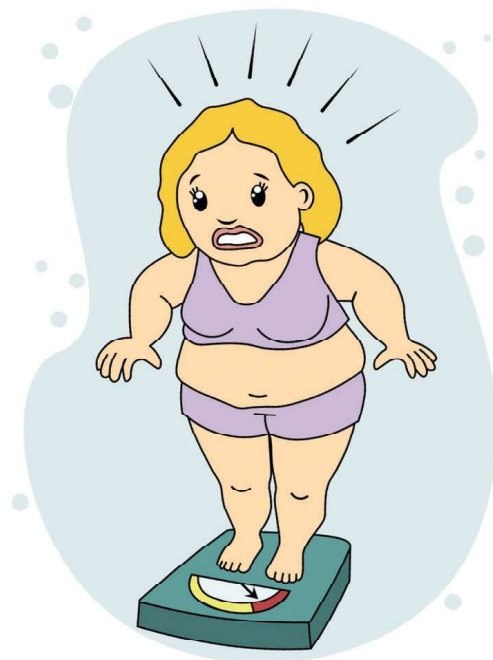


The Agony of Weight Loss

By Tricia Talerico, D.C., M.S., Nutr.



You don't need me to tell you that losing weight and keeping it off is difficult, in fact, for some it is nearly impossible. Understanding why weight loss is so difficult can help you stop beating yourself up over every setback and increase your chances of success.

First, let's distinguish between weight loss and fat loss. Weight loss is a reduction in overall body weight, including muscle and water. Fat loss is a reduction in body fat only. Daily weight fluctuations can be influenced by sodium intake, hydration, exercise, menstruation, bowel movements (or lack of), stress and total calories consumed. So, body composition (amounts of body fat, lean mass and body water) is a more comprehensive way to assess our progress. We typically measure body fat as a percentage. According to the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), a healthy body fat range for men is 10-20%, while for women the range is 18-28%. Generally speaking, when on a weight loss journey (if done correctly) we can expect to lose from 1-3% body fat per month. Quick weight loss schemes or liquid diets can be deceiving, as they may show a drop in weight on the scale, but not necessarily in body fat percentage. Why? Cutting significant calories, especially those that

support skeletal muscle, results in muscle loss, not body fat. These fad diets can also wreak havoc on your metabolism, damaging your weight loss efforts for the long term.

Exercise can help us lose weight and keep it off. However, it is nearly impossible to lose weight from exercise alone (unless you start training like an Olympic

athlete). For example, if you ride a bike for 60 minutes at 12 mph, you can burn approximately 375 calories. We can put that all back with just one post-workout protein bar. To actually lose a pound of fat, you have to burn 3,500 calories more than you consume. So, you can see how hard it is to exercise your way through a poor diet. Instead, you have to clean up your diet and exercise. Don't skip the strength training either. Increasing muscle mass does give your metabolism a boost and gives your body a leaner, more athletic look. Lifting weights at a gym is not for everyone, so buy some weights and possibly hire a Personal Trainer to teach you how to lift and work out at home.

As we stated previously, fad diets don't work. Perhaps you have tried some of the more popular ones? Grapefruit. Maple syrup. Cabbage. Apple-cider vinegar. Juice. The fact is that fad diets only work in the short term through caloric restriction and will not deliver long-lasting results. The key is to make sustainable lifestyle changes. No, you don't have to eat perfectly 100% of the time. Allow yourself a cheat meal once a week and then get right back on your healthy eating plan. In our office, we guide our clients in their weight loss journey by tracking their body composition on the InBody 570. So, if a client can see that they are making progress by decreasing body fat percentage, they may understand why their actual weight in pounds is less important.

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