

# Diet Versus Exercise - What's the best way to lose weight

By Michael Stefano

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The debate rages on. What's most important, a healthy, well-balanced diet or an active lifestyle that incorporates some type of exercise? Let's take a close look at what each can do for us, and at what cost.

Diet Minded

Eat less, weigh less. Simple –right? But from Atkins to the Zone, there's no shortage of nutritional approaches to weight management. Too bad the multi-billion diet industry seems to create more confusion than solutions – a major drawback for those stuck on dieting, spending lots of money, and going nowhere.

Dieting, or temporarily changing one's eating habits in order to shed body fat is at best, a band-aid approach to weight loss. A more sensible method involves taking the time to learn how to eat, what foods are good for you, and what you need to avoid or moderate in your daily diet.

Instead of blindly following the latest fad diet, educate yourself through reading, seeking out a nutritionist, or even consulting your doctor on what's best for you. Eating right can involve a bit of leg-work, but eventually you'll learn that fad and gimmick diets are just a waste of time.

Sticking to a sensible eating program can also involve some discipline and sacrifice. Running into the nearest McDonald's whenever time is short and hunger hits is no longer a viable option. But the hundreds of unwanted fat calories you'll avoid, that would have otherwise found their way directly to your hips, will be well worth the sacrifice.

Most experts agree that the best way to reduce body fat is to never let the unwanted calories cross your lips in the first place. The simplicity of this statement is lost on many of us, but you'll be amazed at how much less you need to exercise when you stop eating too much of the wrong foods.

At the same time, nutritional requirements of protein, carbohydrate and yes, even fat, must be met. You also need minimum daily requirements of vitamins and minerals, as well as plenty of water and fiber. This is where the self-education really kicks in, --out and out starvation just won't work, and can lead to serious eating disorders, such as anorexia and bulimia.

But don't forget about the fringe benefits of eating sensibly. The resulting lowered cholesterol and triglyceride levels reduces your risk of heart disease, while stable blood sugar minimizes your risk of diabetes and its associated problems. Your risk of developing certain types of cancer is also significantly lessened.

## Exercise Ecstasy

To date exercise is the closest we've come to finding the fountain of youth. Exercise can change the way you look, feel, and perform, as well as have a tremendously positive impact on your health and almost every aspect of your life. But it isn't all good news.

For an exercise program to get results, you need to set aside a certain amount of time and energy! Running yourself into the ground, working long hours, and not sleeping right hardly makes for the ideal scenario. Here too the solution involves a bit of self-education, discipline, and prioritizing. You'll need to take a realistic look at how much time you can devote to an exercise program, and restructure your daily schedule accordingly. The key to success is formulating a plan that doesn't waste your time and effort doing the wrong thing.

Another hazard to avoid when taking to the gym is exercising too much, or over training. This can sabotage the most well intentioned novice or seasoned athlete. Over training can also make you sick, or set you up for an overuse injury. A comprehensive plan based on sound knowledge will help steer you clear of this all too common problem.

The cost of gym equipment and a health club membership represent another drawback to the active approach to weight loss. Fortunately, it's not the cost of the equipment that gets results. Experts have found that exercises done with simple dumbbells can be just as, or even more effective than exercises done with sophisticated machines, like those you'll find at any health club.

Setting up a simple, economical home gym will also help overcome some of the time limitations by cutting out travel to and from the gym. With a small initial investment and a few square feet of floor space, you can add convenience to the list of why an exercise program can be so effective.

## Conclusion

A well balanced diet will fuel your workouts and supply your growing muscles with much needed nutrients, while at the same time requiring you to workout less. Exercise will burn excess calories, rev up your metabolism and allow you to eat more without gaining weight. It's a win-win situation. For the best of both worlds, don't choose between diet and exercise, take the comprehensive approach and allow the two to support one another.

## About the Author

Michael Stefano: Author of The Firefighter's Workout Book, Not Just For Firefighters! Special Offer: Lose weight and get in the shape of your life with the FREE Train For Life Newsletter, as well as customized workouts for both men and women.

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