



TIPS FOR HEALTHY WEIGHT LOSS

Obtaining professional advice from, and working with, an Accredited Sports Dietitian is the most effective and appropriate way to help you achieve your personal goal of weight loss but here are some general tips.

When it comes to achieving weight loss, the common saying of “eat less, move more” is generally correct. However, you can do too much of both. Large dietary restrictions or big increases to exercise levels (or a combination of both) can be detrimental to not only your weight loss efforts but to your overall health, injury risk and sporting performance.

For these reasons, it is important to take a long-term approach to weight loss. By which we mean in terms of months to years. Fad diets should always be avoided. They may achieve quick weight loss, but are generally unsustainable and unhealthy. They almost always lack essential food groups and important nutrients that the body needs. Health experts estimate that between 96-98% of dieters regain all the weight lost ‘on a diet’ within 2-3 years and the faster the weight is lost, the faster it returns.

Metabolic rate is the energy required to keep all the baseline functions of the body working and accounts for most of the body's daily energy requirements. A reduction in metabolic rate means a lower energy budget to survive on. This makes it harder to create the energy deficit that produces a loss of body fat. The best approach is to create a small “energy deficit” through reducing something in your diet, or by slightly increasing energy expenditure (but only if your training plan is not already high). An easy and healthy way to do this is to reduce your intake of “discretionary” foods. These are foods with little or no nutritional value (but have a high caloric value), such as sweets, excess use of oil or butter, and “fast foods”. Alcohol is high in “useless” calories and should be avoided or significantly reduced.

Appropriate weight loss is ~0.5kg per week. This ensures little or no muscle mass is lost in the weight loss process. If muscle loss does occur it can be detrimental to both your metabolic rate and your sporting performance. Remember too, to protect muscle mass, adequate protein intake (lean meats, poultry, eggs, fish, legumes, tofu, reduced fat dairy, nuts and seeds) is also necessary during the weight loss process.

Small, sustainable changes to your diet and/or to your training plan can result in healthy weight loss over time. But the best advice, compiled specifically for your body, will come from an Accredited Sports Dietitian.