

7 WAYS To Help Shed Pounds

7 Metabolic Boosters that will help you maximize your weight loss efforts by supporting your metabolism during and after each weight loss phase.

- 1. Frequent Eating (5-6 times per day)**
Constantly fueling your metabolism is the key to maximizing your weight loss efforts. Frequent eating will do this by stimulating thermogenesis (the energy required by our bodies to digest food) and preventing your brain from entering the starvation mode.
- 2. Muscle Boosting**
Muscle cells are nearly eight times more metabolically demanding than fat cells. The greater your ratio of lean body mass is to fat, the faster your metabolism will be and the more calories you will burn.
- 3. Aerobic Exercise**
Aerobic exercise significantly boosts your metabolism, so a regular exercise routine (@least 30 minutes, 3 times/week) will greatly increase your weight loss progress.
- 4. Drinking Plenty of Water**
The more water you drink, the more your metabolism will increase. A good rule of thumb: drink 1/2 your body weight in ounces of water daily.
- 5. Eight Hours of Sleep Every Night**
Sleep deprivation has been linked to low energy, increased food consumption and decreased physical activity. It is critical to get a full 8 hours of sleep nightly.
- 6. Using the Sauna**
Our body produces sweat in response to heat, so the more you sweat, the more calories you will burn. Sweating also raises your metabolic rate, which helps you burn even more calories!
- 7. Detoxification**
The build-up of toxins in the body can limit your ability to burn fat and slow down your metabolic rate, so it is important to frequently cleanse and detoxify the body.

Metabolism and weight loss: How you burn calories

Find out how metabolism burns calories, how it affects your weight and ways you can burn more calories for greater weight loss.

You likely know your metabolism is linked to your weight. But do you know how?

Common belief holds that a slim person's metabolism is high and an overweight person's metabolism is low. But this isn't usually the case. Weight isn't necessarily directly linked to metabolism.

Instead, weight is dependent on the balance of total calories consumed versus total calories burned. Take in more calories than your body needs, and you gain weight. Take in less and you lose weight. Metabolism, then, is the engine that burns these calories.

Metabolism: Converting food into energy

Stated simply, metabolism is the process by which your body converts food into energy. During this complex biochemical process, calories — from carbohydrates, fats and proteins — are combined with oxygen to release the energy your body needs to function.

The number of calories your body burns each day is called your total energy expenditure. The following three factors make up your total energy expenditure:

- **Basic needs.** Even when your body is at rest, it requires energy for the basics, such as fuel for organs, breathing, circulating blood, adjusting hormone levels, plus growing and repairing cells. Calories expended to cover these basic functions are your basal metabolic rate (BMR). Typically, a person's BMR is the largest portion of energy use, representing two-thirds to three-quarters of the calories used each day. Energy needs for these basic functions stay fairly consistent and aren't easily changed.
- **Food processing.** Digesting, absorbing, transporting and storing the food you consume also takes calories. This accounts for about 10 percent of the calories used each day. For the most part, your body's energy requirement to process food stays relatively steady and isn't easily changed.
- **Physical activity.** Physical activity — such as playing tennis, walking to the store, chasing after the dog and any other movement — accounts for the remainder of calories used. You control the number of calories burned depending on the frequency, duration and intensity of your activities.

Metabolism and your weight

It may seem logical to think that significant weight gain or being overweight is related to a low metabolism or possibly even a condition such as underactive thyroid gland (hypothyroidism). In reality, it's very uncommon for excess weight to be related to a low metabolism. And most people who are overweight don't have an underlying condition, such as hypothyroidism. However, a medical evaluation can determine whether a medical condition could be influencing your weight.

Weight gain is more likely due to an energy imbalance — consuming more calories than your body burns. To lose weight, then, you need to create an energy deficit by eating fewer calories, increasing the number of calories you burn through physical activity, or preferably both.

Influences on your calorie needs

If you and everyone else were physically and functionally identical, it would be easy to determine the standard energy needs. But many factors influence calorie requirements, including body size and composition, age, and sex.

- **Body size and composition.** To function properly, a bigger body mass requires more energy (more calories) than does a smaller body mass. Also, muscle burns more calories than fat does. So the more muscle you have in relation to fat, the higher your basal metabolic rate.
- **Age.** As you get older, the amount of muscle tends to decrease and fat accounts for more of your weight. Metabolism also slows naturally with age. Together these changes reduce your calorie needs.
- **Sex.** Men usually have less body fat and more muscle than do women of the same age and weight. This is why men generally have a higher basal metabolic rate and burn more calories than women do.

Burning more calories

Your ability to change your basal metabolism is limited. However, you can increase daily exercise and activity to build muscle tissue and burn more calories.

Regular aerobic exercise, such as walking daily for 30 minutes or more, is an excellent way to burn calories. Strength training exercises, such as weight training, also are important because they help counteract muscle loss associated with aging. And since muscle tissue burns more calories, muscle mass is a key factor in weight loss.

Even though regularly scheduled aerobic exercise is best for weight loss, any extra movement helps burn calories. Look for ways to walk and move around a few minutes more each day. Lifestyle activities, such as gardening, washing your car and even housework, burn calories and contribute to weight loss. Taking the stairs more often and parking farther away at the store also are simple ways to burn more calories.

Don't look to dietary supplements for help in burning calories. Products that claim to speed up your metabolism are likely to offer minimal benefit and may produce undesirable or even dangerous side effects. Dietary supplement manufacturers aren't required by the Food and Drug Administration to prove their products are safe or effective, so view these products with caution and skepticism.

Though your metabolism influences your energy needs, it's your food intake and physical activity that ultimately determine your weight.