

Nutrition, Diet, and Exercise

Whether you are trying to lose weight or live an active healthy life style, nutrition and exercise are vital to your health. We have become as a whole in the western culture, a couch potato, slow moving, over weight and flaccid society. Of course there will always be that smaller percentage of people who get it right and remain fit and healthy. But those that do, make a conscious effort at it with diet and exercise. Well done if you are in that category! Part of the problem is that because we as humans have it ingrained in us to constantly change things, we are the only creatures that invent food. No other animal or insect does this and they don't have the diseases humans do unless we have poisoned their environment. We have so much in the way of processed food that have little nutrient value, that we pack on the pounds and become slower moving. In the wild, animals that eat the raw greens, grasses fruits and berries are very healthy animals. The meat-eating animals consume the healthy plant-eating animals and remain virtually disease free. Our farms on the other hand, need to mass-produce cattle and chickens so we give them hormones and phosphates and the like and we consume them. That is by the way, some experts now think younger girls are developing much earlier than they used to because of the hormones in meat and dairy products. We can however, luckily eat raw fruits and vegetables and we should do so on a daily basis. Another culprit is our need to once again, change our environment. We have more machines that do things for us now and it won't stop there. This is both good and bad. The good is a higher rate of production for the products we need, bad because we are slowing down physically. In as little as ten years ago we could go out on a Sunday morning and see someone pushing his or her lawn mower. (And I mean pushing). Now a days, you'll see more of sit down mowers or power mowers that literally pull you along with it. Our fore fathers were much more active and they ate nutrient rich foods. And they could eat a lot of it without getting fat because of how much energy they spent from hard physical labor. Is all lost for us in this day and age? Absolutely not!!! We are perfectly capable of reversing this trend, but it does require a) your dedication and b) follow through. This can be done no matter what your weight and activity level. Make your first step the decision to become healthy and fit. Once you have firmly made that decision you are on your way. Now take the time to evaluate your lifestyle and really look at it. Be honest with yourself about your eating habits and activity level. Changing your diet to eating healthy whole foods is a good way to start. It'll not only help you lose weight and help you feel better, but it will enhance your quality of life. You'll have more energy and life just feels better when you are healthy. There are many popular diets out there. The Zone, the Blood Type Diet, Atkins, the South Beach Diet, Weight Watchers and the list goes on. They all have had their share of successes so it is hard sometimes to know what to do. I can only say, do your homework. You will find the right one that works for you and you will be more likely to stick to it. If you want to do it on your own you can be just as successful if you know some basic rules. 1) Portion control. Cutting down to smaller portions can help tremendously. A great way to eat less food at one sitting is to drink a glass of water before you eat and then drink more water with your meal. Water takes up a lot of space in your stomach so you will feel full faster and water won't give you any extra calories. Awesome! 2) Water, water, water. Drink lots of clean pure water. Your body needs it and more than you think. Most North Americans are in a state of semi dehydration. Water flushes out toxins, gets your bowels moving. (Did you know that the amount of pain you feel from injury or minor aches and pains are directly proportional to how dehydrated you are? An interesting tid bit) 3) Eat raw fruits and vegetables as much as you can especially dark greens. Cooked veggies lose some of their nutrients so eating a salad every day would benefit you. Most of your vitamins and minerals are going to come from fresh fruits and leafy green vegetables. And try to stick to organic on this to avoid the pesticides and chemicals. 4) Fiber. You need to keep the bowels moving and the combination of water and fiber will do the trick. The best fiber comes from fruit and whole grains. But consider this: You would need to eat 10 bran muffins to get the same amount of fiber as in a half cup of raspberries. 5) Protein. The best source of protein is from meats such as beef, chicken or turkey. But do limit the amount you eat at one time. You don't need a 10 or 12oz piece of meat at one sitting. You can get protein from dairy and cheese but consume only small amounts because they digest too slowly. Nut is a source of protein but they are high in fat so consume small amounts. 6) Sugar, confectionary treats, soda's, junk foods and some processed foods are your enemy. Nothing gives you weight gain and that sluggish feeling quite like this grouping. I am not saying you should never partake of them, but do so only occasionally. We do after all need our cheat days once in a while. Just make them small portions. 7) Find an exercise regimen that you like and will stick to. Pretty much any exercise program will help you lose weight if you stick with it. You will see on TV all the equipment people want to sell you but after watching for a bit you usually know what appeals to you or not. You may just want to pop in a video and exercise with that. 8) I can't say enough about sticking with your program. It takes time and you can experience losses in the beginning when it seems it is not going fast enough, but if you stick with it, you will get your reward and you will reach your goal weight and have energy to burn. 9) And finally, because some of food is deficient in nutrients from growing in poor over used soil it might be a good idea to get some good vitamin supplements to assist in getting our daily requirements in. Getting it in food is the best but that is hard to do these days so find a qualified nutritionist to help you in selecting what's best for you. Good luck and good health!

About the Author

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