

Dieting and Metabolism

One of the more common subjects I deal with during my day to day encounters is dieting and its effect on metabolism.

It seems that in the age we live in, most people who want to shed some weight would prefer to limit their calorie intake (dieting) rather than performing some sort of regular exercise. If you are one of these people, it is important to realise the flow on effect that dieting can have on your metabolism.

To put it simply, when someone is dieting and severely limits their calorie intake for extended periods their bodies enter a 'starvation mode'. This is where our body thinks it has entered a period of famine and will make every effort to store as many of the calories we consume as fat. The body will also look to save its existing fat stores and convert lean body mass (muscle) into fuel. This is where the flow on effect of dieting can come into play. Generally the more muscle mass our bodies carry, the more calories we need to consume and the higher the metabolism. So, if due to dieting your body is using muscle as a fuel source we are going to see a slowing of our metabolism. This can create a snow ball effect, whereby if every time you diet you lose more muscle mass, you will have to cut your calories further and further achieve the same weight loss results. This is why you often see people yo-yo with their weight due to dieting. This person losses weight by reducing their calorie intake; achieves their weight goal and then resumes their normal diet, but due to the loss of muscle mass and subsequent slowing of the metabolism their body can no longer handle the same amount of calories and puts body fat on more easily. I am sure you can see the dilemma here.

A better solution for weight loss would be to cut excessive calories, eat a sufficient and balanced diet and perform some regular exercise. Not only will you be burning calories during your workouts that you wouldn't normally burn, you will also speed up your metabolism making your body more efficient at burning the calories that you consume. Enjoy Fitness.

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The information contained in this article is to be used as a guide only. If you plan to undertake an exercise program you should first consult your medical practitioner and fitness professional.