

WHAT IS A HEALTHY WEIGHT?

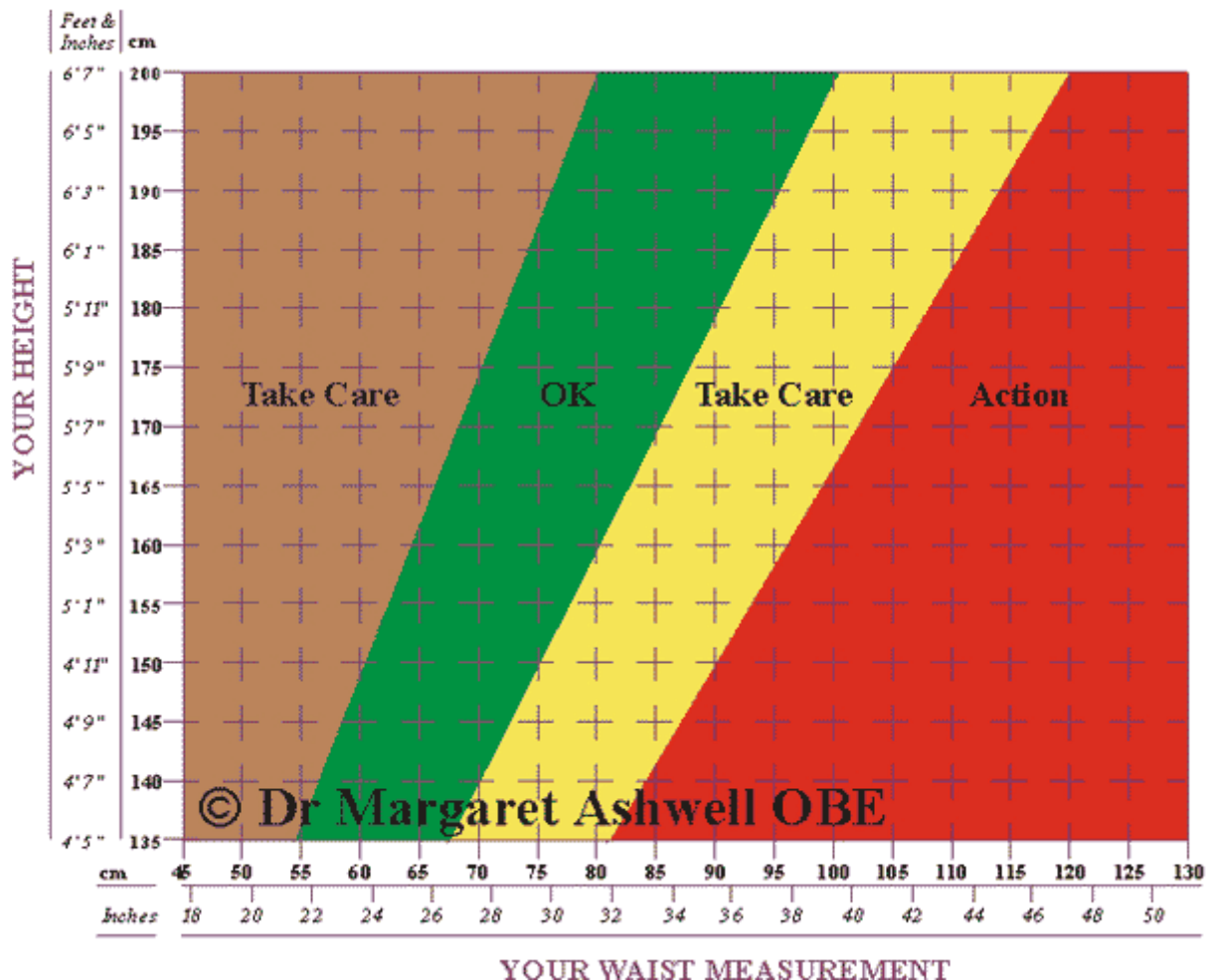
We all know that it is unhealthy to be overweight but what exactly is overweight? I am not a big lover of the BMI calculation so for me, the simplest way to tell is to see if your waist is a healthy size for your height.

If you have too much weight around your middle, often called an 'apple' shape, this increases your risk of developing heart disease, diabetes, strokes, certain types of cancer, osteoarthritis and many more.

If the weight is around your hips, this is often called a 'pear' shape. Someone with an apple shape will face greater health risks than someone who has a pear shape, even if they are both overweight.



To get a clearer picture of your overall health risk, you might find it useful to check out your body shape. You can do this by plotting the size of your waist against your height on the Ashwell® shape chart below.

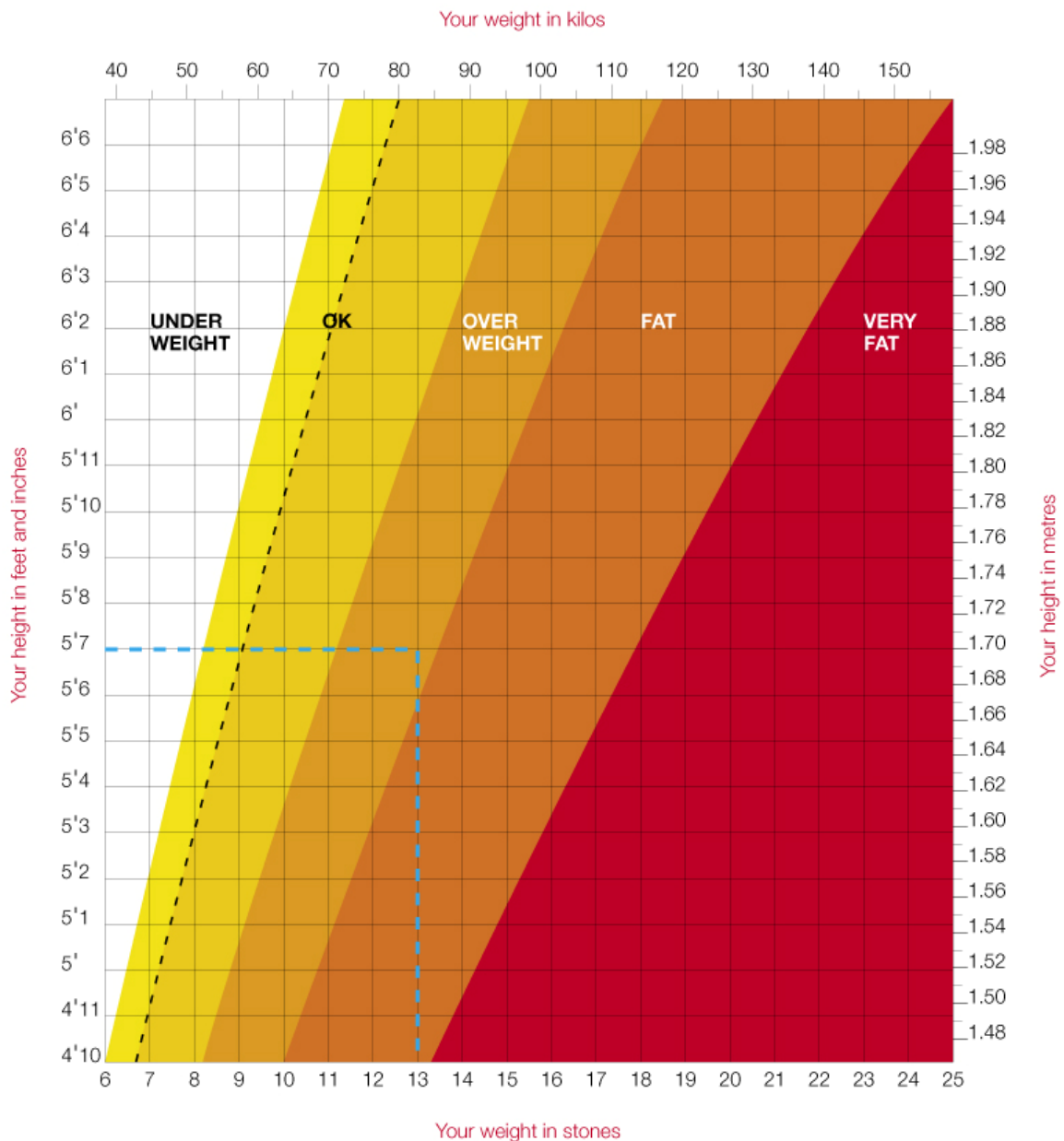
If you have well-developed muscles, you may find that you will fall into the category of overweight on the body mass index calculator (and the height/weight chart), when in fact you may have a healthy body shape and very little fat. If this is the case, ask me to measure your body fat percentage to provide an even more accurate reading for your body type.



The Switch Fitness website has a built in calculator to show you at a glance where you stand with regards to a healthy weight range. Go to:

www.switchfitness.co.uk/calcs

 <p>Brown – Take Care</p>	<p>This means you will probably have a tall thin 'chilli' type of shape. This isn't desirable for good health so you need to take care. You may need to gain weight.</p>	 <p>Green – 'OK'</p>	<p>This means you will probably have a healthy 'pear' shape, which is a healthy shape. With this type of body shape, any excess fat is stored under the skin around the bottom, hips and thighs, which is less harmful to health than having an apple shape.</p>
 <p>Yellow – Take Care</p>	<p>This means you will probably have a 'pear-apple' shape, which means you should take care. Make sure you don't put on any more weight, especially if your measurements fall towards the upper end of the area.</p>	 <p>Red – Take Action</p>	<p>This means you will probably have an 'apple' shape. With this body shape excess fat is stored deep below the skin in the stomach area, which will increase your risk of serious conditions such as heart disease, raised blood pressure, Type II diabetes and some types of cancer. Your health is likely to be at risk so speak to your GP about losing weight.</p>

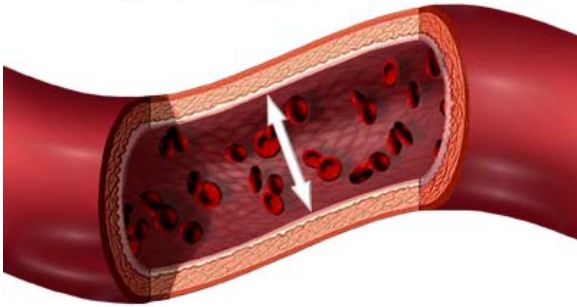


WHAT ARE THE HEALTH RISKS?

Even if you are happy with how you look, and many people are, if you are overweight then you carry a greater risk of illness. The very fact that you are reading this, in a gym, means you do care about your body. Even a small reduction in your body fat can reap huge benefits to your health. Listed below are just some of the illnesses you are at a higher risk of developing by being overweight.

- **Heart Disease and Stroke:** Heart disease and stroke are the leading causes of death and disability

Blood pressure is the measurement of force applied to artery walls

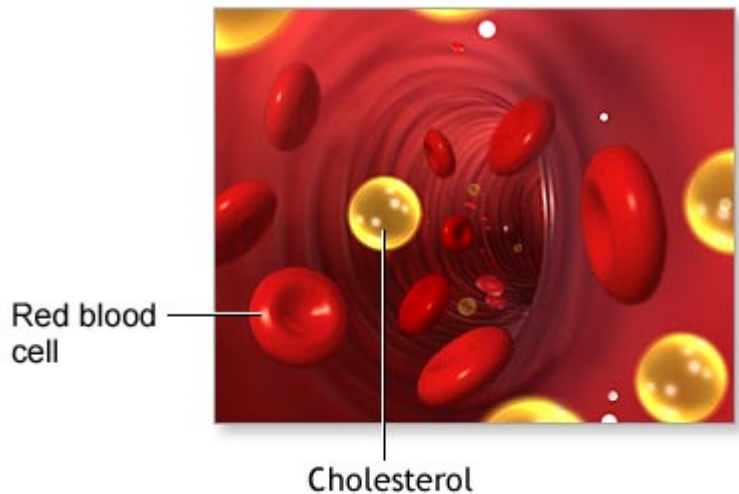


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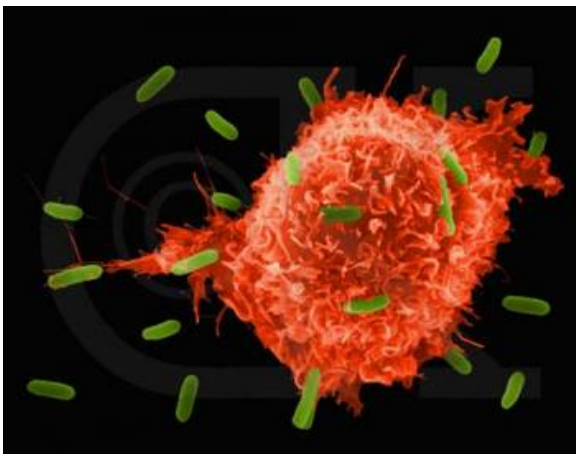
for both men and women in the Western World. Overweight people are more likely to have high blood pressure, a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke, than people who are not overweight. Very high blood levels of cholesterol and triglycerides (blood fats) can also lead to heart disease and often are linked to obesity. Being overweight also contributes to angina (chest pain caused by decreased oxygen to the heart) and sudden death from heart disease or stroke without any signs or symptoms. High blood pressure is twice as common in obese adults

- **Diabetes:** Non insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus (type 2 diabetes) is the most common type of diabetes in the Western World. Type 2 diabetes reduces your body's ability to control blood sugar. It is a major cause of early death, heart disease, kidney disease, stroke, and blindness. Statistically, overweight people are twice as likely to develop type 2 diabetes as people who are not overweight. Gaining as little as 11 - 18 pounds doubles your chance of developing type 2 diabetes. More than 80% of people with diabetes are classified as overweight or obese.

Normal interior view of artery

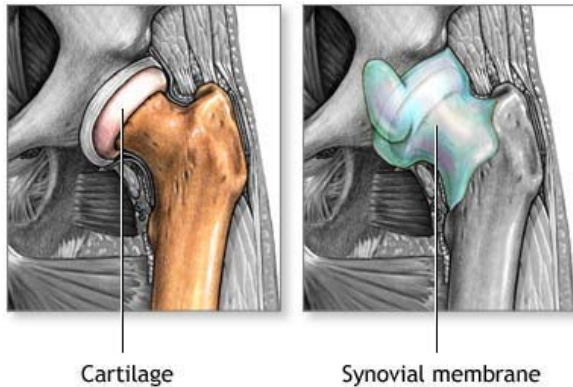


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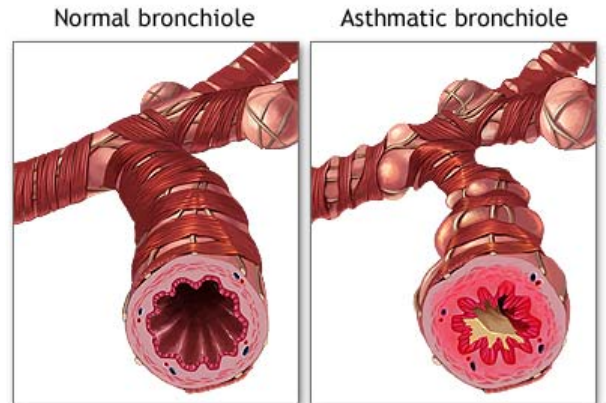
- **Cancer:** Several types of cancer are associated with obesity. In women, these include cancer of the uterus, gallbladder, cervix, ovary, breast, and colon. Overweight men are at greater risk of developing cancer of the colon, rectum, and prostate. For some types of cancer, such as colon or breast, it is not clear whether the increased risk is due to the extra weight or to a high-fat and high-calorie diet, this, of course, being strongly associated with weight problems as a consequence.

- **Gout:** Gout is a joint disease caused by high levels of uric acid in the blood. Uric acid sometimes forms into solid stone or crystal masses that become deposited in the joints. Gout is more common in overweight people and the risk of developing the disorder increases in parallel with higher Body Weights.



- **Osteoarthritis:** Osteoarthritis is a common joint disorder that most often affects the joints in your knees, hips, and lower back. Extra weight appears to increase the risk of osteoarthritis by placing extra pressure on these joints and wearing away the cartilage (tissue that cushions the joints) that normally protects them. Weight Loss can decrease stress on the knees, hips, and lower back and may improve the symptoms of osteoarthritis.

- **Sleep Apnoea:** Sleep apnoea is a serious condition that is closely associated with being overweight. The apnoea can cause a person to stop breathing for short periods during sleep and to snore heavily. As a further consequence, there may be daytime sleepiness and in extreme cases the onset of symptoms of heart failure. The risk for sleep apnoea increases with higher body weights. Yet again, Weight Loss ultimately reverses this risk.



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- **Gallbladder Disease:** Gallbladder disease and gallstones are more common if you are overweight, and your risk of the disease increases as your weight increases. It is not clear how being overweight may cause gallbladder disease but the association may be a consequence of changes in fat and cholesterol handling by the body leading to super saturation of bile.

If you are overweight, losing as little as 5 to 10 percent of your Body Weight and increasing your physical activity may improve many of the problems linked to being overweight, including high blood pressure and diabetes.

THE 4 ELEMENTS TO WEIGHT LOSS.

1. NUTRITION

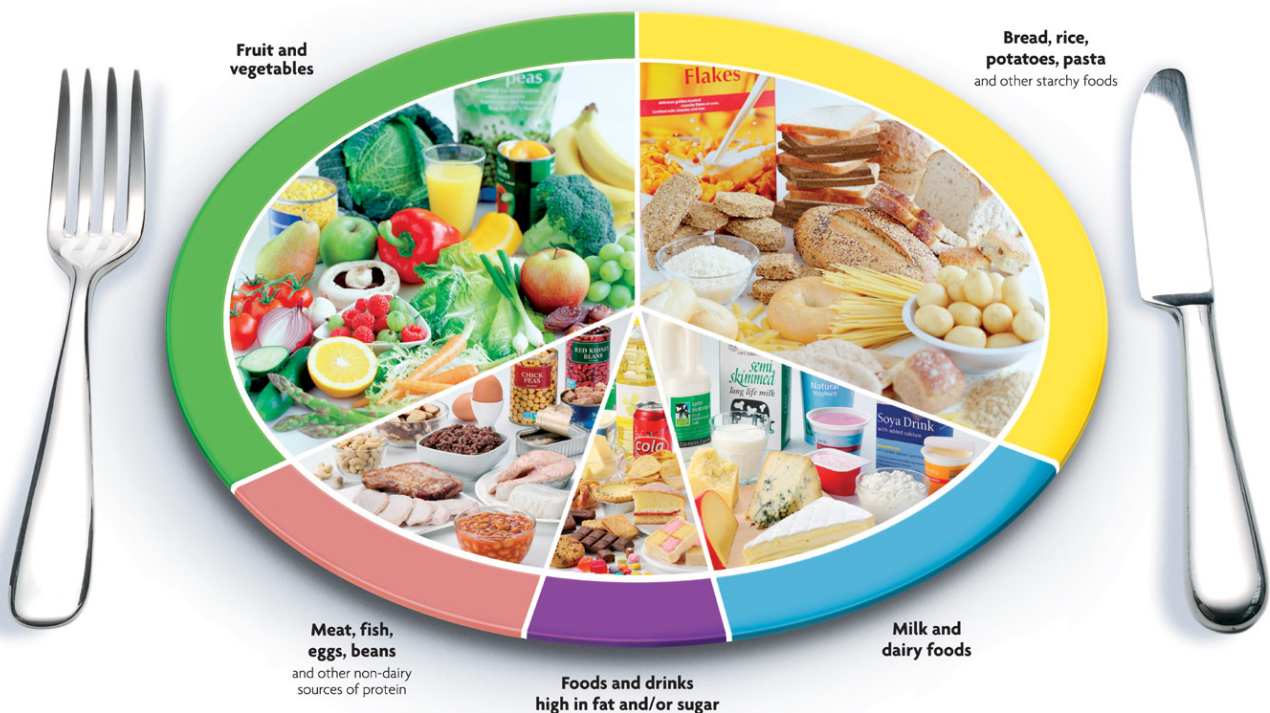
Everyone knows that weight gain is generally achieved by consuming more energy (calories) than the body requires. This is not however the complete story. Different food types consumed in the wrong quantities can accelerate weight gain dramatically, so likewise the correct foods eaten in the right quantities can dramatically accelerate weight loss.

Most people who speak to me regarding weight loss focus solely on the calories they consume, not the 'types' of calories they eat or when in the day they eat them. These two points make a huge difference in your weight loss success, not to mention energy levels and your ability to stick to a new food plan. As a guide, the Food Standards Agency has an "Eatwell Plate" that it uses as a guide to give people an idea of the quantities of different types of food they should consume. A copy of the plate is below, but as you can see it does not mention 'when' these should be eaten. Also, it does not distinguish between different types of food within each group, such as wholegrain versus white or 'good' fats versus 'bad'.

The eatwell plate



Use the eatwell plate to help you get the balance right. It shows how much of what you eat should come from each food group.



Many people make the mistake of assuming that a low fat diet is the way forward when trying to lose weight, and whilst it is true that fats are very calorie dense, certain fats are **ESSENTIAL** to the bodies internal working, and indeed if the body does not receive enough fat in the diet, it is actually much more reluctant to let go of the stuff it is currently holding onto, i.e. the fat you want to be rid of!!!!

The 'Eatwell Plate' is ideal for most members of the general public looking to eat more healthily, but not ideal for those wanting to lose weight. Don't get me wrong, cleaning up your eating habits will result in a certain amount of weight loss, but serious, successful fat loss requires a more structured approach, with (continued...)

(continued...) control over your Fat, Carbohydrate, Protein, Water and Vitamin & Mineral intake, and in particular the times of those intakes.

As a general guide, and only a general guide because the whole subject of Nutrition would take up far more space than this notice board, the following are basic pointers to adhere to SPECIFICALLY TO WEIGHT LOSS. Please however note the following:

1. *What works for one may not always work for everyone else.*
2. *Advice abounds about the many ways to lose weight, please only take advice from qualified nutritionists (such as me obviously!!!)*
3. *Weight loss should never be quick, ALWAYS slow, your body has to adapt to its new state each time you lose weight. If it does not, then rapid regaining of the weight is inevitable. YoYo anyone??*
4. *The nutrition plans that my clients follow are not 'The Holy Grail' of weight loss, they are open to interpretation, analysis and criticism. Indeed my knowledge and opinions are constantly changing as my understanding and education of food increases. If you wish to comment on any of the following points, PLEASE feel free to do so. If you know something I don't then I will be better for it.*

DO.....

- Always have a good Multivitamin and Omega Oil supplement with your breakfast.
- Always eat breakfast, ensure it has some protein, lots of wholegrain carbohydrates and some dairy.
- Eat a mid morning snack of fruit, not fruit juice.
- Make lunch your main meal of the day, lots of wholegrain carbohydrates, some protein and dairy.
- Have an afternoon snack of a different fruit, not fruit juice.
- Eat a moderate dinner, a good protein source, some dairy and lots and lots of vegetables, but NO starchy carbohydrates.
- Eat a piece of fruit or have a glass of milk half an hour before going to bed.
- Drink a minimum of 2 litres of water every day; this is actually really easy to do.
- STAY AWAY from foods high in salt, and any foods with added sugar wherever possible. It's not fat that has made the western world fat, it's SUGAR!!!!!!!!!!
- Have one day a week where you cheat! Eat and drink (including alcohol) what you want, when you want and as much as you want. But only one day a week, and never two days consecutively.

DON'T.....

- Drink alcohol
- Eat foods with lots of added sugar or salt, and don't add these to your foods where possible.
- Eat white bread, pasta or rice. Stick to wholegrain only.
- Drink less than 2 litres of water every day. See the next section about water.
- Eat ready meals unless absolutely necessary.
- Go a day without having eaten at least 2 pieces of fruit and two different types of vegetables.
- Eat Cakes, Biscuits, Sweets and Chocolate except on cheat days.
- Avoid good fats i.e. any fats other than Saturated and Trans.
- Give up!!!

These are obviously only very basic pointers; each of us is different and as such has very different needs regarding our psychological requirements with food. Weight loss is as much about understanding your relationship with food as it is your body's need for it. If you have been trying to lose weight but unsuccessfully, then talk to me.

2. WATER

I cannot stress enough how important water is to weight loss. I repeat, I cannot stress enough how important water is to weight loss!!! It is the be all and end all, it is so essential in fact that without enough fluid intake you may as well give up now and resign yourself to a life of being overweight! The stuff is free as well, and you need to drink it to stay alive, most people are already half way there, you just need to drink a little more.

- *The liver directly affects your body fat and weight loss. The liver's job is to convert the stored fat into energy; this metabolism of fat is directly influenced by the amount of water you drink. The liver also acts as a backup for the kidney, which needs plenty of water to work properly. This means that when the kidneys are not functioning properly the liver kicks in to help out, which diverts it from its primary function of metabolising the stored fat.*



- *Every food we eat contains water. The brain knows this and recognises that it can hydrate the body by eating food. Research has shown that often when we get hungry, we are not actually hungry for food, but that we are actually simply thirsty. It is recommended that when you feel hungry you drink two cups of water and then wait fifteen minute to see if your hunger has gone away.*
- *Drinking cold water helps your body to burn more calories in a weight loss program. This is because your body needs to burn calories to raise the water temperature to your body's temperature; however, the advantage is that normal water has zero calories, which means your body ends up burning more calories.*



- *Many people notice a reduction in weight and centimetres, as their body's water store becomes redundant and so decreases. If your diet has been one that did not provide you with adequate water, your body will have developed a pattern of storing water. It's part of the body's in-built survival mechanism - to store up the essential nutrients in short supply - just in case they aren't available in the future. So if you don't drink*

enough water, you are 'conditioning' your body to store water. And water is bulk and unwanted centimetres.

- *Caffeinated drinks cause the body to lose water. They are what's known as diuretics as they cause your body to dehydrate. You will do your body an enormous favour by cutting back. For every cup of coffee you drink you will need to drink another TWO glasses of water to counter the diuretic effect. Explore the world of herbal teas instead, you may be pleasantly surprised!*
- *The walls of fat cells are largely composed of water. If the body does not have enough water these walls become tough and makes the fat burning process much harder to achieve.*
- *Just drink the stuff, it's free and easy, and is essential to life and weight loss!!!*

3. EXERCISE

Sorry, it had to be mentioned somewhere and surely you would not expect me to generate a guide like this without mentioning it! Exercise goes hand in hand with nutrition when it comes to weight loss. We'll forget all the health benefits of exercise for a moment, and there are thousands, we'll concentrate solely in its role of assisting weight loss.

It is a common misconception that aerobic exercise tones and firms muscles. Actually it accomplishes very little toning and firming. Resistance exercise (weight training) is where real toning and firming of muscles occurs. Doing both aerobics and weight training is the optimal way to lose more fat and gain more muscle. If you are trying to lose weight, studies show that **weight loss increases by 56 percent with aerobic and strength exercises combined.**

Muscle may weigh more, but when you increase your muscle composition, the body is able to burn more fat, even when you are resting, because your metabolism is higher. A pound of muscle will use 350 to 500 calories per week to survive, while a pound of fat only needs about 14 calories per week. New studies have shown that building muscle helps your body fight disease better, too.



Strength training benefits everyone, no matter what age or sex, and is becoming recognized as an important component of fitness. Research is indicating that the muscle loss found in elderly people doesn't come from age, but lack of activity. Even a young person who doesn't get enough exercise can lose muscle mass and strength. Strength training, such as lifting weights or performing weight-resistance exercises, as little as twice a week can help maintain or increase muscle mass and dramatically improve your success with weight loss..



Strength training involving several sets of multiple repetitions using moderate weights will not result in huge muscles. Instead it builds bone mass and increases the metabolism, as well as toning and firming the muscles, giving a leaner look. The increased metabolism ensures your body burns the food it consumes more efficiently and therefore less is stored as fat. The exercise also improves your posture meaning that an improved physique accompanies your slimmer frame.

It is very important to do both aerobics and strength exercises. The aerobic exercises help your heart and lungs get stronger and help your body utilize oxygen more efficiently, which in turn helps with strength training and overall fitness. The strength exercise helps develop muscle, reduce body fat and maintain bone mass. The aerobic exercises should be fartlek or interval based, short and intense so as to preserve muscle and torch the fat!

Weight training is for everyone. That said, you need to be properly assessed first to identify any specific postural or biomechanical imbalances, but once a few checks have been done you are good to go. As you would expect I would stress that proper guidance and support is essential when starting out on a weight training programme to compliment your fat loss, as improper technique can be very dangerous. Not only that but **we have all seen people who have been coming to the gym for a long time and don't actually seem to ever be changing their shape!** Sometimes just a little professional guidance from experts, as opposed to magazine articles can make all the difference! It's also much more fun training with someone than on your own.

4. ADVICE & MONITORING

Any weight loss plan has to be structured. It needs to have definable goals and mid way markers to keep you motivated and focussed. The goals need to be achievable and realistic. The easiest way to do this is to make a plan, keep records of your progress and monitor your results.

The first step is to complete a food diary, for a normal week, before you begin your new eating regime. Be absolutely honest and record every bit of food and drink that passes your lips in a seven day period. A food diary can be found on my website which is available for you to download from:

www.switchfitness.co.uk/downloads

Secondly, consult the charts at the start of this guide (or visit my calcs page on the website) and establish where you want to get to. Aim for a realistic 1-2lbs weight loss a week and then set yourself a realistic time scale. Make sure you allow for Christmas and holidays getting in the way. The set mid term goals, such as 4 weekly to give yourself short term targets.

Thirdly, design your eating plan, write it down in a diary or journal and then stick to it! Every day note the exercise you completed and detail for that day in a new food diary everything you have eaten and drunk. Research has shown that people who write down their food and drink intake are 59% more likely to stick to a new eating plan.



Fourth, use the scales, but don't rely on them solely as a means to measuring your progress. If you are following my advice and incorporating resistance exercises into your programme then you will also be gaining some muscle, providing you with a firmer and more toned physique, and some of the weight from that muscle will counteract some of the fat weight you have lost. Measurements are a more accurate way of monitoring success.

Finally if you do not reach a mid term goal, all is not lost, reassess your time scales and KEEP GOING. The weight was not put on overnight, and you won't lose it overnight, but you WILL lose it if you stick to your plan.

Most importantly, if you are unsure of something, or are not achieving the results you are looking for, get advice. Again from a professional, not the good intentioned neighbour. For the very best results, contact Switch Fitness and we'll do all the leg work for you!!

Weight loss is not magical, and is not impossible. It just requires proper planning, structured progression, a little hard work from you and some will power. Believe me the results are worth it and as anyone who has ever succeeded at losing weight will tell you,

“There is no food that tastes as good as the feeling of being thin”

Thanks for reading this guide; it is available for download from my website at www.switchfitness.co.uk

If you have any questions please contact me either in person, via email or on 07810 481981. Good luck and let me know how you get on.

James Jackson

Switch Fitness
Small Changes...Big Results