

The York University Staff Association Health and Wellness News and Views

One of the most common questions I get asked is "How can I lose 10 pounds?" And this time of year with New Year's resolution motivation slowly dwindling away, that question is even more popular. Losing weight certainly has its rewards, more energy, the satisfaction of slipping into a new pair of jeans, and most importantly improved health. Research shows that if you're overweight, losing as little as 5-10 percent of your body weight can improve blood pressure, lower cholesterol, improve blood sugar levels and improve metabolism. Slimming down will require some discipline and sacrifices however it doesn't need to be a full time job. Here are some simple tips to help ditch those 10 pounds for good and kick start a healthier you in 2016.

When it comes to shedding weight, eating sensibly is the trump card. In fact, in my opinion 75% of all fitness success happens with what you eat. We all know that if your trying to lose a few pounds, the most important formula is calories in versus calories out. That said it is important to remember that your body requires a certain number of calories per day just to maintain essential body functions. If you go over that needed amount of calories each day and you're not active, you will inevitably gain weight. So how many calories should you eat each day? That depends on a few factors, gender, weight, height, age, and daily level of activity. For example an active 25 year old woman requires a higher number of calories per day than a 40 year old woman who is moderately active. To accurately figure out how many calories you need each day in order to lose weight search "Calorie Counter", enter the required information and use the calorie counts provided to help you stick to the daily amounts that are right for you.

You have to get accountable. Whether you are a techie with a fitness tracker or like to keep it simple with a pen and a note book, once you set your daily calorie goal record everything you eat and drink and the number of calories in each item. Studies show that people who keep food diaries tend to lose more weight and keep it off longer than those who don't. Tally calories as you go. If you wait till the end of the day, you're more likely to exceed your target.

The key to losing weight is getting through the first few weeks. This is the time when you're developing healthy habits in to your lifestyle. *"We are what we*

repeatedly do," Aristotle proclaimed. Even if you're not dedicating hours a day to working out, you can burn extra calories by incorporating a few habits that will make you move a little more during the day. Taking breaks every few hours to walk around the office, opting for the stairs instead of the elevator, parking a little farther from the office entrance are all simple habits that will up your calorie burn.

We all know that exercise helps burn extra calories and shed unwanted pounds. To lose weight, it is recommended that you exercise 30 minutes to 1 hour, 3-4 times a week. Find an activity that you enjoy so that it will be easier to stick to it. If you want additional help in your weight loss, you can incorporate strength training 1-2 times per week. Remember that these are simply recommendations that you don't have to strictly follow. The important thing is that you get up and move. You can always increase intensity and frequency as you go along.



There is strength in numbers. Study after study shows that teaming up to lose weight is always more effective than going it alone. Surrounding yourself with supportive people works for several reasons. To list a few, there is accountability: whether you're attending weight loss meetings or connecting with a friend at the crack of dawn to go for a run, people are counting on you. Beyond accountability, a friend that is journeying with you and experiencing the same ups and downs can commiserate, celebrate, and share ideas with you every step of the way.

Losing weight and becoming fit isn't about being perfect or never eating a donut again. It's about making healthy sustainable choices most of the time, day after day. So embrace a few healthy changes in your life, set small goals, make a commitment and stay driven—a healthier you is already on the horizon in 2016.

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