

The New Year is underway. Did you make a New Years resolution to lose weight? Are you already faltering in the goal and vision you set for yourself? If so, don't give up!!!

Please read on...

Many of us attend more parties and social gatherings in December than any other month of the year. It can feel pretty good to get back into a healthier eating pattern and a steady workout routine. It's also cold and dark for the next couple months and that makes it easier to focus on getting in shape. But why do so many people only stick with their increased exercise for the first two months of the year and then dribble back to their old ways?

A New Years resolution can be a good way to clear your mind and get some focus on what is really important. Have you been wishing you could take off a few pounds? If you aren't ready now, when will you be? I'd recommend not just saying, "I want to lose 20lbs this year". Research shows that setting a definite goal that is measurable will help you achieve what you are setting out to do. In fact by not setting a hard and fast goal there is a high probability you will fail.

It would be better to say I will lose 20lbs of fat by March 30th and I'll measure my progress by getting a body fat assessment every two weeks.

To achieve that goal you would need to lose approximately 1.6lbs of fat per week. Now you have a shorter term goal as well as a longer term goal. Tell people what you are attempting to do, visualize it, and write it down. Now, lay out a game plan so you can make it a reality... Get a little OBSESSED.

Here is the REAL QUESTION... Do you know how to lose weight (fat) without the usual starvation strategy? Maybe you have good intentions and you are spending a couple hours a day working out. You are highly motivated.

Greatly reducing your caloric intake is unhealthy and it also isn't permanent. If you are going to go through the effort to make the change, why not make it permanent? That will require a lifestyle change, with a special focus on your eating habits. A lifestyle change will stay with you for the rest of your life. I think when people hear "lifestyle change", they get scared because they like their life and don't really want to change it. Lifestyle change sounds like, " now take your

medicine", "it's good for you", but it sure isn't pleasant and doesn't taste good either. I always laugh when I ask someone if they'd like to taste a product and they say, "oh, that's ok, I can choke down anything". They are in the mindset that if it's good for you it may not be very tasty. Well if you have to "choke it down" you probably won't stick with it for the rest of your life either. Making a "lifestyle change" has to be something that is easy to maintain and is actually enjoyable in the long term.

For most people, weight loss is synonymous with pain and deprivation. Conventional wisdom says it's simple...calories in versus calories out. Deprivation is a major part of that formula. It hurts, it isn't fun, and it makes people grumpy. Couple that with the nutritional wisdom that says you should only eat 3 times a day, don't eat anything after 7pm, eat lots of fruits and vegetables, eat lots of fiber, and you are heading down a trail of pain and a meal strategy that may not support a healthy active lifestyle. People have been trying to follow that advice for years. So why is the obesity rate skyrocketing? Maybe because conventional wisdom really isn't very good...or maybe because there is really more to it than calories in/calories out. Some of the previous statements are very accurate but some of them are dead wrong when it comes to losing body fat in a healthy way, and making a change you can stick to for the rest of your life.

Let me describe a different way... Lifestyle change doesn't mean "quit having fun" and doesn't mean you can't enjoy tasty food any more. I love food!!! I love to cook and entertain and I eat 6 times a day! People that adopt this style of eating and make the change consistently say 3 things, "I can't believe how much I eat every day", "I have so much more energy", and "I'm losing body fat and eating more than before". Bizarre ??? Not really. You will lose body fat if you give your body what it needs, when it needs it, in the proper amounts to efficiently process nutrients.

The "trick" is what you are eating, in what quantities, and how often. It's really not a trick but it is kind of like a magic formula. It does work and doesn't require starving yourself.

In fact, quite the opposite...you won't lose body fat if you starve yourself. Our bodies are quite adept at survival and periods of starvation is something that we as humans had to endure, at times, over many years of evolution. Hey

newcomer, you won't win that game. You may lose some "weight" at first and then comes the plateau. Game over! Your metabolism adjusts, your hormones adjust, and body fat is stored because you are now in "starvation mode". Your body is programmed to survive with or without your help. Or you may get past that plateau and then look gaunt and unhealthy since you are losing so much muscle mass. Now you look like a smaller version of your old self. Not the look you were after? You lose muscle because muscle requires energy, and since your body doesn't have the energy intake to support that much muscle, it adjusts by getting rid of it. This slows down your metabolism, so now you have to eat even less to lose weight, and your body struggles to hold on to precious stored energy by storing fat. Survival! Your body doesn't know the difference between you, not eating because you chose not to eat, versus you, sitting in a cave waiting out a storm so you can hunt for food and eat again. Your body's reaction to this condition is the same... your body will try to adapt to your caloric intake by adjusting metabolic processes to conserve energy. Dump muscle, slow down the metabolism, store fat...survive!

Here are just a few helpful tips to get you started off in the right direction.

Point 1)

Know your body fat percentage. All weight loss isn't good. Keep the muscle, lose the fat. If you are losing muscle you are going to struggle to meet your weight loss goals in the short term and the long term. If you are just using the scale to judge your progress you are missing a major point. What are you losing, muscle or fat? I'd recommend keeping track of this with an accurate body fat assessment and do this every couple weeks so you can adjust as necessary.

Point 2)

Eating 5 or 6 times a day is "crucial" to lose excess body fat. Your body will adjust very quickly to this increased eating pattern by producing more enzymes to digest food at those times as well as speeding up your metabolism. By doing this you are actually reprogramming your metabolism. You will experience increased energy levels as well. And eat a splurge meal once a week. Remember, what I said about deprivation?

Point 3)

Getting protein at each meal and snack is also very important. Many people don't get enough protein and by simply increasing their intake they feel a big boost of energy. High quality protein sources are recommended. I hear many people describe their snacks and list their protein preference as almonds. Eating almonds as your protein source wouldn't be my first choice. Almonds are a good source of fat but not too good of a protein source. Biological values for almonds or nuts is approximately 30% and doesn't support muscle mass nearly as well as eggs or whey at 100%. Since protein will only stay with you for approximately 4 hours it is important to eat it regularly.

Point 4)

Sugar is the enemy. High glycemic foods equate to faster carbohydrate breakdown and higher blood sugar levels. Your body will react to a fast blood sugar rise by secreting insulin and storing body fat. Lower glycemic foods digest slowly and don't tend to spike your blood sugar levels. They also maintain your energy levels for a longer period of time. Less processed foods typically have a lower glycemic index. That is a good thing. Vegetables also tend to be lower glycemic carbohydrate choice. Fruits contain many good nutrients but be careful how much you eat since they can contain quite a bit of sugar.

Point 5)

Resistance exercise is important for fat loss. If I had a choice between cardio exercise or weight lifting to lose body fat I'd chose weight lifting. It is best if you can do both. For each decade after age 30 we lose a few percent of our muscle mass if we are sedentary. Lifting weights will help you stop the loss and even increase muscle mass. More muscle mass will speed up your metabolism, help you to lose body fat, increase your strength and improve balance to prevent injuries, and improve your self esteem, just to name a few benefits.

Point 6)

Don't work out first thing in the morning on an empty stomach. After sleeping all night you have a greatly reduced muscle glycogen level as well as being in a catabolic (muscle breakdown) state. Pushing your body to generate energy while you are in this depleted state will inevitably be counterproductive because you will break down muscle tissue. This is counterproductive whether you are an athlete or whether you are trying to lose body fat.

Point 7)

It is helpful to eat high quality, fast absorbing proteins and possibly some carbs immediately after the workout. After a strenuous workout, our muscles will absorb more nutrients than any other time during the day. This phenomenon is greatest about 15 minutes post-workout and diminishes in the next few hours. Consistent post-workout nutrition will be very beneficial and aid in the muscle recovery and repair process.

Point 8)

You have to eat fat to lose fat. Essential fatty acids are important to your health and a key ingredient in losing weight. Essential fats must be eaten in our diet. Omega 3, 6 and 9 are all essential fatty acids. The western diet typically has an abundance of omega 6 and 9. It's omega 3 that is severely deficit for most people. An omega 3 fatty acid is highly recommended even if you eat fish a couple times a week. The benefit of omega 3's would fill this page. I recommend doing at least 1.5g of EPA/DHA (add mg of EPA to mg of DHA and take as many capsules as needed to get this amount) daily. Essential fats are beneficial for inflammation, brain function, relieving depression, and hormone regulation, just to name a few.

Point 9)

Calories are important. Find out how many calories you burn each day and make sure you include exercise calories in this equation. It takes 3500 calories to burn a pound of fat. If you put yourself in a calorie deficit beyond 2 lbs per week you will probably lose muscle mass. Don't starve yourself.

Point 10)

Fruits, Vegetables, Fiber, lean meats, nuts and healthy fats should make up the bulk of your food choices. Supplements can really help to fill in when we are very busy or when we just need some higher quality nutrition. It's back to the old 80/20 rule. Eat good food 80% of the time and supplement 20% for maximum health.

Point 11)

If someone gives you a "diet" and they don't ask about your specific exercise calories, or they advise you to drink watered down orange juice throughout the day to keep your blood sugars regulated, or they ask you to eliminate food groups.... RUN!!! Those are FAD DIETS.

Please let us help provide education so you can eat in a healthy way and you can maintain it for the rest of your life without sacrificing everything you love. We also do full comprehensive nutrition plans that we tailor to "your" schedule and specific needs.

We also do free body fat assessments, help you set correct caloric targets based on your goals, and we can track your progress. We will let you taste Max Muscle products before you buy them so you don't end up with something you don't like.

We are certified in Nutrition and can be there to help guide you, make recommendations, cheer you on, and help you when you get stuck.

Scott is available to do nutrition presentations for your group, company or organization. These are "no charge" and they are not supplement sales pitches. They are designed to explain good nutritional practices and help people develop a healthy lifestyle.

Please call with questions. We welcome your inquiries. Good luck with your journey toward optimal health.

To Your Continuing Health,

Scott Herkes

Duck Creek Plaza 852 Middle Rd.
By Home Depot Bettendorf, Iowa

Coming Soon 4335 16th St
South Park Mall Moline, IL
Best Buy parking lot

Certified Sports Nutrition Specialist

Call 309-235-7336 or email scott.maxmuscle@mchsi.com
www.qcmaxmuscle.com