



## Weight Reduction Tips From the Pros

With more than 60 percent of Americans being overweight or obese, you undoubtedly know someone who struggles with how to shed undesired body fat. At the American Dietetic Association's annual convention this October in Philadelphia, nutrition researchers presented two alternatives to the standard "eat less and exercise more" diet advice.

**1. Curb the Obesity Epidemic.** Denver's Dr. James Hill believes we need to focus on stopping weight gain, as opposed to advocating for weight loss. One simple way to limit weight gain is to eat 100 to 200 fewer calories at the end of the day. This small calorie deficit

contrasts to standard diets that severely restrict calories and are no fun. People on strict diets tend to stop losing weight after six months. Hill believes they dislike the drudgery of always being on a diet.

Yet, during the first six months of dieting, most dieters create new health habits – such as regular exercise – that they maintain. Exercise helps prevent (or reduce) weight regain. Surveys with "successful losers" indicate they include exercise as part of their daily routine. For some, exercise offers spiritual benefits. For others, it provides a handy opportunity to socialize with friends. Some diet-and-exercisers even become "athletes." (Sound familiar to anyone you know?)

Dr. Hill also recommends addressing the obesity epidemic by changing the way people think about weight. For example, Denver wants to become known as "America's Healthiest City." City leaders are working to create a culture where healthy eating and daily activity are the sustainable norm. Healthier employees will hopefully attract businesses to Denver because of lower healthcare costs.

**2. Curb Mindless Eating.** Dr. Brian Wansink, PhD of Cornell University's Food and Brand Lab is campaigning to end mindless eating; e.g. munching entire tubs

of popcorn without being hungry; nibbling on M&Ms while waiting for someone; unknowingly finishing the kid's leftovers. Just 100 extra mindless calories a day can contribute to gaining ten pounds of undesired body fat a year.

Dr. Wansink recommends we curb weight gain by making mindful decisions about the calories that end up in our mouths. We decide not only what we eat (turkey or tuna sandwich? Low-fat or regular mayo?), but also how much (half or whole sandwich?). He has determined that we eat 92% of what we serve ourselves. Think about it: When do you stop eating? Chances are, you stop eating when your plate is empty. That means, we eat with our eyes, not with our stomachs--we don't always stop when our stomach signals it is full. Wansink believes a simple way to cut calories (and control weight) is to buy smaller bowls, plates and also glasses. He reports you'll drink less if you pour your beverage into a tall, thin glass compared to a short fat glass. And you'll eat less pasta if it's served from a small dish rather than a large platter.

To conclude – the best way to achieve a healthy weight is to prevent weight gain, and to eat mindfully.

### INSIDE:

- 2 Ticker Training
- 3 Massage Therapy
- 4 Curtis Corner

# Train Your Ticker!

If you have been doing steady-state cardio workouts for a while, you may have (a) noticed your benefits have slowed or stopped, or (b) grown bored with the steady slog. Adding intervals once a week to your routine will add both results and fun! Here's how:

## Know Your Levels

To start, subtract your age from 220. This is an estimate of your maximum heart rate. So if you're 30, your max heart rate is 190 beats per minute (bpm). Next, calculate both 65% and 90% of that number - you'll need to know these to follow the routine.

## Attack Your Intervals

1. Warm up by exercising at an easy pace - about 30% of your best effort - for 5 minutes.
2. Sprint so your heart rate reaches 90% of your max heart rate, and maintain for 60 seconds.
3. Rest until your heart rate returns to 65% of your max.
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 for a total of five sprints.

## Monitor Your Slowdowns

After your final sprint, time how long it takes your heart rate to drop 25 bpm. The faster the better: A study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* found that men whose heart rates took longer than 60 seconds to decrease 25 beats had a 2.2 times greater risk of sudden death from a heart attack than those who recovered quicker.

You can use any piece of cardio equipment to do intervals: bike, elliptical, treadmill, or rower are all perfectly suited for bursts of speed. Just make certain you are comfortable using the equipment and have been exercising for at least a few months before adding intervals.



## The 5 Principles of Heart-Rate Training

1. A heart-rate monitor gives you direct access to the simplest, most efficient feedback tool you have: your own heart. It can help you train smarter and more scientifically than ever before.
2. Your most important heart rate is your morning heart rate. By monitoring this on a regular basis, you can determine if you are overtraining or when you might be coming down with a cold or other illness.
3. Your aerobic training pulse (ATP) is the pulse at which you should be doing approximately 80% of your training. Many runners train too fast most days of the week, which is wasteful and inefficient.
4. With a heart-rate monitor, you can make sure you're training at your ATP. Simply determine your maximum pulse rate (220 minus your age) and multiply it by 0.60 to get your ATP.
5. You can also use a heart-rate monitor to correctly measure the effort of your other harder training days, so you'll run at the right pace when doing tempo runs and max VO2 training.

(this list originally appeared in *Runner's World* magazine.)

## Health Therapies & Services: **Massage Therapy**

The term massage therapy (also called massage, for short; massage also refers to an individual treatment session) covers a group of practices and techniques. There are over 80 types of massage therapy. In all of them, therapists press, rub, and otherwise manipulate the muscles and other soft tissues of the body, often varying pressure and movement. They most often use their hands and fingers, but may use their forearms, elbows, or feet. Typically, the intent is to relax the soft tissues, increase delivery of blood and oxygen to the massaged areas, warm them, and decrease pain.

Here are a few examples of massage therapy:

In **Swedish massage**, the therapist uses long strokes, kneading, and friction on the muscles and moves the joints to aid flexibility.

A therapist giving a **deep tissue massage** uses patterns of strokes and deep finger pressure on parts of the body where muscles are tight or knotted, focusing on layers of muscle deep under the skin.

In **trigger point massage** (also called pressure point massage), the therapist uses a variety of strokes but applies deeper, more focused pressure on myofascial trigger points-- "knots" that can form in the muscles, are painful when pressed, and cause symptoms elsewhere in the body as well.

In **shiatsu massage**, the therapist applies varying, rhythmic pressure from the fingers on parts of the body that are believed to be important for the flow of a vital energy called qi. In traditional Chinese medicine, the vital energy or life force proposed to regulate a person's spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical health and to be influenced by the opposing forces of yin and yang..

Massage therapy (and, in general, the laying on of hands for health purposes) dates back thousands of years. References to massage have been found in ancient writings from many cultures, including those of Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome, Japan, China, Egypt, and the Indian subcontinent.

A 2002 national survey on Americans' use of CAM (Complimentary and Alternative Medicine) found that 5% of the 31,000 participants had used massage therapy in the preceding 12 months, and 9.3% had ever used it. According to recent reviews, people use massage for a wide variety of health-related intents, such as pain relief (often from musculoskeletal conditions, but from other conditions as well); rehabilitate sports injuries; reduce stress; increase relaxation; address feelings of anxiety and depression; and aid general wellness.

### **Some Points To Consider**

Massage therapy should not be used to replace your regular medical care or to delay seeing a doctor about a medical problem. Before you have massage therapy, ask the therapist about:

- training, experience, and any licenses or credentials
- Any medical conditions you have and whether s/he has had any specialized training or experience with them
- Number of treatments that may be needed
- Cost
- Insurance coverage, if any
- If a massage therapist suggests using other CAM practices (herbs or other supplements, a special diet, etc.), discuss it first with your regular health care provider.



# CURTIS CORNER

## Ode to the Simple Life - Happy New Year!

It used to be so uncomplicated. January 1 shake off the cobwebs and decide it was time to burn off last years' accumulated calories...diet and exercise. That was it! The diet was simple: stop eating so much. The choice of exercise - straightforward: go to the gym and cycle, walk or run; maybe add a few strength exercises to see if you've still 'got it'. Perhaps make an appearance at an "aerobics" class. Not so nowadays.

In keeping with the cultural trends of an ever increasing complex society of time constraints and multi-tasking, we have taken our fitness options to a new level: It is not longer just good enough to lose weight, we have to address terms like "lifestyle". "Work - Life balance" and "healthy, active aging" to accommodate the stay-young-at-all-costs baby boomers.

"At one time, it was a cookie-cutter approach." People who were already fit were the main group working out and they were primarily running or going to the gym. "Now we also have special populations (older adults, overweight children and teens, the disabled), people with health challenges (weight, heart, multiple sclerosis, fibromyalgia), and all those groups are each looking for something that will fit their challenges as well as their likes or interests," says Marjorie O'conner, international fitness consultant.

Included is a potpourri of physical options from outdoor boot camps and sports training, to tai chi, meditation and functional exercise. Fusion-type classes that blend different disciplines such as yoga and strength training, yoga and cycling, pilates and strength training, dance classes of any kind from ballroom and salsa to belly dancing and `zumba', fuelled by popular TV reality dance shows.

Meditation used to be a hard sell -- with or without yoga -- but people are trying anything and everything to relieve their stress levels, which lead to the most important aspect that drives our health - mental health. So, while you are trying to figure out how to get active, consider your past and present behaviour and lifestyle patterns, your values and beliefs, for without a `shift' or change in these patterns, you will not get very far. In comes the Life Coach, Change Coach or Personal Change Consultant. Add the Dietician and the Personal trainer and you are ready to go...some time in March, just in time for Spring Break and lots of Easter chocolate!

What happened to the KISS principle?

- Charles Curtis



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