

Good advice by Dr. Harold

Improving your metabolism for overall health

Metabolism is the result of chemical processes that occur in your body to create energy to maintain life, health and wellbeing. It participates in cell growth, maintenance of cell activities

and can be compared to a motor engine that keeps working to provide the motion and other activities that assist in the process.

Boosting your energy levels is one way of slimming through the processes of burning calories. Some people inherit speedy metabolism and they are referred to as the 'High metabolic types. Men tends to burn more calories at rest than women. This rate of burning calories at rest is referred to as the, 'Basic Metabolic Rate' (BMR).

It is defined as the rate of energy expenditure per unit time at rest.

To lose weight you need to reduce your calorie intake below your total daily calorie requirement indicated by your BMR plus calorie take.

The reason for men to have a higher BMR is because of the stronger musculature and each pound of muscle uses about 6 calories a day at rest. Each pound of fat in your body burns only about 2 calories daily.

You could increase your metabolic rate through exercise, especially in strength training at the gym. Increased metabolism means increased calorie burning, an ideal way to lose weight if obesity is your problem.

Unlike strength training which builds the muscles, aerobic exercises seem to rev up your metabolism whilst your muscles remain thin. Speed walking and jogging seem to be most practical way of burning calories, for working people to maintain a healthy body weight and health.

Dehydration

If you are dehydrated your metabolism becomes sluggish, like your automobile trying to run without fuel. If you drink many glasses of water your metabolism improves and starts burning more calories. It is advisable to keep on drinking water whilst you exercise. If you walk for many hours you also need to eat a snack to increase your energy input.

Drinking warm water versus cold water



This is high octane gasoline for your body

Some people drink warm water. Drinking cold water straight from the fridge is more refreshing when you are thirsty during and after exercise. Cold water in your stomach gets warmed up to the body temperature. Warming up cold water in your tummy burns about 5 calories. So, if you want to reduce weight drinking cold water is advised.

Energy drinks

Caffeine in energy drinks can boost your metabolism. They also have taurine, an amino acid which also boosts your metabolism and burn fat. You are advised against drinking too much of energy drinks.

Brown versus white fat on metabolism.

There are two kinds of fat in your body. Brown fat and white fat. Brown fat is also called brown adipose tissue (BAT). White fat is a form of stored unwanted fat, is called white adipose tissue (WAT). It makes you obese and is prone to type 2 diabetes. Visceral fat is mainly white fat that increases your risk of heart disease. Both fats serve different functions. White fat is a storage depot for extra calories, whilst brown fat generates heat and help regulate body temperature and assists in metabolic boost.

White fat cells have few mitochondria the cellular 'power plants' responsible for burning fat, and they are more stored than used for energy. Brown fat on the other hand is loaded with mitochondria and easily be activated for metabolic processes. The latter is also called metabolically active thermogenic tissue and boosts your metabolism and burns more fat.

So, brown fat reduces body fat and improves metabolic health.

Eating more frequent small meals

Chinese eat some noodles in a cup every two hours and they remain slim. Eating more often in small amounts help lose weight. The way we the Sri Lankans eat-three large meals a day slows down your metabolism. This is one reason that most Sri Lankans are over-weight and 'pot-bellied'.

Spices and chillies increase your metabolism

Spices like garlic, chili pepper and others added to your curries do boosts your metabolism. Those who can eat raw chillies with their food are blessed to boost their metabolism like using high octane gasoline. Chillies may cause inflammation of the stomach mucosa in some people, whilst are lucky enough to tolerate. Chillies do not harm your liver as some believe.

High proteins

Protein rich food seems to burn more calories through digestion than it does eating fats and carbs. Good sources of protein are white meat, tofu, beans, eggs and low-fat dairy products. Low fat unsweetened yogurt has high proteins.

Black coffee

Black coffee boosts your metabolism for a short term and feel less tired when you do your 10,000 steps. Remember coffee also increases your bad cholesterol.

Green Tea

Green tea offers caffeine plus catechins which may boost your metabolism. Research suggests that drinking 2 to 4 cups of tea may push the body to burn 17% more calories during moderately intense exercise for a short time.

Daily walks boost your metabolism

Going on the treadmill is ideal to improve your heart health. 15 minutes on the treadmill will exhaust you burning say 100 calories. On the contrary, brisk walks can be done for hours burning more calories with less exhaustion.

So, for heart health go on your treadmill, but for overall health including losing weight- brisk walks for an hour or two is advised. Both are aerobic type of exercises but walking at a vigorous intensity have more benefits for health and fitness.

Walking 20,000 steps you do 14.50 km, burning 750 kcal. Normally you would do 8,000 steps on an average per hour..

Sustaining this number of steps daily is the panacea for reducing the risk of a huge array of diseases to reduce stress, reduce the risk of diabetes, obesity, fatty livers, reduce the risk of getting heart conditions, high blood pressure, cancer, mental health and over all physical fitness.

When you reach this number of steps regularly, you do not have to worry much about your diet. The saying goes that even stone will get digested with long distance walks.

If you are obese with visceral fat causing a protruding belly, going on advertised diets makes no difference long term, but daily walks will reduce your weight and flatten your belly. That is guaranteed.

Walking is a physical exercise with no expense, free other than wear and tear of the soles of your shoes.

The author of this article walks indoors regularly. There are more advantages walking within your house or apartment. You could do more walking indoors than in the open air. You could relax anytime when you feel tired. You could open the fridge and eat a snack and drink a cool glass of water intermittently. You could even go to the toilet when you feel like. The author does 35,000 steps indoor daily, and has lost 12 kg in four months, resulting in reduced insulin intake by 50%, stopping blood

pressure medication, but of course still careful about diet, even when visiting friends for dinners and parties.

My health stats are recorded on Samsung health apps in the smart phone which is kept in the trouser pocket whilst walking.

Exercising keeps the gut microbiome healthy

Exercising boosts wellbeing of your beneficial gut bacteria. Gut microbiota are your best friends as far as maintaining good health. Looking after them, have reciprocal health benefits and has an effect on the state of your health.

Both bacterial diversity in the gut and regular exercise are important when it comes to health. New studies show that daily exercise also help adjust the balance of the gut microbiome.

Bottom line:

The only natural way of reducing weight and improving your metabolism with no cost attached is just walking for a few hours and the benefits are undeniable. Yet many of us don't make time for exercise -as simple as walking.

In Sri Lanka, people don't find the time to exercise. They always say that they have no time after a hard day's work, most of them travelling using public transport. The incidence of heart disease is very high mainly due to lack of exercise and consuming the wrong diets. The very same people who had no time for walking are seen walking when meeting after many years. They seem to find the time for a walk after bypass surgery for heart disease. That is the irony of the situation.

Hope this article was useful.