

TIP OF THE WEEK: Hints and tips on how to lose fat

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Always make carbohydrate intake a priority:

In the early stages of physical adaptation the body will have to, 'learn' how to utilise fat as a priority fuel source. This takes some weeks to achieve with regular practice (gym sessions) on cardiovascular exercise. In the meantime, I advise that from day one you have sufficient carbohydrate in your diet each day to facilitate energy for doing that initial 20-minute session. This raises another crucial point. If there is not enough carbohydrate available each day then you will have to utilise some of your already small amount of lean tissue protein and convert it to simple sugar (glucose) through the glucose-alanine chain in the liver. Sacrificing lean tissue protein stores to enable fat to be burned in the mitochondria in the presence of carbohydrate and oxygen means that you are actually losing lean tissue and gaining a proportionate percentage of fat tissue. This is a scary fact which slows down any measurable difference in your lean/fat percentage ratio.

Always remember that fat loss is all about long-term goals:

Burning fat takes time, but the more you do it the easier it becomes and the greater the amount of fat burned will be. When performing fat-burning exercise it takes about 20 minutes for an unconditioned person to actually start burning fat. An average conditioned person will take about 10 minutes, whereas an elite Tour de France athlete takes only about five minutes. This is an important fact as it shows that, for an unconditioned person, 20 minutes of fat-burning exercise is not enough. The aim, therefore, is to progressively and safely reach 45 minutes. **It takes a fit person about 11 sessions of a 45-minute fat-burning exercise period to burn 1lb of fat, which is 3,500kcal.** People new to exercise will always take longer.

Never alternate between cardiovascular equipment when performing fat-burning cardiovascular work:

It is generally accepted that when you come off one piece of cardiovascular equipment and go onto another it is going to take 8-10 minutes before you reach full fat-burning potential again on the subsequent piece of cardiovascular equipment. However, this will depend on your level of fitness and your percentage of red slow-twitch and intermediate-twitch muscle fibres. **The fitter you are and the more aerobic and intermediate muscle fibres you have, the quicker you will reach the fat burning zone again.** In addition to this, during any fat burning mesocycle of 4-6 or 8-12 weeks you must always use exactly the same exercises during the entire mesocycle so that you ensure maximum muscle fibre recruitment and that the body can learn the most effective way in which to perform this exercise, the most efficient way of processing nutrients and removing waste products, and also the best way of recovering from the demands imposed. The stationary exercise bike without moving handles is the best piece of equipment for performing your fat burning cardiovascular work on, as it keeps the heart rate at a much more stable level. This means that you can get the maximum amount of fat burning possible out of each session by keeping your heart rate in the correct zone throughout the entire session.

Never say, 'I cannot eat after 6pm':

As the day progresses, the metabolic rate falls. So **in the late evening and early hours of the morning, your body is at its most inefficient for processing large quantities of fuel in one go.** However, this does not mean that you cannot eat after 6pm, of course you can. In fact, it is essential that you do eat again to make sure that your metabolic rate is kept as high as possible. The only thing that you have to bear in mind is that **you must keep this food intake to a snack, whilst making sure that it is of good nutritional value.** If you eat nothing from the early evening onwards, your body is essentially in starvation mode until you wake and eat breakfast the next morning. This has two very important implications. The first is that your body thinks that starvation is really a possibility, as it has no way of knowing that you are trying to lose body fat. As a result the body dramatically lowers the metabolic rate in order to counter the possibility of starvation and thus conserve as much energy as possible. Secondly, a significant amount of carbohydrate depletion occurs while you sleep. By not eating anything at all from the early evening onwards you will also have completely decimated your carbohydrate stores by the time that you wake again, which will ultimately have a negative impact upon your long-term training goals.

Never eat too little:

It is generally accepted that 1 or 2 pounds is the very maximum amount of fat that you can lose in a week without sacrificing intra-cellular water and lean muscle tissue. In order to achieve this, the maximum amount of calories you can cut from your diet is 1/7. This limited reduction will also ensure that you lose body fat without slowing down your metabolic rate.

Never choose low in fat, always choose low in calories:

Low in fat does not equate to low in calories. A lot of these products are filled with sugar in order to make them taste better. **Always check the calorie content to make sure that you are in fact buying something that is low in calories.** Never exist on pre-prepared convenience foods, buy fresh produce (organic if possible) and make it yourself. You are going to have to face the fact that if you want to lose body fat then you are going to have to put in a little effort. Convenience foods are high in chemicals, salt and a host of other harmful substances. In addition, the majority of convenience foods offer little nutritional value. Everyone will use these from time to time, but the more you can do without the better it will be.