

Must You Calorie Count?

Written by Ian Hart
Tuesday, 31 July 2012 13:30



If you're like most people, as soon as you hear the words, 'counting calories', you encounter anything from a slight feeling of anxiety to full blown dread. Calorie counting is not something that most people enjoy, and oftentimes, I find that most people are unaware that it's something that's necessary for successful weight loss. The reality is that calorie counting is not as bad as so many people make it out to be. If you want to see fat loss success and you've dedicated yourself to exercise, then why not become educated on what's going into your body? Let's take a closer look at the topic of calorie counting and it's relation to weight loss.

Your Natural Eating Tendencies: Some people naturally tend to consume fewer calories during the day, many times because they are busy and don't think about eating all day. Hours or even the entire workday will go by and they have to remind themselves that it's time to eat; then they have a massive meal at dinner time. For others, the opposite is true. Food seems to always be on their minds and if they had it their way, they'd eat constantly. To tell you the truth, both sides of the coin can be detrimental to your weight loss strategy. Whether you're eating five or 6 small meals throughout the day or a few larger meals, at the end of the day, if you want to lose weight, you must eat LESS than you have burned each day. And how do you know whether you're consuming less than you're burning? You track your calories.

Your Normal Food Choices: If you normally lean towards eating foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables, and lean proteins, then you may take in a lower calorie diet naturally. However, if you often choose higher calorie items like breads, pasta, nuts, fried foods, fatty meats and high-calorie dairy products like cheese, then not only is calorie counting going to help you gain an appreciation of how many calories you're consuming, but you may also need to make some changes to your diet.

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Drinking Your Calories: This is another thing that we need to be conscientious about. Many people forget that most drinks contain calories and must therefore be factored in to your daily consumption figures. Furthermore, don't be fooled by zero-calorie diet drinks. They contain harmful chemicals whose effects reach far beyond your caloric intake.

The same goes for alcohol. Firstly, it is a diuretic and will dehydrate you. Alcohol is one of the worst things you can consume when trying to achieve weight loss success. Secondly, alcohol demands the body's attention once consumed. And if the body is focused on processing alcohol, it is unable to properly break down foods containing carbs and fat - they don't call it a beer belly for nothing! These calories are then converted and stored as body fat. The moral of the story is nothing beats good, old-fashioned H₂O.

Eating Out: Don't get me wrong – everyone enjoys eating out ever so often. But doing so can hinder your weight loss plans if you're not careful. The USDA's food intake surveys have shown that the "food-away-from-home sector" has been steadily increasing – proof that more and more Americans are eating out. And what do you think the chances are that we're choosing healthy options? Slim-to-none. The data also shows that when eating out, people either eat more food, or have higher calorie foods—or both! This rising trend does not bode well for weight loss.

So there you have it: compelling reasons why counting calories is the best way to go if you want to lose weight. Even if you make a goal to count your calories for 90 days straight, at the very least you will be educated on portion sizes and what your limits should be. Then you WILL

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achieve weight loss success.

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