

everything they consumed managed to lose an average of seven pounds during the holiday period.

6. Drink Fewer Calories

Today we are drinking far more calories than we ever did—soda, fruit juice, sports drinks, specialty coffees, and herbal teas. Dr. Richard Mattes, PhD, a professor of foods and nutrition at Purdue University in Indiana, conducted an interesting experiment to prove the point. In his lab, he put people on a four-week study of jellybeans and soda pop. Individuals were given 450 calories of pure carbohydrate daily as either jelly beans or soda. When they consumed the jelly beans, they ate less of other calories, but when they drank the soda, the soda calories were just added on to whatever they were consuming to begin with. Individuals who drank the soft drinks gained a significant amount of weight.



If you are thirsty, try drinking a large glass of refreshing water. There may be no scientific or metabolic reason for drinking a glass (8-10 ounces) of water before each meal, but it seems to leave less room in your stomach for those extra food portions. Also, water is an excellent test to decide if you are truly hungry or just craving a snack between meals—drink a glass of water, wait 15 minutes, and see if your desire for food subsides. To make water more appealing, try it with a slice, or drop or two, of lemon or lime.

7. Keep Moving

You probably thought this slimming strategy would have been near the top of the list for weight loss essentials. It is no secret that daily walking or other types of exercise will burn calories, but physical activity plays an even larger part in weight maintenance. In an as-yet-unpublished study by Stanford University researcher Peter Wood, a group of 220-pound men were put on a diet designed to reduce their daily caloric intake by 300 calories. A second group of men did not change their current diet, but were to either walk or run three to four miles per week. After one year, both groups had lost weight: The diet group averaged a loss of 15 pounds per person and the exercise group nine pounds per person. However, when the two groups were rechecked 42 months later, research results showed that the diet group had regained back half their weight loss, whereas the exercisers had kept it all off. [*Nutritional Action Health Letter, March 1989*]

In this upcoming festive season of the year, which is so often accompanied by many social activities involving food and drink, let sensible lifestyle habits of nutrition, exercise, and positive attitudes be part of being a healthy Christian steward.

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the Stewpot

A potpourri of practical ideas to help you become a better steward.

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THIN FOR LIFE

By Gordon Botting

As a nation, we have been dieting for decades and what has it gotten us? Extra pounds! In 1991, only one in eight people had a weight problem, but in the last ten years the number of Americans who are obese has nearly doubled. More than half of all adults (97 million) in this country are now either overweight or obese. Obesity is an epidemic in the United States, according to the Center of Disease Control and Prevention, and as the average American has gotten heavier, the list of health and disease reasons to lose that excess weight has become longer, now including heart disease, gallbladder disease, stroke, diabetes, arthritis and a variety of cancers, such as colon, rectum, prostate, breast, cervix and uterine.



There has been a steady increase in obesity—which, by definition, means being at least twenty percent overweight—in every state in the U.S., in both men and women, as well as in all age groups, cultures, and educational levels. Tragically, the age group with the greatest increase is our young adults, those 18 to 29-year-olds.

Culturally, in the last decade, Hispanics have shown the greatest increase, with Afro-Americans, people in the 50-59 years age group, and individuals without a high school diploma having the greatest proportion of overweight people. The South Atlantic states had the largest increase (67%). The state with the highest increase was Georgia, with over 100% percent increase. The two states with the lowest proportion of overweight Americans were Arizona and Colorado, with only a 15 % increase. [*Berkeley Wellness Letter, May 2000*]

Despite an ever-growing selection of commercial weight reduction programs, diet books, supplements, gimmicks and gadgets that promise fast and long-lasting weight control, experts agree that the basic rules haven't changed. Following are some lifestyle strategies, not diet tips, that can help you maximize your efforts in the fight to win the battle of the bulge.

Stewardship is a total life-style. It involves our health, time, talents, environment, relationships, spirituality and finances.

1. Why Bother?

According to the famous Framingham Study, every extra pound will shave one month off your lifespan—if you are 50 pounds overweight, that's more than four years! Obviously, as you shed those unwanted pounds your outlook and longevity will increase. Using information found in two large health studies, researchers estimated the potential benefits of a sustained 10% weight reduction among both men and women, ages 35 to 64, who were either mildly, moderately, or severely obese. They found that a 10% loss over a lifetime by one thousand individuals would result in 12-38 fewer cases of coronary heart disease and 1-13 fewer cases of stroke. Depending on age, sex and BMI, this same weight loss would cut the expected time an overweight person would have hypertension by 1.2 to 2.9 years and Type 2 diabetes by 0.5 to 1.7 years.

[*American Journal of Public Health, October 1999*] Also, of benefit is not just increased longevity, but the increased quality of life you would enjoy, beginning today. By losing those extra pounds, you will have much more energy, stamina and endurance, and best of all, you will feel and look much better.



2. Believe You Can

Even though we are constantly reminded through the media of television and magazines that we need to be slim, in shape, and beautiful, yet we are told repeatedly that it is nearly impossible to lose those unwanted pounds. Because of this constant reinforcement of failure, the majority of individuals give up before they have chance to succeed.

But people have been successful in keeping off the pounds permanently. In her book "Thin for Life: 10 Keys to Success From People Who Have Lost Weight & Kept It Off" (Houghton Mifflin), Anne Fletcher has interviewed and followed 160 individuals over a number of years. Thirty of the individuals she tracked had kept off 100 pounds for over five years, with an average of 64 pounds for this book's group. These weight losers came from all different walks of life, from a state senator who melted away 35 pounds to a scientist who lost 25 pounds. On the average, these individuals had a loss of 29% of their weight, resulting in the group's average size going from obese to normal.

3. Don't Think Diets

Research has shown that the best "losers" don't go on a diet, but rather change the way they eat and live. Long-term weight loss means getting rid of the "diet mentality," which implies that going "on" a diet means eventually going "off" the diet. Over 90% of dieters regain their lost weight within a year and sadly, many add even more pounds. Constantly losing and gaining weight is both unhealthy and frustrating. Some interesting research was conducted by Kelly Brownell and coworkers at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine in the mid 1980's. Brownell made a group of rats gain, lose, regain, and re-lose their weight. After their first weight gain, the animals

took 21 days to lose the excess weight and 46 days to gain it back. However, the second time, the rats needed 46 days to lose the weight and only 14 days to put it back on. If you relate this rat research to humans, what happened was that the body reacts to dieting as if it is in a famine situation and it becomes increasingly efficient at storing food.

4. Cut Calories

The majority of overweight individuals consume 500 to 1,000 more calories per day than they need. Women should aim for 1,200 to 1,500 calories and men 1,500 to 2,000 calories per day. Do not severely limit your calories. Never drop below 1,000 per day because it will not only shortchange you nutritionally, but your body will interpret it as being on the verge of starvation and slow your metabolism. Hence, it becomes harder and harder to lose those extra pounds as your body burns fewer calories as you eat less. In a recent government study of 100,000 men and women in which more than two thirds of them were trying to lose weight, or at least keep from gaining a pound or two, it was found that 30-40% made the mistake of eating less fat without paying attention to their total calorie consumption. The best type of food to help cut your calories, but not your feeling of satiety, are the "high-water" foods such as fresh vegetables, stews, non-creamy soups and whole grain hot cereals, which provide high volume but relatively few calories.

5. Keep Track

You don't need to become obsessed with weighing and measuring every morsel that goes into your mouth. Occasionally track your food intake for a 24-hour period or a week. Keeping a food diary will help pinpoint where the extra calories are coming from. It may help you stop before you grab a handful of nuts, potato chips or other not-so-healthy snacks. Also, your food history should tell much about when, where, what and, most importantly, why you eat.

If you don't want to take the time to keep a food history, then "eye" or estimate your foods. Most fruits, such as a medium apple or pear, in rounded off figures equal 100 calories; a cup of strawberries or cranberries—50 calories. Vegetables, such as a large potato—approximately 200 calories; same for a cup of peas. Other vegetables, such as broccoli, Brussels sprouts and carrots, are only 35 calories for a half-cup. Remember, this works only with unrefined foods—fruits, vegetables, nuts and legumes—the type of foods that should be the mainstay for a healthy lifestyle. The best method is to purchase a pocket size calorie counter.

But here is even better news: You don't have to put on pounds during the coming holiday season. Daniel Kirschenbaum, a professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Northwestern University Medical School of Chicago, tracked 38 individuals from two weeks before Thanksgiving to two weeks after the New Year and found that those who faithfully kept a food history of

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