

LIFESTYLES WITH SYLVIA



Dear Friends,

As we happily welcome in the warm weather of summer together, now is the perfect time to discuss the secret weapon for losing weight and gaining quality of life: movement.

Losing weight is all about balancing energy, which is to say balancing calories. In our previous columns, we have focused on the energy we take in, also known as the calories we eat and drink on a daily basis. In this column we'll shift gears to the other side of the energy equation: the energy we give out, or the calories we burn through activity.

You know the drill: when we burn more calories than we consume, we wind up with a negative calorie balance and, as a result, we lose weight. To create this negative calorie balance, we can either cut back on how much we eat or boost our daily activity level. It should come as no surprise that the best strategy is to do both.

COMMIT TO MOVE MORE

If you want to move towards your fitness goals, you have to commit to doing just that: moving. Plus, exercise not only burns calories, it also helps curb appetite by slowing the movement of food through your digestive system, which keeps you feeling full longer. A little movement goes a long way, too—becoming more physically fit makes your body more effective at burning calories, even when you are not moving.

THE BASICS

Ready to get moving? Here's a look at the two main types of physical activity, both of which play an important role in managing your weight and keeping you healthy.

Lifestyle Exercise: Movement that is part of your regular routine. Lifestyle exercise includes lifting groceries, doing household chores, moving around at work and the walking you do to get to and from places each day.

Programmed Exercise: Activity meant specifically as exercise. Programmed activity has no other purpose than to make you healthier and more fit, to help you manage your weight and to be **fun**. A daily walk, run or workout, classes at the gym and participation in sports all fit into the category of programmed exercise.

If you want to lose weight, lifestyle exercise alone simply won't cut it. Our goal will be to work regular programmed exercise into your life. After all, making a serious commitment to an exercise routine is the best way to make being active a lifelong habit.

CHOOSE YOUR REGIMEN

Any exercise that gets your large muscle groups moving, such as walking, running and biking, is excellent for weight management. These aerobic exercises get your heart and lungs going, which is the key to burning calories and building stamina. Other good choices for aerobic exercise include jumping rope, cross-country skiing and the use of rowing machines and elliptical trainers.

If you prefer working out with a group, you might prefer more organized activities, such as kickboxing or dance classes. Just be sure you can attend these classes regularly, and that you're moving continuously throughout each session.

PLAY A SPORT

Organized sports such as swimming, tennis and golf are a terrific way to make a regular commitment to being active. The benefits of organized sports are the same as those of solo workouts, but you'll be much more motivated to show up when you know a team or a partner is depending on you. Plus, organized sports make fitness fun and social, which just might be the incentive you need to get started.

INCLUDE STRENGTH TRAINING

As you probably know, cardiovascular exercise isn't the only way to get moving. Strength training or resistance training offers a variety of additional benefits, including strengthening bones and muscles and improving your body's sense of balance. It also revs up your metabolism: muscle tissue burns calories, so the more muscle tissue you have, the more calories you will burn. Strength training takes some getting used to though, so if you are trying it for the first time, invest in a few sessions with a personal trainer.

START TRACKING YOURSELF

In previous columns we've discussed why it's important to keep track of the energy you take in, and the same principles can be applied to keeping track of the energy you give out. Just as a food diary keeps you aware of (and accountable for) what you eat, an activity diary tracks progress and helps you build more activity into your days.

Additionally, self-tracking is self-motivating. Each time you record your movement, you're giving yourself credit for being active, and that credit adds up. Starting today, take a few minutes to write down, and give yourself credit for, any heart-pumping activity you complete.

WHAT ABOUT CALORIES?

I know what you're thinking: how many calories will I burn as I move? The numbers really depend on your size. People of different weights burn calories at different rates. To figure out approximately how many calories you are burning, apply the following general rules of thumb (it's not exact, but it will give you a good idea of where you're at):

- Walking or running one mile burns about 100 calories
- Riding a bike for the same amount of time it takes you to walk one mile burns about 100 calories

So how much programmed activity should you aim for? A good target to shoot for is burning 1,000 calories per week through programmed exercise. If you can walk a mile in 20 minutes, burning 1,000 calories through programmed exercise is the weekly equivalent of walking 10 miles. If you are not regularly active now, ease yourself into a program gradually by setting your first week's goal at 250 calories, which is 2.5 miles. Every two weeks, raise your goal by 250 calories, until you have reached the target of 1,000 calories per week.

LIFESTYLE EXERCISE

Like I already said, if you want to lose weight, lifestyle exercise alone simply won't cut it, but that doesn't mean upping your lifestyle exercise isn't an important part of a daily exercise regimen. To get started, think about your day and consider how you can burn a few extra calories here and there. Can you take the stairs instead of the elevator? Can you carry your groceries to your car and leave the cart behind? By making small changes in your daily routine, you can easily lose additional pounds.

LEARN MORE AT SRC NUTRITIONAL COUNSELING SUPPORT CLASSES

If you're ready to get moving but still not quite sure where to begin, keep in mind that this column will only take you so far. That's why SRC now offers special Nutritional Counseling Support classes twice a month as an added benefit of membership.

This month we will meet on *Tuesday, July 7th at 6:30 pm and Wednesday, July 8th at 10:30 am*. Some of the topics we will cover include the best forms of exercise, why a pedometer is one of the smartest investments you can make and how many calories are burned through the most commonly practiced cardio activities. If you have any specific questions, feel free to email them to me at SylviaE9@aol.com and I will answer them in class.

Remember, just as we tend to underestimate how much we eat, we are usually a little too optimistic when we estimate our level of physical activity. So let's get moving. In the end, each time you add an activity into your daily routine you are doing something positive for yourself—and that can be hugely empowering.

Until next time, happy healthful eating,
Sylvia

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