

Many fast food restaurants are now pushing their products as the perfect solution for a take-home alternative to the traditional, home-cooked family dinner. Fast food fare that used to be considered an occasional family 'treat' is now the nutritional staple of far too many households.

If you factor in the major lack of regular and consistent physical activity, you can paint a rather bleak picture of our nation's future in regards to the health and longevity of its citizens. The only winners will be the pharmaceutical companies producing the drugs that help keep unhealthy people alive.

The mind-boggling selection of diet and fat burning supplements available today are a testament to the desire for overweight individuals to slim down. People aren't gaining weight in record numbers because they *want* to be heavy.

Why is it so hard for the majority of us to lose and keep off extra weight?

If the answer to that question was easy, 60% of Americans would not be overweight. There are *many* ways that we can sabotage our weight loss programs without even knowing it!

The good news is you *can* lose weight and keep it off for good. Here in *Fit Newz*, we will begin a monthly exploration of various weight loss dilemmas and how they can be overcome.

Last month, we shared a medical study that suggests a tendency for many people to underestimate how many calories they are consuming while overestimating how many calories they are burning. If you are one of those people, you may be taking in over 2,000 calories a day, but you *honestly think*

you have only taken in 1500 or so. You may *think* you've burned 600 calories while exercising, but you have only burned 300. If your metabolism is such that you need to reduce your caloric intake to 1500 calories or less to lose weight, then you may *think* you are doing everything you're supposed to, and your lack of success will eventually lead you to believe that you are incapable of fat loss, or that your exercise program is useless.

A good solution to this problem is to keep a daily food diary. Write down *everything* you eat, even if it's just a nibble. Try to find out the *actual* calorie content of everything you eat and write it down with a running total. There are many good books available that offer accurate calorie counts, and there are several websites that provide that information, too.

As far as determining how many calories you burn during exercise, never use calorie burn as an excuse to eat something outside of your current food plan. Think of your exercise regimen as the 'bonus' calorie burner that will help you reach your goal even faster!

Back Talk

We talk a lot about protecting the lower back, especially in BODYPUMP. It goes without saying that caution must be taken in any weightlifting activity, but you can hurt your spine through simple, every day activities, too. Anyone who has ever 'thrown out' his or her back will tell you it's a lousy experience. Back trouble can make even the most ordinary daily activities all but impossible to accomplish.

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