

Health Benefits of Exercise and Physical Activity:

- Reduce the risk of premature death
- Reduce the risk of developing and/or dying from heart disease
- Reduce high blood pressure or the risk of developing high blood pressure
- Reduce high cholesterol or the risk of developing high cholesterol
- Reduce the risk of developing colon cancer and breast cancer
- Reduce the risk of developing diabetes
- Reduce or maintain body weight or body fat
- Reduce depression and anxiety
- Improve psychological well-being
- Enhanced work, recreation, and sport performance
- Increases HDL (good) cholesterol
- Makes the heart a more efficient pump by increasing stroke volume
- Increases bone density
- Improves the control of blood sugar
- Improves sleep patterns
- Increases the efficiency of the digestive system
- Increases the thickness of cartilage in joints, which creates protection of the joints
- Elevates metabolism so you can burn more calories every day
- Increases your aerobic capacity (fitness level), thus a fit person has more energy and stamina to get through the day
- Improves the function of the immune system
- Improves balance, coordination, stability
- Building muscle mass raises your basal metabolism so you burn calories 24 hrs a day
- Weight training can improve posture and reduce low-back injuries

METABOLISM: WHAT IS IT???

What is metabolism?

Metabolism is the process by which your body converts calories from food into energy. People often believe that a slim person's metabolism is high and an overweight person's metabolism is low, but this isn't usually the case. Metabolism alone does *not* determine your weight. Rather, weight is dependent on the balance of calories consumed versus the calories burned. Eat more calories than you need — you gain weight. Eat fewer calories than you need — you lose weight. Metabolism is merely the body's engine that burns calories and regulates your caloric needs.

The Three Ways your body burns calories

1. Basic body functions. Basal metabolic rate is the amount of calories your body needs to sustain vital functions — digestion, breathing, blood circulation, adjustment of hormone levels, cell growth and repair, etc. Typically, your basal metabolic rate makes up 66 percent to 75 percent of the total calories your body requires for a day.
2. Digestion and absorption of food. About 10 percent of your day's calories are burned digesting and absorbing the food you eat. Yes, you actually need calories to burn calories.
3. Exercise. Daily physical activity accounts for the rest of the calories burned.

What you *can't* control about your metabolism:

Age: Metabolism slows about 5 percent for each decade after 40. That's because as we get older, we tend to lose muscle and gain body fat. Lean muscle mass is more metabolically active than fat tissue. So when you lose muscle mass, your metabolism slows down.

Gender: Men generally have faster metabolisms than women because they're larger and have less body fat. Men's basal metabolic rate is estimated to be 10 percent to 15 percent higher than women's.

Hypothyroidism: An under active thyroid will slow down your metabolism and ultimately lead to weight gain. The good news is that a simple blood test can determine whether you have this condition or not. If you do, you can control it with the proper medication.

Genetics: Some people are lucky enough to be born with speedy metabolisms — and others are not.

Source From: Today contributor, and Nutritionist Joy Bauer

10 WAYS TO SUPER-CHARGE YOUR METABOLISM

- 1. Always eat Breakfast!** Skipping Breakfast sends the message to your body that you're starving because you haven't eaten for an extended amount of hours. As a protective mechanism, your metabolism slows down. Food, which is energy or fuel for the body, starts the fire of your body, the metabolism, and you immediately turn your body into a calorie burning machine all day long.
- 2. Never eat less than 1200 calories a day!** Less than 1200 usually is not enough to support your resting metabolic rate and it will slow your metabolism down to conserve energy.
- 3. Snack Frequently!** Snacking fuels your body and keeps the fire going (your metabolism) Snacking also can prevent you from becoming too hungry. The hungrier you are, the more likely you are to overeat your next meal and lose control over portions. Skipping meals will slow the metabolism and often leads to binge eating.
- 4. Exercise and get moving!** Doing some type of aerobic exercise on a *daily* basis increases our metabolic rate significantly as well as gives us the energy to get through the day.
- 5. Build lean muscle mass!** Try strength training at least twice a week. The more muscle you have, the more calories you burn through the day, even at rest! It is suggested that per one pound of muscle mass gained, you burn 30-50 more calories at rest.
- 6. Avoid too much sugar!** Processed and refined sugar overloads the body and can cause obesity and diabetes. Complex carbohydrates, such as fruit, vegetables and whole grains are a better energy source because they level blood sugar levels out, and take longer for the body to break them down.
- 7. Get Sleep!** Research has proven that the body needs 8 hours of rejuvenating sleep so that body can heal and regenerate itself, including the muscular system. People who do not get sufficient sleep are apt to gain weight.
- 8. Avoid Alcohol!** Alcohol depresses your metabolism and stimulates you appetite!
- 9. Drink plenty of water!** 64+ ounces of water a day to be exact. Your metabolism needs plenty of water to function properly. It is a lubricant to the body and also helps flush toxins out of the body. Now the liver can operate properly and metabolize stored fat! Carry a water bottle around with you all day and drink often.
- 10. Avoid Stress!** Stress can cause weight gain, especially around the abdomen. Physical and emotional stress releases the hormone cortisol which is a steroid that slows metabolism.

Web Sites for further information:

www.cdc.gov

www.mypyramid.gov

Food and nutrition information

For access to more Federal government food and nutrition information

<http://www.nutrition.gov>

Food composition

For data on the nutrient content of specific foods

<http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodcomp/>

Nutrition Facts label

For more information about understanding and using the Nutrition Facts label on food products

<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/foodlab.html>

Coronary heart disease/cardio-vascular disease

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/index.htm#chol>

High blood pressure

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/index.htm#hbp>

http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/Hbp/HBP_WhatIs.html

Obesity and maintaining healthy weight

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/index.htm#obesity>

http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose_wt/index.htm

<http://www.win.niddk.nih.gov>

Osteoporosishttp://www.fda.gov/fdac/features/796_bone.html

Diabetes

<http://www.fda.gov/diabetes/>