

A close-up photograph of a woman's midsection. She is wearing a black, ribbed, cropped top. A yellow measuring tape is wrapped around her waist, with her hands visible on the right side holding the tape. The tape shows measurements from 21 to 31 inches. She has a belly button piercing. The background is plain white.

16 Unusual,
Unconventional,
and Ultra-Powerful Ways to
**Get Fit &
Lose Weight**

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SECTION 1

DIET TIPS

DIET TIP #1

Eating Right: What You Need to Know About “Good” and “Bad” Fat

Although many health experts are telling us that we have too much fat in our diet, the truth is that most people are actually deficient in essential fatty acids (EFAs), especially omega-3 fatty acids.

By increasing your consumption of these vitamin-type fats, you can lower your chance of getting heart disease, reduce inflammation in your joints, enhance your immune response against cancer, and promote healthy brain function.

The point is that the types of fat you eat make a big difference in your risk of developing or dying of heart disease. Despite what you've probably been led to believe, it's not necessary to reduce fat consumption in order to reduce your risks. It is important, however, to change the KINDS of fats you eat.

In a recent study published in the New England Journal of Medicine, researchers concluded that replacing unhealthy fats like margarine and shortening with healthy sources of fats -- such as olive oil, avocados, nuts, and cold-water fish -- was more effective in preventing coronary disease than reducing total fat intake.

Here's an easy way to remember which fats are good and which are bad, plus the best way to get the important fats you need.

* Saturated fats are those that are solid at room temperature. They are found in meat, dairy products, palm and palm-kernel oils, cocoa butter, and coconut oil. Numerous epidemiological analyses have observed that increased consumption of saturated fat is linked to increased incidences of heart disease and cancer. While some scientists (including Dr. Robert Atkins) have argued that saturated fats have been unfairly maligned for their role in the development of heart disease, most nutritionists advise that saturated fat be kept to 10 percent or less of your total daily calories.

* Monounsaturated oils are those that are liquid at room temperature but become cloudy or solid when refrigerated. They include olive oil and canola oil and are present in avocados. Studies have shown that cultures that get the majority of their fat calories from monounsaturated fats have a lower incidence of all types of cardiovascular disease and many kinds of cancer. Health and nutrition experts now recommend that the majority of your dietary fat intake should be from monounsaturated oils.

* Polyunsaturated oils remain liquid even when chilled. They are important because they supply the essential fatty acids. The most commonly used vegetable oils, such as those made from corn, peanuts, and soybeans, are high in omega-6 EFAs. Sources of omega-3 fats include deep-sea (cold-water) fish like salmon, herring, cod, mackerel, and sardines, as well as flaxseed (also known as linseed).

Most of us get adequate omega-6 from our diet. But unless you are eating cold-water fish four or five times a week or chewing a tablespoon of raw flaxseed daily, you will most likely benefit from an additional omega-3 EFA supplement.

In the past, most people took fish-oil and flaxseed-oil supplements. Unfortunately, both of these can have digestive side effects, ranging from an unpleasant taste to noxious burping, nausea, and diarrhea. The Health Sciences Institute has recently reported, however, on a better alternative: perilla oil. We've found that perilla oil appears to be the most inexpensive and best-tolerated source of these valuable compounds. It delivers all of the benefits of omega-3 EFAs and in some cases appears to be even more powerful than fish or flaxseed oil. Most importantly, it's free of the digestive side effects that many people suffer with the traditional sources of omega-3 fatty acids.

DIET TIP #2

The Most Dangerous Fat of All

Modern food processing has created unnatural kinds of fats called "trans" fats, which are made when unsaturated oils are artificially hydrogenated in order to increase stability and shelf life. Virtually all packaged foods, including cake mixes, crackers, breakfast cereals, and mayonnaise, are made with artificially hydrogenated fats. Trans fats are also created when unsaturated fats are heated to high temperatures, as in deep-fat frying.

Although they are technically unsaturated fats, trans fats behave like saturated fats by clogging arteries and increasing the susceptibility of cholesterol to oxidize. When the American Heart Association advised Americans to give up butter in favor of "heart-healthy" margarine, it was sadly guiding people out of the frying pan right into the fire. The hydrogenated fats in most margarines have now been shown to be far more damaging to the heart and arteries than the naturally saturated fats in butter.

Your best bet? Read labels closely. If you see the words "hydrogenated" or "partially hydrogenated," you can be sure the product contains trans fats.

DIET TIP #3

How to Eat like a Frenchman and Stay Lean

- for Pierre's breakfast, nothing but coffee
- for his lunch, a little salad and meat and a small glass of red wine
- for his dinner, meat, poultry, or fish covered in some rich sauce, fresh vegetables, potatoes or pasta, unbuttered bread, a glass of wine, and dessert
- absolutely nothing but water or coffee (and plenty of cigarettes) between meals

Pierre says the single glass of red wine twice a day is critical. And he may be right. A recent study by a team of Spanish researchers found that people who drink two glasses of wine a day are 50% less likely to exhibit cold symptoms than are nondrinkers. The study,

reported earlier this year in the American Journal of Epidemiology, looked at 4,272 people, ages 21 to 69 years old, for a year.

The diet I follow to lose weight -- the Carb Addicts diet -- is remarkably similar to the way the Pierre eats. Fish and above-ground veggies are best ... then some meat and a little starch ... wine twice a day (but only a glass each time) ... and plenty of supplements. Refined carbs (starches) are clearly the worst. And though some people can apparently eat some of them, I can't stay lean if I eat starch more than once a day.

Instead of a cup of coffee for breakfast, I have a single boiled egg. For lunch, I eat salad or veggies plus a small piece of fish or meat. For dinner, I consume as much as I want of anything, including wine and dessert, but it must all be eaten within a 60-minute period.

The Italians -- also generally thin -- eat in a very similar way.

If you've had trouble keeping thin, you might want to give this eating approach a try.

DIET TIP #4

For Maximum Health, Pay Attention to Two Things

I read something yesterday that I thought you might appreciate. It's a way of thinking about health -- a two-pronged approach to staying healthy that comes from naturopathy, a healing system postulating that disease occurs when one of the body's basic functions breaks down.

Two of the body's most basic functions are digestion and elimination -- eating and, well, you know.

The basic idea is this: If you give your body what it really needs and help it eliminate toxins, you will be and stay healthy. You will increase your vitality, reduce your chances of getting sick, and rid yourself of any physical problems you currently have.

It's hard to disagree with this in theory. After all, what could affect a natural organism more than what that organism takes into itself for fuel? And who wouldn't want to rid his body of poisons?

How good are you at following this simple, two-part program?

What about your input? Do you consume good stuff or are you filling yourself full of toxic crap? From what I've read, I believe that sugar is the single greatest "input" problem modern eaters have. Refined sugar is omnipresent. It's in cakes, cookies, and candies, of course, but it's also in fruits, fruit juices, canned goods (including, sometimes, vegetables and meats), packaged goods, medicines, etc.

Starches -- and particularly refined carbohydrates -- are also poison. Yet government and medical health professionals recommend we eat this junk four or five times a day.

Chemicals and chemically infused animal products are also ubiquitous and harmful. Yet they are hardly talked about in the health media.

I asked Dr. Al Sears (the chairman of the advisory board for *Early to Rise's* sister publication, *Total Health Breakthroughs*) for some tips for better digestion and elimination. Here's what he said:

1. Chew your food well before swallowing. Chewing is the first step in digestion. When you gulp your food, you unnecessarily reduce the efficiency of digestion.
2. Minimize your intake of refined, processed foods. These man-made concoctions are alien to your digestive system. The human body is remarkably adaptable and will often find a way to derive energy. But, over time, the adaptation itself can have untoward consequences. Many processed foods also have preservatives. The problem is that the same substances that retard spoiling retard digestion as well.
3. For elimination, the most important thing you can do is exercise regularly. Exercise is nature's most powerful cathartic.
4. Try an occasional fast. A one- to three-day juice or water-only fast can give your digestive system a break and help eliminate toxins.
5. Herbs can help. For aiding digestion, my favorite is cascara sagrada. It is made from the bark of a tree that grows in the Northwest. One ounce of fluid extract in a glass of pineapple juice after dinner is an excellent treatment for chronic constipation, dyspepsia, and indigestion. For aiding elimination, my choice is a weedlike herb called milk thistle. One 300-mg capsule taken three times a day for a week can detoxify and rejuvenate the liver.
6. Practice "contemplative eating." Try to break the habit of eating while watching television or reading. Think about eating while you eat. Not only will you better enjoy one of life's greatest pleasures, but focusing your attention also aids in initiating the process of digestion.

DIET TIP #5

Cut the Carbs and Decrease Your Cancer Risk

Until recently, most studies of low-carb diets have examined the effects on heart disease and cholesterol levels. But a new joint report from Mexico's Instituto Nacional de Salud Publica and the Harvard Medical School shows a significant relationship between diet and your chances of getting cancer.

Women who ate large amounts of carbohydrates were more than twice as likely to get breast cancer as those who ate less starch and sugar, the CDC-funded report announced. The results were published in the August 2004 issue of "Cancer Epidemiology (see "Word to the Wise," below), Biomarkers & Prevention."

DIET TIP #6

Want to Lose Weight? Eat Your Breakfast

The majority of people who are successful at losing weight and keeping it off eat breakfast every day. Researchers at the National Weight Control Registry analyzed data on nearly 3,000 people who had lost an average of 70 pounds and kept the weight off for a year or more. 85% of the subjects said they eat breakfast at least six or seven days a week. Only 4% said they never eat breakfast.

DIET TIP #7

A Realistic Approach to Weight Loss

Sally has an ambitious weight-loss goal for 2005. She is planning on losing 40 pounds. In breaking it down to monthly goals, she said she figured she'd lose four pounds a month for 10 months and then celebrate in October. If she fell behind a little bit, she'd have two months to catch up.

That is good thinking, but I suggested the following adjustment. Rather than an even four pounds per month, she should plan to lose weight more realistically. For example, she could shoot for six pounds in the first three months, five pounds for the next three, three pounds for the next two, and the final pound in the ninth month.

That kind of approach corresponds better to how your body actually works. You'll take off more weight in the beginning -- when your new eating and exercise programs are having the greatest impact -- and then give yourself more time to settle into a stable routine for the rest of your life.

DIET TIP #8

Want to Lose Weight? Add Some Almonds to Your Diet

You may have heard that nuts are fattening. But in fact, nuts can be a great weight-loss food. For one thing, they digest slowly and therefore satisfy your hunger longer. Not only that, nuts are a source of monounsaturated fats - and most nutrition experts believe that these fats (which are found in olive oil and almonds) actually help people lose fat, improve insulin resistance, reduce cholesterol, and lower blood pressure.

Researchers in California conducted a study of overweight and obese subjects. Half of the participants consumed 84 grams of almonds each day, and the other half did not. Both groups consumed the same amount of calories. The result? Those in the group that ate

almonds achieved substantial decreases in weight, fat mass, body water, and blood pressure, as compared to those who did not eat almonds.

DIET TIP #9

Eat More to Lose More (Weight, that is)

If your goal is to lose weight this year - whether 5 pounds or 50 - you should NOT go on a diet. Dieting fails for more than 9 out of 10 people - for two very simple reasons.

First, most "diets" focus on restricting the amount of food you eat. And unless you enjoy being in a perpetual state of hunger, you won't stick with it. Plus, by restricting calories, you send a signal to your body that you are starving. This sets off a survival mechanism that slows down your metabolism and causes your body to hoard what you eat and store it as fat. With a decreased metabolism, you're bound to regain the weight - and then some - when you begin to eat normally.

If you want to lose weight - and keep it off for life - you should eat smaller meals more frequently. And you should focus on eating more of the right foods. This will raise your metabolism naturally. It will send a signal to your body that there is no emergency - that it is okay to release fat.

So ditch the foods that add to your belly and detract from your health, and keep your kitchen (and your workplace) well stocked with nutritious foods and snacks. I make it a point to always keep fruit, yogurt (unsweetened ... I just add a little stevia and berries), almonds, sardines, peanut butter, and celery around. I also spend some time every few weeks to make healthy meals that I can freeze in individual portions. That way, when I don't have time to prepare a meal, I always have a healthy lunch or dinner ready to go.

If one of your New Year's resolutions is to lose weight, don't plan to do it by dieting. Stop starving yourself ... and lose the weight forever by eating more of the foods that Mother Nature intended for you to eat.

DIET TIP #10

Drink Diet Drinks... and Gain Weight!

During the past two decades, the number of people who use artificial, no-calorie sweeteners has more than doubled. At the same time, the prevalence of people who are overweight and obese has also increased dramatically.

Here's even more evidence that diet drinks can make you fat:

The International Journal of Obesity published a study showing that when a group of rats drank an artificially sweetened liquid, they consumed three times more calories than another group of rats that did not get the sweetened liquid. Both groups had the same access to food.

SECTION 2

FITNESS AND EXERCISE TIPS

FITNESS AND EXERCISE TIP #1

What Every Man (and Woman) Should Be Able to Do in an Emergency

Most people who exercise regularly and eat a healthy diet do it because they want to enjoy a long life, they want to improve their appearance, and, in the case of exercise, relieve stress. But there's another important reason to keep yourself in peak physical condition. In a recent issue of his daily e-zine, Matt Furey (see Ed. Note, below) quoted fitness pioneer Earle Liederman, who wrote:

"Every man should be able to save his own life. He should be able to swim far enough, and run fast and long enough to save his life in case of emergency and necessity."

How do you know if you have enough functional strength and endurance to save yourself (or someone else) in an emergency? According to Liederman, you should be able to:

- swim at least half a mile
- run at top speed at least 200 yards
- jump over obstacles higher than your waist
- pull your body upward by the strength of your arms 15 to 20 times.

FITNESS AND EXERCISE TIP #2

The Sedentary Lifestyle of Today's Youth

Football in the backyard ... kickball in the street ... sweaty games of "capture the flag" with every kid in the neighborhood taking part. These are all memories of my youth. When school was out, the last place we wanted to be was inside. But today, with computers and TV replacing outdoor activities, a majority of today's kids are already on the road to developing weight issues and degenerative disease.

British researchers at the London Sports Institute recently monitored the activity levels of 4,500 11-year-olds. The children were outfitted with sophisticated motion sensors to monitor their activity. The study found that nine out of 10 of these children are not doing enough exercise to ensure that they grow into healthy adults.

FITNESS AND EXERCISE TIP #3

The Cardio Myth

Most fitness books and magazines will tell you that the way to shed fat is to increase the time and distance that you exercise. While endurance exercise does burn a lot of calories, it is not the best way to decrease body fat.

During moderate-intensity exercise, the body burns fat for energy. And by engaging in that type of activity over and over, you are effectively telling your body that you need that fat. So, to prepare for the next time it is called on to repeat the activity, your body will store more fat.

Conversely, when you engage in short bursts of high-intensity exercise, your body uses glycogen stored in the muscle tissues for energy. Over time, this conditions your body to store energy in the muscles - rather than as fat. Exercising this way will also cause you to burn more fat during your recovery period, as the glycogen in the muscles is restored.

Consider this study performed by the University of Quebec. One group of exercisers cycled for 45 minutes without stopping. Another group exercised for short bursts lasting from 15 seconds to over a minute, with rests in between. The long-duration exercisers burned more calories, but the short-duration exercisers lost more fat. In fact, nine times more fat for every calorie burned.

This is why many endurance athletes have body fat percentages ranging from 10% to 20%, while sprinters have a well-muscled physique and usually carry only 4% to 8% body fat.

If you want to increase the health and strength of your heart, you don't need to spend hours on a treadmill or run for miles and miles. In fact, doing that can be counterproductive.

Endurance exercise actually makes the heart, lungs, and muscles smaller, so they can perform longer with less energy. But what you gain in efficiency, you lose in reserve capacity. In other words, while you might be able to handle an hour-long jog, you compromise your ability to produce bursts of energy. In your later years, it is this reserve capacity that provides protection from heart attacks.

So if you want to improve the health and strength of your heart, focus on short intervals of intense exercise punctuated by brief periods of recovery.

FITNESS AND EXERCISE TIP #4

Fitness Tips for Travelers

A few ideas that I've gathered from reading, from fellow travelers, and from trial and error:

- Other than a glass of wine or beer with dinner, don't drink on the plane. It will dehydrate you, which may give you a headache. (And besides, only obnoxious, loud people drink heavily on planes.)
- Force yourself to exercise while you're away from home. Although I exercise like crazy when I'm in my regular routine, I find it very difficult to exercise when traveling. I've gotten better recently by making it easier. My new routine is 10 minutes of yoga movements in the morning (before showering), and 10 minutes of Hindu squats and push ups in the early evening (before dressing for dinner). By asking less of myself, I've been able to do more.
- Eating well is another challenge when traveling. Between the rush, the junk food that's being pushed at you during meetings, and the tendency to have breakfast, lunch, and dinner meetings, I tend to put on weight. The only solution I've found is to stick to a zero-carb diet until dinner. It doesn't work all the time (it's tough to keep saying no to those cookies), but when I fail I don't worry about it. I know I'll take the extra pounds off right away when I get back.
- Get some sunshine. It's easy to get into a routine where you are out of the sun for a week when traveling for business. That's not good for you. Schedule some time to get out and walk in the sun every day.

FITNESS AND EXERCISE TIP #5

Okay... Who Doesn't Have Time to Exercise Now?

What if you could get the same results with six minutes of cardio exercise each week, as opposed to six hours? Well, if recent research is any indication, you can.

In a study published in the Journal of Applied Physiology, 23 reasonably fit men and women were timed to see how fast they could cycle 18 miles. They were then divided into three groups. One group cycled two hours a day at a moderate pace. Another group biked 10 minutes a day in one-minute bursts. The third group biked for a total of two minutes a day - an all-out sprint for 30 seconds, followed by several minutes of rest (repeated four times).

After two weeks, the subjects repeated the 18-mile test - and all of their times improved to virtually the same degree. Additional tests showed that their muscle enzymes (essential

for preventing diabetes) and the ability of their muscles to absorb oxygen also improved to the same degree.

Granted, this is a small study. But it does show that you can reduce your workout time (and get the same or better results) if you're willing to endure some discomfort.

FITNESS AND EXERCISE TIP #6

How to Avoid Becoming a Fat Thin Person

Whether your goal is to lose weight or just "tone up," your objective should be the same: to lose fat without sacrificing muscle. Otherwise, you'll just end up as a fat thin person. In past issues of ETR, we've told you exactly how to do this: Base all your meals around a healthy source of protein and add resistance exercise to your workout routine. Recent research published in the Journal of Nutrition confirms this approach.

Researchers at the University of Illinois divided 48 obese women into two groups. One group was put on a higher-protein diet, while the other group consumed more carbohydrates. (Both diets contained the same number of calories.) All of the women walked several times a week, but the "high-protein" group added two sessions of resistance exercise.

When the study concluded, the high-protein group had lost an average of 22 pounds - almost all of it from fat. The women on the high-carbohydrate diet lost only 15 pounds, and more than two pounds of that was muscle. In other words, 15% of their weight loss was from muscle!

Dr. Donald Layman, the author of the study, summed it up this way:

"Both diets work because, when you restrict calories, you lose weight. But the people on the higher-protein diet lost more weight. There's an additive, interactive effect when a protein-rich diet is combined with exercise. The two work together to correct body composition; dieters lose more weight, and they lose fat, not muscle."

To maximize your fat loss while maintaining or building muscle, cut back on carbs, base all your meals around a healthy source of protein, and combine interval training with resistance exercise. You won't believe how quickly your body will respond.