

Weight Loss Myths

What You Should Know

Willpower And Exercise And Their Role In Weight Loss

by James M. Rippe, M.D.

(NAPSA)—I'm sure you've heard the following myths: Willpower is the key to successful weight loss—and—You can lose weight with exercise alone.

Losing weight does not have to be complicated—and a good way to start is to understand how these two myths could sabotage weight loss.



Myth 1. Willpower is the key to successful weight loss.

Actually, the role of willpower is overrated. You can't buy willpower or teach it to yourself. Believing that weight loss and weight maintenance are simply a matter of willpower can be a dangerous thing. If weight loss does not occur—or if weight snaps back—it's often blamed on a lack of willpower. The dieter feels defeated and therefore gives up. Why bother if willpower is the key to weight loss and you don't seem to have it.

Some people who seem to have a lot of willpower over what they eat are still obese. It's more important to exercise flexible restraint or to moderately control what you eat. The real key to successful weight loss is to find a balance you can maintain.

Certain strategies support willpower. One such strategy is making positive changes, such as developing and practicing techniques that reinforce your belief that you can lose weight and keep it off. Given the right tools, you can trust your ability to make smart choices that will

help you reach your goals.

Myth 2. You can lose weight with exercise alone. Most people don't get enough exercise, so getting to the gym just a few times a week can make a huge difference in weight loss. Depending upon the exercise and its intensity, exercise tones the body, flattens the stomach and firms the thighs, which dieting alone can't do. But exercise alone as a weight-loss method has its limitations. To lose one pound of weight you need a deficit of 3,500 calories. Burning enough calories to lose a significant amount of weight simply by exercising takes a lot of exercise. An hour on the treadmill may only burn off the equivalent of a glass of orange juice.

While exercise is one of the healthiest things you can do—it's a stress buster and a mood booster—it's most effective when it's part of a well-rounded weight-loss program.

Since taking on too much at once could be a recipe for disaster, spend the first few weeks of your diet getting comfortable with your eating plan before you add any formal physical activity.

Once you combine a healthy eating plan with exercise, the few hundred calories that are burned with regular physical activity can compensate for adding a bit more food to the eating plan during weight loss. At a time when living a healthier lifestyle is foremost in your mind, physical activity can be a bright spot in the day.

Dr. James M. Rippe and Weight Watchers have written "Weight Loss That Lasts: Break Through the 10 Big Diet Myths."



Note to Editors: This is the second in a series of articles on weight-loss myths. The next article will explore the truth behind the myth that "calories don't matter" and the myth that "the wrong metabolism can keep you from losing weight."