

Make a few adjustments to eliminate winter's extra pounds

By Mandy Kendall

The arrival of some warmer weather will most likely have us delving into our wardrobes for some lighter clothing. However, some of us may be finding that our clothes have mysteriously shrunk in our cupboards over the winter. Pants feel a little tighter around waistbands and those sleeveless tops don't seem to make our arms look as toned as they did last year?

If we can't blame the clothes shrinking for this strange phenomenon, then I guess the next alternative to consider is the hibernation factor that causes an insulating layer of extra flesh that appears over the winter months to protect us from the cold and any possible threat of starvation.



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So, what to do about it? Well, the warmer weather, enticing us to be outside and more active again, will go some toward shedding some of the winter layer. However, as we all know, it's a lot to do with what we eat that will dictate how much of an extra layer we carry around with us. Traditional weight loss diets had us reducing the amount of food we ate, and therefore reducing the number of calories we took in.

Not anymore. Today's theories surround the quality and type of food we take in. One of the latest buzz terms in the nutritional circles is "crowding out". The idea is to add fiber rich and nutrition dense foods to your diet, which gradually crowd out the craving for any junk food. It's all about filling your body with hunger quenching foods in such a way that you never get the chance to feel hungry. This sounded like my kind of diet, so I did a little research.

So what's it all about? It's all about fiber. There are numerous benefits to eating fiber. It fills us up without adding too many calories, it slows digestion keeping us feeling full longer, and also keeps our blood sugar levels even and balanced (no spikes and drops that have us grabbing for sugary snacks or drinks) and it attacks like nature's "bottle brush" cleaning out our digestive track as it passes through. All of this along with lowering your risk of colon cancer, heart disease and digestive problems makes fiber a very important part of our diet.

Apparently we evolved eating about 100 grams of fiber a day, mainly from wild greens. It's currently recommended women eat at least 25-30 grams and men 35-40 grams per day however, the average American currently only eats around 10-15 grams per day.

So here are some *Qwik-e* (quick and easy) tips on foods to increase the amount of fiber in your diet and decrease the tightness of those summer shorts.

An apple day – According to the Mayo clinic, apples contain about 4.4 grams of fiber and plenty of antioxidants in the peel. They contain a gelling agent called Pectin, used in jams and jellies, which can delay our stomachs emptying and keep us feeling full longer. Pears have 5.5 grams of fiber (if you can catch them during the 30 seconds that they are 'just right'). However, raspberries are a whopping 8 grams per cup.

Full of beans – Topping the chart on the top 10 fiber-rich foods list are cooked split peas and cooked lentils at 15 and 16 grams a piece per cup. Maybe that's where the saying comes from? In general, all the beans and legumes varieties are high in fiber and a great source of protein too.

Going nuts for fiber – Almonds are pretty fiber rich at 3.5 grams per ounce (about 23 almonds) so make a great hunger-quelling snack. Just be aware of over-doing nuts in general, they are high in fat (albeit good fat) and calories so you can get too much of a good thing.

Vegetables – Cooked peas provides about 8 grams of fiber per cup with broccoli yielding about 5 grams of fiber per cup. However, a medium artichoke beats them all with 10 grams of fiber. So going green is good for you in more ways than one.

Grains, cereals and pasta – Now who would have thought that whole wheat spaghetti has more than 6 grams of fiber per cup when cooked? Couple that with some fresh chopped tomatoes, some green vegetables and finish with a bowl of raspberries and you would be well on your way to your daily fiber target.

Flush it through – Just remember that plenty of water is required to flush the bulky fiber through the system.

For reference, here is the Mayo Clinic website with a list of the fiber content of the main food groups.

Here is a longer alphabetical list of foods, and their fiber content, from the USDA National Nutrient Database.

Just be aware they will possibly differ slightly but will give you a very good idea of which foods will give you the most amount of fiber.

Until next time.

Mandy Kendall operates Health Connective in South Lake Tahoe. If you have any questions, would like some advice, or would

like to request some Qwik-e tips on any health and wellbeing topic, please feel free to drop me an email at healthconnective@gmail.com, visit us on Facebook, or keep an eye out on Lake Tahoe News for regular Qwik-e tips on how to make healthy changes one Quick and Easy step at a time.