

Nutrient-rich food will help with weight loss

By Mandy Kendall

Now that summer is round the corner, some of us may be thinking ahead about getting in shape for all those activities and, dare I say it, more revealing wardrobes. The winter may have encouraged us to gain a little insulation over the past few months that we no longer need. So how should we go about releasing those unnecessary inches?

We are all probably familiar with the “calories in, calories out” view on weight loss and how we need to burn more calories than we consume in order to lose weight. However, all calories are not created equal. Our bodies respond differently to different food groups. For example, protein calories need more energy than fats and carbohydrates to digest and our bodies will respond differently to 200 calories of ice cream versus 200 calories of broccoli.



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Even calories from within the same food group will elicit very different responses in the body. Trans fats, from cakes and muffins produce a totally different response than say the fat from fish, avocado and nuts. Processed foods and alcohol all contain a lot of empty calories and offer very little to the body other than material that is often eventually just stored as fat.

Conversely, nutrient rich foods tend to be lower in calories, so they help you remain satisfied for longer while consuming fewer calories. As a guideline, the less a food is processed the more nutrient rich it is likely to be.

The National Weight Control Registry reports that the majority of their most “successful (weight loss) losers” all have something in common; they eat breakfast. Eating shortly after you wake helps jumpstart your metabolism (“breaking the fast” you were in while you were sleeping), helps prevent snacking during the morning or making bad food choices for lunch because of hunger.

Recent studies have suggested that instead of a meal of breads and cereals (often laden with sugar), a breakfast based on higher proportions of protein and fiber (for example an omelet with mushrooms and bell peppers) is the better option. This combination helps to moderate blood sugar levels throughout the morning and prompts fat burning instead of fat storing.

Call it what you may ... exercise, training, working out ... our bodies need movement to maintain strength and integrity. However, even if we were to be perfectly still all day our bodies still need a certain number of calories every day to maintain our internal systems like temperature control, heartbeat, breathing, etc. This is called our resting metabolic rate. Any calories we take in, above that number, need to be used up otherwise they will be stored in fat cells for future use. Fat cells require little or no calories to maintain themselves, whereas muscle cells burn energy (using calories). So a great way to increase your RMR is to increase the amount of muscle tissue you have. The more muscle tissue you have, the more calories you will burn every day. Eating protein rich foods is a great way to encourage muscle growth. Another reason to increase your protein intake.

One of the most recent trends in weight loss research surrounds something we all do every day, (or should I say

every night) – sleeping. There is growing evidence that there are strong links between sleep and weight. A study in 2011, published in the International Journal of Obesity discovered that people trying to lose weight were more successful if they slept between six to eight hours a night. According to research, a lack of sleep decreases levels of leptin (the hormone that tells you when you are full) and increases levels of ghrelin (the hormone that tells you when you're hungry). So, basically, when you're tired, you will feel hungry and not know when you're full. A dangerous combination.

So here are our *Qwik-e* tips for helping you to shape up and release some unwanted weight:

Quality rather than quantity – Before you eat something, try and ask yourself what nutrition is this going to give my body? The great thing about nutrient rich food is that more often than not it is low in calories and incredibly filling so you can have quality and quantity.

The most important meal of the day – Try and eat within an hour of waking and make the first meal of the day high in protein and fiber. Protein and fiber at every meal makes losing weight no big deal.

Exercise – It is important to include strength training (using weights for example) into your daily exercise in order to maintain a good percentage of muscle mass.

Sleep it off – A good night's sleep is essential to help balance your "eating" hormones to make sure you are not trying to "eat yourself awake".

Health Connective is running a group Nutrition, Energy boosting, Cleansing and Weight Release program in May. Each participant will also receive additional vouchers to be used with Health Connective holistic health professionals in our community. Email connect@healthconnective.com for more details.

Mandy Kendall operates Health Connective in South Lake Tahoe, which aligns wellness seekers with their ideal wellness provider. If you have questions, would like some advice, or would like to request some Qwik-e tips on any health and well-being topic, drop her an email at connect@healthconnective.com 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.