

Active Image

Building the Foundation for a Healthier You!

Weight Loss Plateaus

Here is the scenario. For the last few months you've been exercising regularly, watching your caloric intake and losing weight steadily and for the last 4 weeks your weight has stayed the same. Now you are getting frustrated and starting to feel like you were never meant to achieve that goal. The truth is that weight loss plateaus are a common part of most weight loss programs. Our bodies are very efficient machines that self-adjust to the demands that we place on it.

There are however a few steps that you can take to move you from the plateau.

Get Real with Yourself

Do an honest self-assessment. After months on a program we can sometimes get lax in our exercise routines or our meal plans. Ask yourself the following questions

- Am I still following my plan or have little extras begun to creep into your diet- remember, those small things add up
- Am I eating enough? – the body will stop burning calories if it is not being fed enough- this is a protective mechanism necessary for survival.
- Am I monitoring my portion control
- Have I been exercising as often as I need to?
- Have I been planning the week in advance?
- Am I still as motivated as I was initially?
- Has my overall lifestyle changed- are other areas in your life becoming more sedentary

Check your Water Intake

Adipose tissue, ie. fat, is mobilized through a process called hydrolysis. As the word suggests, hydrolysis requires plenty of water. Insufficient amounts of water in your body will hinder effective breakdown of fat. Yes, 8 cup of water per day is still the minimum recommendation (that's 64 oz or a 2 litre bottle of Evian) . Some experts suggest you should divide your current weight in pounds by 2; this number is how many ounces you should drink each day, but no less than 64 oz *

Change Your Exercise Routine

Your body quickly learns to adapt to changes. Also remember that if you at 200 lbs burn 300 calories during your 30 minute run, you at 175 pounds will burn 275 calories (guesstimate) because there is less of you.

Here are some ways to change your routine:

- Change your weight training routine by varying the number of sets, the exercises i.e replace tricep kickbacks with tricep extensions, or the intensity
- Add weight training to your program if you currently are not
- Try a new activity- change cycling to running or a stairmaster
- Take a break- you'll be surprised what a week off from all activity will do

Is it Really a Plateau Don't just use the scale as your marker- even though your weight may have reached a plateau you may still be losing inches. Assess your accomplishments based on your body measurements and how your clothing fits and not just by the scale. As you gain muscle the result may mean a higher number. Remember that muscle weighs almost twice as much as fat.

* adapted from an article at www.diettalk.com/articles/29.shtml

Cathy Morenzie © July 2, 2002

The Active Image Commitments Program™ is a 12 week weight management program focused on helping you achieve and develop a healthy weight through monitored eating and exercise, weekly coaching, and successful behavior modification techniques. The goal of the program is to give you the tools to help you manage your weight for a lifetime ! For more information on the **Active Image Commitments Program™** or other questions, please email activeimage@sympatico.ca or call (416)410-8517. Remember, to always consult your doctor before beginning any exercise program.

Please share this article with your family and friends; they will thank you for it.