

## 4 DON'Ts for Fat Loss!

**While you are speaking to everyone you know and reading up every article you see online to understand what you should DO to lose weight, here's a quick list of DON'Ts for you to focus on to ensure that you don't DO anything useless in your journey to fat loss!**

### 1. Don't starve.

I see your logic too - If eating less can cause fat loss then eating really less should cause more fat loss. Unfortunately, your body isn't that basic a system. For each person, based on their genetics, size, age and gender, there is an optimal amount of food that produces consistent fat loss without any detrimental effects. Starvation or extreme hunger results in putting your body in a kind of panic mode and, instead of using the fat as energy to fuel your activities, your body ends up holding on to it's fat stores. This results in muscle loss which produces a drop in body weight but then is the equivalent of reducing your luggage by throwing away the most valuable items and saving the fluff.

What do you do instead? Eat real food as much as possible to reduce processed or junk food to a bare minimum. Eat when you're hungry, only when you're hungry. Stop eating when you feel satiated but before you feel full.

### 2. Don't give up anything.

Even sugar or gluten. There is no commonly consumed food that is so dangerous that a single use will hurt you badly (unless you are severely allergic to a certain good). It's all dose dependent and, like in most things, abusing any particular food or food item will be detrimental to your health and appearance.

What do you do? The idea is not to perennially be in addiction or in rehab but to cruise along while building a good relationship with foods, especially the foods that you enjoy too much.

### 3. Don't overdo the exercise.

Yes, you want to do your best and look your best. But that doesn't mean you go from little or no exercise to a full blown warrior type training. Just like how starvation doesn't mean more fat loss, more and more exercise doesn't mean more and more fat loss. Remember - recovery is as important as training itself and an optimal zone exists here too.

What do you do? Stay calm and make gradual progress. Start with 2 twice/week of training and stay active on the other days with light walking or running or swimming. Gradually, as your body adapts, increase the number of training days up to 4.

### 4. Don't overdo the cardio.

When fat loss is a goal, it's common to spend hours running or cycling or on the elliptical. Cardio, though an important part of fitness and fat loss, is a tool that needs to be used carefully. When overdone, it uses muscle protein as fuel and stores fat which is the opposite of what you're trying to achieve.

What do you do instead? Keep running and other cardio based activities as part of your training program but don't make it your training program itself. Be sure to use (or work with someone who can recommend) a well balanced program containing strength training, only the required amount of cardio, interval training and a solid nutrition plan.

### **5. Don't waste your time working abs.**

Because ab exercises don't reduce belly fat. When done right, they target the muscles underneath your belly and make them stronger. When done wrong (which is how most beginners like yourself do them), they cause low back pain. Realize, spot reduction of fat is a myth. That is, doing more reps of an exercise will not cause fat loss in that area. Your body loses fat in sheets and though you may be in a hurry to lose fat from a particular area, your body isn't and it will follow the physiologically optimal and safe route.

What do you do instead? Train consistently 3-4 days a week, do isometric core work 1-2 times a week, eat wholesome real food and be patient.

*Note:* This article was originally published in The Hindu MetroPlus.