



Why Am I Not Loosing Weight

This often seems like a simple question with no simple answer. The good news is that unlike some of the more refined types of art, the formula for fat loss can be learnt. It is simply a matter of asking some basic questions of yourself and your food and training behaviours that can hold all the answers to fat loss, for good.

How committed are you to achieving your goal?

Individual's definitions of commitment differ widely. For some, a routine trip to the gym three times a week represents the ultimate level of commitment, while for others commitment is no more than training at the highest level every day for an hour and a half. The truth is that neither of these examples is relevant to anyone but the person setting it. The level of commitment required for fat loss will differ considerably between individuals as each of us has a different body type, genetic background, level of fitness and long term goals. For some of us, this will mean weight training each week in addition to high intensity sessions with a trainer while for others; two or three aerobic classes will be adequate. If you are serious about losing body fat for good, be prepared to do whatever it takes for you to achieve your goals as an individual.

What do you really eat?

It sounds so simple but try writing down all the extras that slip in during the day and you may well have the answer as to why you are not losing weight. Cakes at work for office celebrations, the office biscuit tin, lollies at night, picking before dinner and energy dense snack foods such as 97% fat free muesli bars, rice crackers and sugar loaded drinks such as fruit juice and soft drink are the most common culprits that prevent fat loss. Write down everything you go to put into your mouth for just one or two days and you will see how easy it is to identify the extras and get rid of them.

Are your nutrients balanced?

The less weight you have to lose, the more precise the balance needs to be between the quantities of protein, carbohydrate and fat you are eating. A simple thing such as having too much carbohydrate in the morning or too little fat can prevent fat loss. The best way to identify your nutrient balance is to have nutrient analysis completed by a professional. Generally speaking a good balance for fat loss is ~40% energy from carbohydrate, ~30% from protein and ~30% from good fats. This regime will ensure that your variety of foods is not overly restrictive but is more sustainable than strict regimes such as Atkins (~10% carbohydrate, ~50% fat, ~30-40% protein).



What time do you eat?

The ability to burn fat depends on what different fuels the body has available to it. Within a mixed meal of carbohydrate, protein and fat, the body will always utilise the carbohydrate and proteins before it will the fat. This is merely an evolutionary adaptation for humans to store extra fat for times of famine. What this means in terms of fat loss, even if you eat a very low fat, nutritionally balanced diet, if you eat the bulk of your calories in the second half of the day you are unlikely to burn body fat simply because the body will spend its time digesting the carbohydrate and protein contents of your food and is unlikely to get to fat stores before you eat again the next day.

For this reason, a key step in fat loss is to shift your food intake forward, Aim for a carbohydrate protein breakfast, morning tea and lunch and then taper off the carbs sticking to meat and vegetables for dinner. Naturally, rewarding yourself with chocolates, biscuits or lollies late at night for all your hard work during the day is not a good idea as it is fuelling you up at night and likely to be preventing fat stores being broken down.

Do you do the right type of exercise?

Just as there are large differences in the types of food we eat, there are large differences in the types of exercise. It may sound harsh, but while swimming, aerobics classes, slow walking, pilates aqua-aerobics are fantastic for general fitness, flexibility and health they are not ideal for fat loss. To be an efficient fat and energy user, you need to have your heart rate elevated for a significant period of time, with no breaks. This means good, hard sessions on the treadmill, rower and exercise bike, often coupled with a couple free weights sessions to really get your body working efficiently.

Do you exercise at the right time of day?

There are definite advantages to exercising when in a fasted state ie with no food in your gut. The reason for this is that remember that the body will utilize the fuels most readily available to it and if you have just eaten you are likely to just burn the food you have just eaten rather than tapping into fat stores. For this reason, pre breakfast or late afternoon sessions are usually best.

Do you exercise at the right intensity?

Remember that the body does not like change, it would much rather realign itself into a homeostatic state very quickly. If you are completing your workout program easily, can carry out a full conversation with your friend while you are walking or are not sweating, you are not working hard enough. There is no doubt that working out in shorter, harder bursts are much more beneficial for fat loss than long slow sessions. Mix up your routine, change the treadmill setting, run in between telegraph poles instead of walking and swap machines at the gym to challenge your body and burn more energy.

Have you had your hormones checked?

Medically there are not many conditions that directly impact on weight status but insulin resistance is one of them. Insulin resistance is a state in which the body is having trouble processing carbohydrate based foods as the hormone secreted by the body to break these foods down, insulin is not working properly. Symptoms of insulin resistance include an inability to lose body fat despite following a strict diet and exercise program, skin pigmentation, fatigue, bloating and a family history of infertility or Type 2 diabetes. Talk to your local GP if you have any of these symptoms and are having a significant amount of trouble losing body fat.