

FROM THE BLOG: WEIGHT MATTERS
BY YONNIE FREEDHOFF

About the Blogger:

Family doc, Assistant Prof. at the University of Ottawa, Author of The Diet Fix, and founder of Ottawa's non-surgical Bariatric Medical Institute - a multi-disciplinary, ethical, evidence-based nutrition and weight management centre. Nowadays I'm more likely to stop drugs than start them. You can also follow me on Twitter at [YoniFreedhoff](#)

13 myths of modern day dieting that he wrote about in his book The Diet Fix.

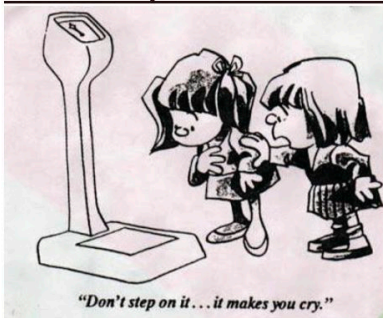
DAY, APRIL 14, 2014

The 1st Myth of Modern Day Dieting: It's About Willpower

The first myth of modern day dieting is that willpower is required. Yet people often spend more willpower on weight management than any other area of their lives. Has there really been an epidemic global loss of willpower over the course of the past 60 years? I don't think so. We as a society haven't changed, the world around us has. In this day and age, and in this toxic food environment, weight struggles aren't a willpower issue, they're as Yale's [Dr. David Katz](#) would put it, a *skillpower* issue.

TUESDAY, APRIL 15, 2014

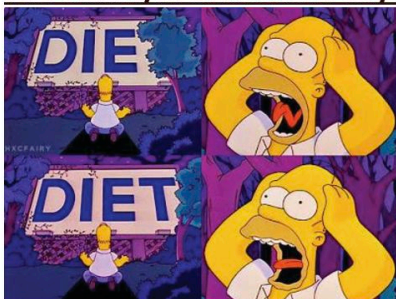
The 2nd Myth of Modern Day Dieting: Scales Measure Health



Scales don't measure the presence or absence of health. Nor do they measure happiness, self-worth, or success. Scales measure one thing, and one thing only. Scales measure weight

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16, 2014

The 3rd Myth of Modern Day Dieting: Dieting Must Be Difficult



Simply put, weight lost through suffering comes back. While there's no doubt that weight management and healthful living require effort, if the efforts required include regularly facing off with hunger, blindly denying yourself foods you enjoy, or following a dietary regime that doesn't fit your tastes, they're not going to last.

Whatever program or diet you undertake, the most important predictor of your likelihood of long-term success is being able to answer, "yes" to the question, "*could you happily live this way for the rest of your life*", with the key word there being, "*happily*".

THURSDAY, APRIL 17, 2014

The 4th Myth of Modern Day Dieting: You Shouldn't Eat Unless You're Hungry



For those who struggle with dietary control I can't imagine a more dangerous piece of advice than, "*you should wait until you're hungry to eat*". Hunger influences choice. Shop at the supermarket hungry and you'll see that influence in action. Sit down to a meal hungry and while you're not shopping from an aisle, instead you'll be shopping from your fridge, cupboard, plate or a menu and no doubt, your choices will be different. On the other hand, organize your eating so that you're not hungry, and then you've got a shot, as "willpower", when it comes to dietary choice, is often simply the absence of hunger.

Myth 5: The 5th Myth of Modern Day Dieting: You Can Outrun Your Fork

80% of your modifiable weight is likely determined by your dietary choices leaving only 20% for your fitness choices. While exercise has truly fantastic health benefits and markedly mitigates the risks of weight, you're far more likely to lose weight in your kitchen than you are in your gym, and if you're exercising solely for the purpose of weight management, you run the risk of quitting perhaps the single healthiest behaviour you could adopt if and when the scales don't fly down. Unless you plan on spending a heroic part of each and every day running, you're not going to outrun your fork.

TUESDAY, APRIL 22, 2014

The 6th Myth of Modern Day Dieting: Cheat Days Are Wise



That up above?

That's a photo of The Keg's carrot cake à la mode. I once referred to it at *the world's most dangerous piece of*

cake because who in their right mind would ever guess it contained more than a day's worth of calories?

Item	Serving Size	Energy (cal)	Total Fat (g)	Saturated Fat (g)	Protein (g)	Carbs (g)	Sodium (mg)
Carrot Cake (US menu)	-	2173.1	127.0	45.0	21.0	240.0	1470.0
served with... Vanilla Ice Cream	-	171.0	9.2	5.3	2.6	19.7	78.9
Totals	-	2344.1	136.2	50.3	23.6	259.7	1548.9

While I'm all for thoughtful indulgences (and even that piece of carrot cake if you've thoughtfully decided it's worth it), in our current non-intuitive, hyper-calorific food environment, cheat days, even cheat meals, can easily sink your weight management efforts. The answer to the question, "*is it worth it?*", is a personal one, but if you don't even ask the question because the day or the meal's a "*cheat*", you're liable to bite off far more than you'd have thoughtfully decided was actually worth chewing.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2014

The 7th Myth of Modern Day Dieting: Some Foods Must Be Forbidden

I'd bet I've written more actual prescriptions for chocolate than any other physician in North America. While of course there's no all-you-can eat chocolate weight loss program, there's also little doubt that if chocolate is one of the loves of your life, the likelihood of you living forever-more without it is slim to none. It's about the smallest amount of chocolate you need to like your life, and for most chocolate lovers, zero isn't a sustainable amount.

THURSDAY, APRIL 24, 2014

The 8th Myth of Modern Day Dieting: There's One Best Diet



Different strokes for different folks is definitely true diet wise, and it's dead simple to know if you're on the best diet for you. Just ask yourself the question, "*Could I happily live like this forever?*", and if the answer's "*no*", you're on the wrong diet. The corollary's true too - if the answer's "*yes*", and if you're happy with your health, don't let any diet guru or zealot try to tell you different.

THURSDAY, MAY 01, 2014

The 9th Myth of Modern Day Dieting: Muscle Gains Outweigh Fat Losses

Have you ever told yourself that the reason you're not losing weight is because you're gaining muscle?



Oh how I wish muscle were that easy to gain!

MONDAY, MAY 05, 2014

The 10th Myth of Modern Day Dieting: You Should Save Your Calories For Dinner



If you know you've got a big dinner planned, while it might intuitively make sense to try to skimp on your daytime eating, if you show up to your indulgent meal hungry, you're likely to eat back your savings and then some.

Given the average restaurant appetizer packs between 400-600 calories, and that bread baskets beckon before appetizers even arrive, and that decadent mains and desserts festoon all menus, if you show up to a restaurant hungry because you skimmed all day long and between the bread, an appetizer, a more indulgent hunger-influenced main that you're more likely to finish, and whatever daytime calorie savings you racked up will likely be gone even before your main course arrives. On the other hand, show up not particularly hungry and suddenly the bread's less tempting, there'll be no need for an appetizer, your main is likely to be less indulgent (and perhaps not finished), and dessert'll be easier to share.

Bottom line for most meals out - if you save your calories for dinner, your overall daily total may well wind up higher than if you don't.

MONDAY, MAY 12, 2014

The 11th Myth of Modern Day Dieting: There Are Bottles Full of Weight Loss



There are no shortage of products promising remarkable weight loss benefits. You can buy them from actual pharmacies and sometimes they're even promoted on television by actual doctors (or at least by one actual

doctor). Yet the only thing remarkable about those bottles is that they're legally allowed to be sold.

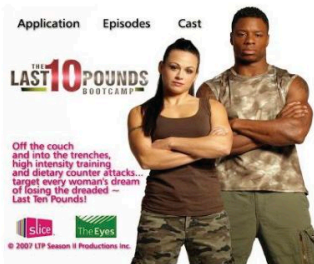
If there were such a thing as bottles full of weight loss, the world would be very slim indeed.

TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2014

The 12th Myth of Modern Day Dieting: The Last 10lbs Are the Hardest!

If you want those last 10lbs to stay off, well then they'd better not be any "*harder*" to lose. "*Harder*" usually implies extremes of effort - lots of white-knuckles to pass by the yummy stuff, more gym sweat than is enjoyable, or incredibly monotonous eating and denying yourself the ability to enjoy food for comfort or celebration. Well guess what? You're not likely to live with those extremes for good and as a result (and you know this is true) it's not a matter of if, but rather of when those last 10lbs are going to return.

Your real last 10lbs, while I don't know which 10lbs they're going to be, and while they will certainly be **the slowest** 10lbs, shouldn't be any "*harder*" than your first 10, and if they are, you're doing something wrong.



WEDNESDAY, MAY 21, 2014

The 13th (and Most Dangerous) Myth of Modern Day Dieting: Weights Should Be "Ideal"



If I had to pick the single most toxic, backward, and yet desperately believed societal myth about weight there's no doubt it would be this 13th myth of modern day dieting - that weights should be "*ideal*", that people of similar heights are **supposed** to weigh similar amounts, and that numbers make useful goals.

They don't. But if you believe that they do, well that's likely to lead you to all sorts of stupid when it comes to trying to lose as it's a belief that has fuelled the past 60 or 70 years of traumatic and extreme diets.

Let me say it quite plainly (and forgive me for my language) - as a means to set personal goals BMI is bullshit. Sure it may be useful when considering a population and risks associated with weight overall, but it's simply not useful to you as an individual as there are all sorts of weight-affecting realities that you simply won't be able (or willing sometimes) to change.

Like every other area of your life, your goal with weight management or healthy living is to do your best, and whatever weight you reach living the healthiest life you honestly and actually enjoy - well that's your "*best weight*". And I'm here to tell you, whatever that weight is, it's frickin' great.