

## Achieving An Appropriate Weight

Maintaining a reasonable weight is one of the most important general health measures that a person can work on. Being overweight can have many health consequences, including diabetes mellitus, heart disease and acceleration of arthritis.

### What is an Appropriate Weight?

Determination of a reasonable weight can be based on the concept of Body Mass Index (BMI). The BMI relates body weight to height; this makes sense because the taller an individual the more they should weigh, and vice versa. The formula for BMI is in the metric system: weight in kilograms divided by height in meters squared. A kilogram is 2.2 pounds, and one meter is 39.37 inches. There are tables that do the calculations for you.

The guidelines are that a BMI of 22 - 26 is reasonable, BMI of 26 - 28 is overweight, and BMI greater than 30 is markedly overweight.

Table of Height, Weight, and BMI

<b>Height</b>	<b>BMI = 26</b>	<b>BMI = 28</b>	<b>BMI = 30</b>
60" – 5' 0"	133 lbs	143 lbs	155 lbs
62" – 5' 2"	142 lbs	153 lbs	164 lbs
64" – 5' 4"	151 lbs	163 lbs	174 lbs
66" – 5' 6"	161 lbs	173 lbs	186 lbs
68" – 5' 8"	171 lbs	184 lbs	197 lbs
70" – 5' 10"	181 lbs	195 lbs	209 lbs
72" – 6' 0"	191 lbs	206 lbs	221 lbs
74" – 6' 2"	202 lbs	218 lbs	233 lbs

### How does one reduce weight?

This is a very common question that has resulted in many diets and books. Although we would all like a simple pill that would result in weight loss, at this time there is none.

However, there are a number of straightforward steps that can be taken that will work. The basic issue is that we take in calories (energy) that our body needs to fuel our cells. What calories we do not use (burn) we store as fat. We lose weight when we burn more calories than we take in, and we gain weight when we take in more than we need.

We can burn extra calories with exercise, but the number of calories is surprisingly little.

Table of Calories Burned with Common Activities

Activity	Calories (Kcals/hour)
Lying/sleeping	80/hour
Desk work	110/hour
Standing	140/hour
Housework	180/hour
Bicycle riding (11mph)	440/hour
Walking (2 mph)	150/hour
Walking (4 mph)	330/hour
Golf (with cart)	150/hour
Jogging (5 mph)	640/hour

#### What if I Cannot Exercise?

Some people cannot exercise for various medical reasons. Not to worry because the gain from exercise is small. We suggest the following guideline to help you lose weight.

#### **Eat 100 calories fewer per day.**

Most diets, including the Adkins and South Beach diets probably work by this method. You do not have to stop eating what you like, just take in a little less.

You can see that 100 few calories per day will be 700 calories per week, equal to 2 hours of walking or 1 hour of running.

This can be done by several ways.

- Try to leave one or two bites of food on your plate at every meal.
- If you drink sodas with sugar, switch to artificially sweetened sodas.
- If you drink fruit drinks or Gator Aid, switch to lemon-flavored water.
- If you are hungry between meals, drink a glass of water in place of food.

This will result in a weight loss of about 2-3 lbs/month. This is the usual rate people put on weight; you are reversing the process! The long-term goal is to change your style of eating.

#### What if I only eat a little?

A recent research report published in the New York Times (11 October 2006) provides many clues that can help. Professor Brian Wansink's research indicates that (paraphrased):

“65% of overweight people got that way because they did not realize how much there were eating. All we see is big portions of food that cost less than small ones, and that can be confusing.”

“When people exercise they feel they are entitled to eat more.”

“Employing a few tricks and you can take in 100-300 fewer calories a day and at the end of a year you can be 10-30 pounds lighter.”

“People make well over 200 food decisions per day. Some are obvious, some subtle. The bigger the plate, the larger the spoon, the deeper the bag, the more we eat.”

Sometimes we decide how much to eat based on how much the person next to us is eating, sometimes moderating our intake by more than 20% up or down to match our dining companion.”

One can add to the tips above:

- Use smaller plates, bowls and spoons.
- Talk with your dining companion to work together on eating a little less.
- Watch out for advertisements for large portions, especially with fast foods.

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