

*Why Your Weight Gain is
Not Totally Your Fault!*

Copyright © 1995-2009

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means without written consent from the publisher, unless acknowledgement is given by the author for quotes or source information presented in reviews, research or reports.

First Edition: July 2009

Visit us on the web at:

<http://www.activeimage.ca>

<http://www.myharmonichealth.com>

Note: The information in this book is for educational purposes only and is not recommended as a means of diagnosing or treating illness. All situations concerning physical or mental health should be supervised by a health professional knowledgeable in treating that particular condition. Neither the author nor anyone affiliated with Active Image or Healthy by Design dispenses medical advice nor do they prescribe any remedies or assume any responsibility for anyone who chooses to treat themselves.

Please consult your doctor before participating in this or any other exercise program. Certain elements of this program can be physically demanding may involve the risk of injury. All readers are voluntarily participating in these activities and using equipment with the knowledge of the potential dangers involved. All readers hereby agree to expressly assume and accept any and all risks of injury.

Table of Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	4
<i>Cleansing</i>	5
<i>Emotions</i>	7
<i>Attitudes</i>	9
<i>Diet- Your Meal Plan</i>	11
<i>Exercise</i>	13
<i>Sleep</i>	17
<i>Stress</i>	19
<i>Summary</i>	21

Introduction

Have you ever heard this statement before, “Losing weight is easy – just eat less and move more.”

This statement might be true in a perfect world but then throw in metabolism issues, detoxification issues, emotional issues, suppressed immune systems, sleep issues, high stress levels and of course a confusing trillion dollar diet industry and we’re left scratching our heads about what our bodies ‘should be’ able to do naturally—release weight.

Here are some other factors about weight releasing that may be affecting your weight:

Sleep- Did you know that insufficient sleep suppresses 2 important hormones which control your appetite (ghrelin and leptin)?

Stress- Did you know that stress causes the adrenals to release excess cortisol, a stress hormone that triggers over-indulgence?

Cleansing- Did you know that the more chemicals and toxins in your body, the more fat you will have? Fat accumulation is your body’s way of protecting itself. Cleansing rids the body of toxins which in turn allows the body to burn fat naturally.

Emotions- Did you know that experts estimate that 75% of overeating is caused by emotions? Manage your emotions and manage your weight.

Attitudes- Did you know that wrong beliefs and attitudes are at the core of many health problems including obesity? Learn to change your attitudes and beliefs and release unwanted pounds forever.

Diet- Do you think low carbohydrate, high protein diets are the way to go?— It may for some people but it could also be the reason why you’re putting on weight. You’ve got to know what nutritional needs are right for YOUR body.

Read on and learn how your body will release weight naturally once you learn to give it what it needs.

Cleansing

Most people around the world do some type of cleansing, it is a practice that dates back to ancient times.

The purpose of cleansing is to give the body a break from the onslaught of junk that we often feed it. It allows the organs to function more efficiently by absorbing nutrients and eliminating toxins more efficiently, thus making our bodies healthier and stronger. Cleansing can also re-establish your sugar control mechanism; recharge your metabolism and interrupt any negative habits that you may have grown accustomed. Your body will only be as healthy as the fuel you give it so feed it well and it will serve you well.

According to "National Geographic," studies have discovered various chemicals from our foods and environment which indicate that we contribute 700,000 tons of pollutants into the air every day. These range from hair dyes, household cleaners to cosmetics.

So just how can this affect your weight?

Chemicals and toxins accumulate in your body over time, and cause the liver and kidneys to become overworked and weak. This stress causes the adrenals to release excess cortisol which is a stress hormone that triggers over-indulgence in simple carbohydrates such as chocolate, candy, sodas, and ice cream, even when you are not hungry. Excess cortisol also contributes to hormone imbalances.

Secondly, chemicals and toxins accumulate in fat tissue. The more chemicals and toxins, the more fat the body manufactures. Have you ever tried to lose weight only to be disappointed? Now you know the reason why!

Start with a mild cleanse by simply removing all processed foods from your diet and as you begin to get more comfortable with the process (any enjoy the results) then you can move on deeper levels of cleansing.

My favorite cleansing program is the 30 day [Isagenix Cleansing System](#). The milkshakes are delicious and I don't feel hungry (except for the first day)

Benefits of Cleansing

- Relieves frequent fatigue and low energy
- Relieves flatulence, gas & bloating
- Aids in weight loss
- Improves digestion
- Relieves food cravings
- Relieves candid infections
- Alleviates protruding belly ('pooch')
- Alleviates chronic constipation
- Alleviates skin problems, rashes. etc.

Emotions

"Let's not forget that the little emotions are the great captains of our lives and we obey them without realizing it." Vincent Van Gogh, 1889

Experts estimate that 75% of overeating is caused by emotions.

Emotional eating refers to when we eat in response to our feelings regardless of whether we're hungry or not; when we use food as a tool or coping mechanism to either numb pain or to feel better.

Food is meant to fuel our bodies; to give us the energy we need to survive and thrive.

Eating should be a conscious choice. Emotional eating can be done consciously but it is often unconscious. Even when we become aware of our use of food to mask certain emotions; until we get to the root of the problem we are often powerless to change the behavior.

The root of emotional eating often goes back to childhood. Remember the popsicle that your mom gave you when you hurt yourself? Well the hormones that your body produced as a result of eating the popsicle actually did make the pain go away. The problem is that it created a file in my mind which says 'sweets will make pain go away. When we continually use food to medicate ourselves we run into challenges with food.

Managing Food Cravings

A study in Psychosomatic Medicine showed that people over-eat in order to self-medicate their feelings of stress or anxiety.[\(1\)](#) People find it almost impossible to manage their food cravings even with the threat of potentially life-threatening risks.

It's not totally your fault though, well, it is but it might not be because you're out of control. One reason people overeat is that certain foods increase brain levels of serotonin which promotes the 'feel-good' sensations. Unfortunately these 'feel-good' foods are not so good for our waistlines.

Other factors such as hormone levels, blood sugar levels and even vitamin deficiencies can also trigger certain food cravings.

Our body is quite capable of letting us know exactly what it needs and sometimes the food you're craving is your body's way of telling you that it needs a certain nutrient. i.e. chocolate cravings can indicate your body's need for magnesium; coffee or tea is your body's cry for phosphorous and even a general overeating indicates your body's need for the amino acid, tyryptophan.

Scientists have also found that eating a meal alters your emotional predisposition and your mood, typically by increasing calmness and reducing irritability.[2](#)

One more interesting point to note is that men have more muscle and therefore often crave more proteins for muscle maintenance. Women have larger fat cells and stronger hormonal cycles. These variations in estrogen levels affect blood sugar levels which trigger sweet cravings. Research also shows that women also lack magnesium, hence the chocolate cravings. During menstruation the body demands more fuel which tends to spark cravings.

Can you see all of the factors here alone that can affect your weight? The key is to learn you body, how what it needs and how different foods affect it. Mastering this is one of the first steps in mastering your weight.

Attitudes

"We are limited, not by our abilities, but by our vision."

What do you say about yourself when you look in the mirror? Studies report that 80% of women will be dissatisfied with their reflection, and more than half may see a distorted image. (Social Issues Research Center, Kate Fox, 1997)

Research also confirms what most of us already know: that the main focus of our discontent for most women looking in the mirror is the shape and size of their hips, waists and thighs.

For years people have known that your health is related to your thoughts. Now research in the biomedical sciences proves that your thoughts can heal your body mind and spirit.

Research done at Stanford University by Dr. Lipton shows that 'when the mind perceives that the environment is safe and supportive, the cells do their job of growth and maintenance if the body. However, in stressful situations, cells forgo their normal growth functions and adopt a defensive 'protection' posture. (<http://www.brucelipton.com>) When your cells are in this defensive posture they don't grow and function like they should.

Confusing?? Here's the bottom line-- Wrong beliefs and attitudes affect our physical health. Wrong attitudes and beliefs are actually at the core of most physical problems according to this new science of biology. Feelings of being unlovable, alone and insignificant actually manifest in the body as stress. The result of this stress is sickness and disease.

The research even goes further to say that lack of love in your life specifically affects your energy levels and causes you to gain weight.

So how do you begin to change your attitude? Especially when you're not even sure what some of those attitudes or beliefs are that are affecting your health and weight.

Here is where prayer and daily affirmations come into play. Begin to

Speak, live and think differently and it will have an effect on your health and weight.

Please note that this is not just a name, it is a claim in psychology. As you begin to heal your cells by treating the root (unconscious thoughts and beliefs), you will begin to heal your body so it can function the way it was designed to.

Now this is very new learning for me and it might be for you too and I acknowledge that I have only presented you with the tip of the iceberg so I encourage you to do some more research on your own.

Diet- Your Meal Plan

"Part of courage is simple consistency."—Peggy Noonan

The Zone, Atkins, South Beach, Weight-Watchers, Blood Type, Jenny Craig—You've heard them all! And I'm sure you've learned by now that not every diet that boasts miraculous results will be the right one for you.

What can even be more discouraging is that many of these diets can have you actually gain weight instead to losing. Imagine getting the opposite results of what you set out to do—how frustrating?

So what's the solution?

Over the years I've learned that as no two clients are alike, meal plans also need to be individualized. There is no one-size-fits-all diet.

The sooner you accept this, the sooner you can get on with the business of finding the foods that are right for you.

Step 1- Maintain a Food Journal

There's a popular saying, 'you can't manage it if you can't measure it.' So, step one in creating the perfect diet for you is to get a handle on what you are currently eating by keeping a food journal. Your current meal plan will give you a good indication of when you eat, what type of foods you eat or crave, how often you eat and the amount of foods you eat. I suggest you keep a food journal for at least 1 week. You might surprise yourself.

Step 2-Learn What Foods are Right for your Body

In the [Healthy by Design Intensive Program](#) you will learn what your metabolic type is. Most people are either categorized into protein types, carbohydrate types or mixed types. Eating right for your type is the best way to promote health, help your body release weight naturally and give you boundless amounts of energy.

Each of the different body types will have different nutritional needs, different eating habits and need a different emphasis.

Step 3- Learn What Foods will Hurt Your Body

Certain foods will sabotage even the best diets. Try to avoid or minimize your consumption of the following foods as they aggravate certain metabolic conditions:

Dangers of Alcohol

1. Alcohol reduces the number of fat calories you burn, it also increases your appetite and lowers your testosterone levels which increase fat accumulation.
2. The liver's role is to protect the body from harmful toxins so while its busy metabolizing (burning) alcohol, it is unable to metabolize (burn) fat- this could be for a few hours or days. If the fat is not being burned then its stored in your body.
3. Alcohol also decreases cortisol levels which causes fat accumulation.

Caffeine

1. Like alcohol, caffeine stimulates the adrenal glands to produce increased cortisol levels .
2. Caffeine also triggers food cravings and increases appetite.
3. It also increases your desire to eat more food with higher fat content.

Refined or Processed Foods

1. Refined grains like white rice, white pasta and sugary cereals turn into blood sugar (glucose) so fast that they can cause a spike in your insulin level. This signals your body that plenty of energy is readily available and that it should stop burning fat and start storing it.

Exercise

Here's the bottom line. The more fit you are the more calories you will burn; the more food you can consume and the less fat you will have.

Someone who is fit will typically have a lower body fat percentage and higher amounts of muscle in their body. Muscle is metabolically active—it burns calories and fat whereas fat (as the term sounds) pretty much sits there and shows very little metabolic activity.

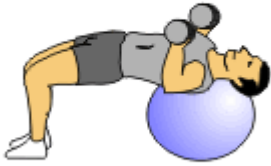
Here are some answers to some often asked questions about exercise as it relates to weight loss:

1. **High Intensity exercise** such as weight training and interval training will produce the most fat loss but be warned—it is stressful on your body and can result in injuries. To maximize your caloric output work as hard as you can for as long as you can but listen to your body.
2. **Low intensity exercise** such as walking where you can talk comfortably while exercising is where fat gets burned preferentially as fuel for the body but be aware that you will have to do this type of activity for a longer period of time than high intensity training.

For effective weight release, your exercise program should include aerobic exercise, muscular strengthening and flexibility. Read below to learn more about them.

Aerobic Exercise

Your exercise routine should include a variety of cardiovascular exercise such as walking, running, swimming, tennis or cycling. These activities benefit your heart and lungs, help manage your weight by burning fat in your body.



Weight Training

Weight training or resistance exercises are great for developing muscle tone, increasing or restoring bone density, improving posture, helping you look and feel better, injury prevention and increasing your metabolism. You can use your own body weight (push ups), bands, free weights or machines. The more muscle you have the more fat you will burn so a good weight loss program should include weight training exercises.



Flexibility

Stretching should also be part of your regular fitness routine. Whether it's a few stretches when you wake up in the morning, a yoga class or post-workout stretch, be sure to stretch each muscle that you use. Good flexibility reduces muscle soreness, improves posture, increases blood flow and nutrients to the tissues and improves balance and co-ordination. Remember what you learned about keeping your stress levels in check. A good stretching program will help to relax you mind as well as your body.

How to Sneak Exercise into your Day

For many of us, the challenging part of exercise is simply finding the time to do it. Try some of these tips below to help you sneak exercise into your day.

- On the phone

While talking on the phone, stand up instead of sitting, balance on one leg, go for a walk, do lunges, squats or stretches.

- Sitting at the computer

Replace your chair with a Swiss Ball and work your abdominals all day long. Try doing some knee lifts, shoulder rolls and chest stretches at your desk.

- In the bathroom

Spice up your bathroom routine -- while brushing your teeth, balance on one leg, do isometric abdominal exercises by sucking your abs in towards your spine, stretch or do wall squats.

- At the table

Your chair is the perfect height for triceps, dips ... make it part of your daily routine to do 10 dips before dinner; this will tone and strengthen your triceps.

- Standing in line

Hate waiting in line? Make it into time well spent as you do an invisible butt squeeze to tighten the largest muscle group in your body – your glutes. Repeat squeezing your cheeks together, hold for two seconds and then release—do this 15-20 times per day. Also use this time to practice holding your stomach in and holding your shoulders back to improve your posture.

- At the mall

Do yourself a favor and find the parking spot farthest from the entrance. Remember, every little bit helps!

- Learn to love housework

Not a fan of housework? Look at it as an opportunity to improve your health. Turn vacuuming into lunges; window cleaning into an arm workout and imagine the possibilities you can create with a broom!

- Book a meeting

Who says meetings always have to be in a stuffy boardroom? Book a walking meeting and kill two birds with one stone.

- Watching TV

Use commercial breaks during your favorite TV program to do push ups or abdominal exercises. Challenge yourself to improve each week.

- Become inefficient

Instead of trying to carry all of your groceries, files or garbage in one trip, take some extra time and make a few trips.

It's the small things that you do each day that will add up. See how many activities you can add into your daily routine.

Sleep

*"Early to bed and early to rise, Makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise."
Franklin, Benjamin, Poor Richard's Almanac Maxims*

You're eating all the 'right foods'; you're exercising regularly; you're taking the time to nourish your spirit through positive affirmations yet you're still gaining weight.

The answer to this quandary might be in the amount of sleep you're getting each night. Studies report that inadequate amounts of sleep could increase the levels of the certain hormones associated with appetite and eating behavior. Read on and learn what these hormones are and how they affect your weight.

Have you ever experienced a sleepless night followed by a day when no matter what you ate you never felt full or satisfied? If so, then you have experienced the workings of hormone imbalance-- more specifically, the hormones ghrelin and leptin.

Good sleep helps control the hormonal balance which in turn, help control appetite.

A study which followed 68,000 women for 16 years showed that women who sleep only five hours a night or less are one-third more likely to weigh more—up to 30 pounds over the course of the study—than those who sleep seven hours a night.

Another Stanford study finds that men who slept less than eight hours a night had lower levels of the hormone leptin and higher levels of the hormone ghrelin and higher body fat than those who got adequate sleep.

1. Ghrelin, a metabolic hormone is produced in the gastrointestinal tract. It stimulates appetite. Leptin, another metabolic hormone is produced in fat cells. It sends a signal to the brain when you are full.

When you don't get enough sleep, your leptin levels decrease which means you don't feel as satisfied after you eat. It also

conversely cause your ghrelin levels to increase which stimulates your appetite so you want more food !

2. Another factor affecting sleep and weight is this: when you are tired, your body will crave high carbohydrate and sweet snacks to keep you alert. Over a period of time, this results in weight gain.

3. The final and simplest explanation as to why you less you sleep the more you eat is that people who are awake more have more hours in which to eat. If you're sleeping your can't be eating. (dreaming about food does not count)

The next time you just can't seem to get full, check the amount of sleep you got the night before.

Stress

"The mind is never right but when it is at peace within itself." Seneca

Did you know that your physical body is the end result of mental, spiritual, emotional and chemical (nutrition) energies?

What does this mean?

Aches and pains, low energy, accumulation of fat etc. is a result of the health of all other aspects of your life.

Put another way, your outer or physical body is the manifestation of what's happening inside your body.

You are so much more than your physical body. It's cleansing and restoration must begin from the inside.

Chronic stress elevates our body's cortisol levels. Cortisol is a hormone made in the adrenal glands, when the body is under stress. In chronic states of stress such as a hurried day coupled with a poor diet, excess cortisol stimulates glucose production. This excess glucose then typically end up as stored fat, especially in the abdominal area.

The catch-22 is people often crave junk foods when they are under chronic stress. A study in rats revealed that 24 hours after activation of the chronic stress system rats engaged in pleasure-seeking behaviors, which include eating high-energy foods (sucrose and lard). The animals developed abdominal obesity.[1](#)

The study suggests that comfort food applies the brakes on a key element of chronic stress. Unfortunately, there are serious health consequences of the use of food as a brake. The result is abdominal obesity (which can lead to cardiovascular disease, Type II diabetes and stroke), and cardiovascular disease itself.

Here are some signals your body gives you to let you know that you are chronically stressed:

- Poor sleep quality
- Poor digestion
- Constipation
- Anxiety
- Increased muscle tension and muscle aches
- Increased Susceptibility to infection
- Increase respiratory rate and heart rate
- Waking up feeling un-rested
- Depressed sexual drive and sexual dysfunction

Summary

So much for the over-simplified, ‘old school’ teaching of eating less and moving more to lose weight. Your physical health and weight is the end result of mental, spiritual, emotional and chemical (nutrition) energies.

Take some time and get you know your body and how it works. For programs and resources on this topic please visit [Active Image for more information.](#)

