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The fastest diet is not necessarily the best or safest!

It's Tough Losing

BY WINSTON J. CRAIG



Should one cut carbs, fat or calories?

January often means New Year's resolutions. We plan to make lifestyle changes that will improve our health. Some may need to do some damage control after stepping over the line during the holiday season. So you set a goal to "Lose weight in '08." You really want to be a successful loser this time.

But it's tough going. Losing weight is not easy. Most people find it a tough challenge. Some people can lose weight on almost any diet. But can they stick to the diet? Is it easy to follow? Can they sustain the weight loss or will the pounds come back? And will the diet become a new lifestyle?

Placing whole food groups off-limits makes a diet more challenging to follow. Almost 60 percent of dieters on restrictive diets, such as the low-carb Atkins diet and the very low-fat Ornish diet, battle with food cravings (and consequently, snack attacks) compared to about 30 percent of dieters following a less restrictive diet, such as Weight Watchers.

No one diet seems to fit with everyone's temperament. A person must truly find the diet that is best for them. When it comes to weight loss, the fastest is not necessarily the safest or the most successful program in the long-term. The following are six simple guidelines to make weight loss a realistic goal, and weight management a success.

1. Set realistic goals. Don't try to lose more than one or two pounds a week. Studies have shown that two out of every three dieters typically quit within three months, while up to 85 percent may quit by six months.

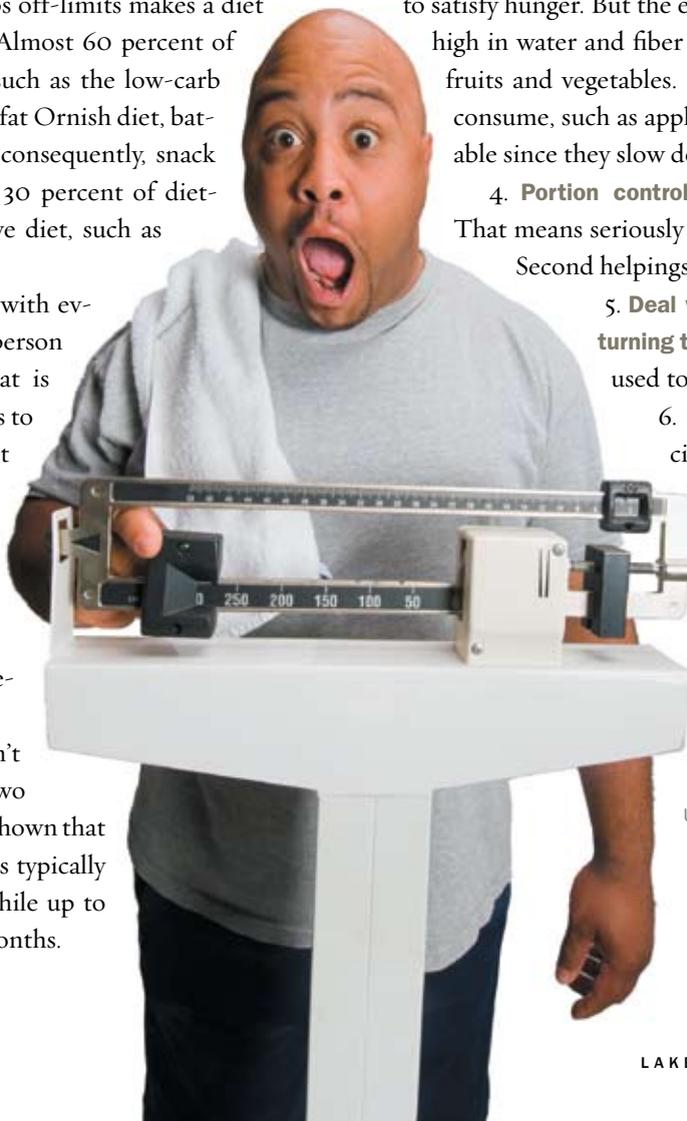
2. Exercise is essential for keeping your BMR (basal metabolic rate) from falling. Exercise does more than assist you with better weight management. It improves your sense of well-being and your mental attitude. It helps you manage stress more effectively.

3. Don't eliminate fat from your diet. Some fat is needed to satisfy hunger. But the emphasis should be on foods high in water and fiber and low in calories, such as fruits and vegetables. Foods that require work to consume, such as apples and pineapple, are desirable since they slow down the rate of ingestion.

4. Portion control is essential for success. That means seriously reducing your serving sizes. Second helpings are out.

5. Deal with life's problems without turning to food. Eating should not be used to provide emotional healing.

6. Don't go it alone. Create a circle of people around you who support your objective of losing weight, who exercise with you, who motivate you to stay on course, and who encourage you when things are not going well.



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