

IS THERE A SHORTCUT TO LOOSING WEIGHT ON YOUR OWN?

Obesity is a global epidemic and is increasing worldwide especially in the black population. It is screened by measuring the BMI (Body Mass Index) and waist circumference. BMI is calculated by dividing the body weight in Kg by the height in meters squared (kg/m^2). Obesity is defined as a BMI 30 kg/m^2 . Waist circumference is used to assess abdominal obesity and is measured with a tape at the top of the hip bone (iliac crest).

Obesity is associated with increased mortality as well as many disorders including high blood pressure, diabetes, stroke, cancer, symptomatic osteoarthritis and sleep apnea. A waist circumference greater than 35 inches in females and greater than 40 inches in male implies excessive visceral fat and increases risks for such disorders as high blood pressure, heart disease, nonalcoholic liver disease, diabetes and lipid disorders.

Hence the big question, Is there a shortcut to losing weight? Unfortunately the answer is a big "NO". Losing weight on your own requires a lifestyle change aka eat less and move more. Any weight lost by quick dieting is quickly regained once you go back to your old habits. Many diets have been studied, from Atkins to Weight Watchers, with no one better than the other in the long run. The bottom line is sticking with a diet that reduces the total number of calories that are eaten. Bulking up your diet with assorted vegetable, legumes and fruits will keep you full over a longer period of time, while keeping your insulin level low. A high insulin level prevents you from burning fat and encourages increased fat instead. Pairing your carbohydrates with a small piece of protein will decrease your stomach time of emptying and keep you full. Stick with all natural foods instead of processed ones. Avoid sugary drinks and simple carbohydrates like white potato, white bread and white rice. Instead eat whole grains, brown rice and sweet potatoes.

Increasing activity is an important part of losing weight as well as helping cut your cancer and cardiovascular risks. Any activity is better than none. A combination of interval training and resistance training most days of the week will help you burn fat faster. Compound exercises like squats, lunges, pushups, chin-up, shoulder presses are preferred for resistance training as they seem to increase post exercise fat burning just like interval training.

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