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Top 7 Weight Loss Mistakes

by Craig Ballantyne, CSCS, MS (with comments from Shawn Horwood)

My comments will be italicized so it's easy to tell what Craig is saying and what I'm saying.

Seven Mistakes People Make When Trying to Lose Fat

1. They fail to consider the consequences of their actions.

Alwyn Cosgrove (one of the top trainers in the business) once told me, "I get my clients to think, "Will this help me or not? Is this a positive step or not?" If you can see that every action that you take is either helping you lose fat or stopping you from losing fat, then you will start to make better choices. So remember that everything you put in your mouth is either for or against fat loss. And every exercise choice you make is either for or against fat loss. "Get that", Alwyn says, "and you're a hit."

Alwyn is one of the top trainers in the business and is definitely a guy to listen to. His advice is incredible, as you can see from the statement Craig has provided. The concept of understanding that you are either moving towards your goals or away from them is beneficial in all areas of life, not just your health.

2. They neglect to control their insulin and blood sugar levels - 2 key factors in determining whether or not the body fat will come off.

If you eat processed foods you are guaranteed to elevate your insulin & blood sugar levels. If you do that, your body sends the message, "Store fat!", and you won't make any progress. So avoid white-flour based bakery products, sugary drinks, and almost any carbohydrate snack that comes in a bag or a box.

This is basic nutrition advice that SO many people ignore. Ditch the processed garbage and start eating some real food and you'll find it much easier to get and stay healthy.

3. They train like it's the 80's.

Yes, I know. Eighties music is popular again. But that doesn't mean ineffective training methods from the 80's like light weights, low intensity steady state cardio, and endless low-intensity ab work should also make a comeback. That type of training should stay buried in the back issues of cheesy muscle magazines. Stick to strength training and interval training for efficient and effective body changing routines.

Whenever I see someone lifting light weights I am saddened because they seem to think that 10,000 repetitions will build massive muscle or something. Like the guys who think they have great abs because they do 1,000 crunches/day. Look at Craig's abs (they're way better than anyone I've seen who does hundreds of crunches) - and he's totally anti-crunch/situp!

4. They don't take 30 minutes to plan their next day's food intake.

If you fail to do this, you will set your fat loss efforts back by a minimum of 72 hours. Without a good meal plan, you are left to hunt and gather food in the modern world. And that's a recipe for fat loss disaster. You are bound to eat something processed if you aren't prepared. You will lose the fat burning benefits from yesterday's workout and it will take until the end of the following day to get back on track. An entire 72-hour period wasted.

I admit that this is not one of my strong suits. I never plan my meals ahead - I just figure it out as I go most of the time. However, I don't buy processed foods when I am grocery shopping so when I get hungry I usually find something good to eat.

5. They don't eat enough vegetables.

We can thank John Berardi for making it common knowledge that you should eat fibrous vegetables at every meal

to assist your fat loss efforts. By doing so, you'll control your blood sugar and insulin - thus supporting the optimal hormonal situation for fat loss.

Controlling insulin levels is very important as insulin causes you to store fat. This is why one of the symptoms of diabetes is rapid weight loss because of the lack of insulin. I've actually joked that people should just become diabetic and not take their insulin and they'll lose weight. Death also causes you to lose weight, and it's about as desirable as diabetes.

6. They screw up their hormones with poor lifestyle choices.

If you are out boozing and staying up late on the weekend, you are shutting down your fat loss and messing up the optimal hormonal environment for fat burning. I will talk a lot more about the optimal hormonal levels for fat loss, as I believe this is the underrated key to building your best body ever.

Just to be clear, if you have a beer once in a while it ain't gonna kill you. However, getting drunk every weekend (actually getting drunk at all) is not healthy and not conducive to fat loss.

7. They don't plan and monitor their training sessions.

If you are still going to the gym without a plan, then you are going to have a hard time losing fat. And if you aren't recording your workouts and eating habits, then you aren't losing as much fat as you probably can. To fix this mistake, start by getting on track with strength training and interval training. It's guaranteed to get you lean.

If you fail to plan, you plan to fail. Enough said.

About the Author

Craig Ballantyne is a Certified Strength & Conditioning Specialist and writes for Men's Health, Men's Fitness, Maximum Fitness, Muscle and Fitness Hers, and Oxygen magazines. His trademarked Turbulence Training fat loss workouts have been featured multiple times in Men's Fitness and Maximum Fitness magazines and all over the Internet, and have helped thousands of men and women around the world lose fat, gain muscle, and get lean in less than 45 minutes three times per week. For more information on the Turbulence Training workouts that will help you burn fat without long, slow cardio sessions or fancy equipment, visit www.TurbulenceTraining.com

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