

Metabolism Q & A

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Q: What is metabolism?

A: Metabolism is the body's process of combining nutrients with oxygen to release the energy required to power our bodies. This energy, measured in calories, is used to keep the body functioning and to fuel daily activities and exercise. Resting metabolic rate (RMR) or basal metabolic rate (BMR) is the number of calories your body burns at rest, basically the number of calories your body expends just to keep you alive. At rest your body is using energy, the heart is pumping blood, the lungs are working, the liver is detoxifying, the kidneys are filtering and so on. Each one of these functions comes with an energy cost as every cell of the body is consuming energy constantly.

Q: How do I increase my metabolism?

A: Strength Training! Studies have shown that adults who did 2 dozen reps of 4 basic exercises 3 times a week boosted their metabolic rate by 15% after 3 months, which translates into an extra 200-500 per day depending on your size. At rest, a pound of muscle utilizes anywhere from 20 to 50 calories a day while a pound of fat burns next to none. To lose one pound of fat you must expend 3,500 calories. Aerobic exercise burns more calories as it is being done but the metabolism slows back down to a normal rate after about half an hour; whereas strength training keeps the metabolism elevated even after the workout.

Don't Diet, Fast or Skip Meals! Your body needs a certain amount of calories and nutrients each day for normal function. Denying the body of these essential elements throws the system into survival mode, slowing metabolism and encouraging the storage of energy in the form of fat. And if the body is not receiving enough hydration that can also decrease metabolic processes. Since water is the body's most important nutrient, the liver will turn its concentration to water retention instead of doing other duties such as burning fat.

Eat Nutrient Rich Calories! You need plenty of vegetables, fruits, proteins, fats and healthy carbohydrates for your body to function properly. Junk-foods are high in calories and offer nutritional depletion instead of nourishment. These "foods" do nothing to supply the essential food and nutrients our bodies need. Fat, processed and packaged foods we choose for convenience contain few nutrients, essential vitamins and minerals that have been destroyed in processing and replaced with synthetic elements that the body does not recognize and stores as impurities in our fat cells or cellulite tissue.

Q: Why does my metabolism slow down?

A: Dieting or eating too few calories, the aging process, for women menopause, sedentary lifestyle or general inactivity, or any combination of these will cause metabolism to decrease in its capacity to burn.

Q: How should I eat to keep my metabolism up and my weight down?

A: Your metabolism works best when it is well fed throughout the day. Beginning with breakfast, spreading meals throughout the day with no more than 3 hours apart and healthy snacking will keep the metabolism working best for you. Therefore, if you eat smaller more frequent meals throughout the day, you will burn more energy. When you eat, you stimulate your body to burn energy which equals calories. Make the first 2 meals of the day (breakfast and lunch) the larger meals of the day. Start off the day with a sizeable (and blood sugar stabilizing) meal and you'll eat less the rest of the day. Studies found that people who eat fewer calories for breakfast ate more overall for the day whereas those who have more calories in the A.M. take in fewer calories overall. Diets with lots of fresh vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds, good for you fats and oils, fish and lean meats result with a more stable and productive metabolism.

References:

Releasing Fat by Ray Strand <<http://www.releasingfat.com/>>

Fight Fat After Forty by Pamela Peeke

The Diet Cure and The Mood Cure by Julia Ross