

## Lose the Weight, Keep the Energy

Many of us have been influenced by **advertisements, the media, and our peers** to think that lean is good and leaner is better. In this environment, it is important to reflect on our **reasons** for wanting to reduce our weight and what an **appropriate weight goal** should be.

### What you must know to lose weight:

- **Diets don't work** – dieting and denial slow the metabolism (making it harder to lose weight) and lead to overeating, if not binge eating.
- Your body has a **setpoint** – a predetermined weight range that is appropriate for your body; it may not be your favorite number, but you can't healthfully change it.
- The body is a **calculator** – calories in must be calibrated with calories out.
- **One diet does not fit all** when it comes to losing weight and keeping strength.

It is essential to maintain enough energy to train and keep our power. Here is how you know you've got a **healthy sports nutrition weight reduction** eating plan:

- There are **NO BAD FOODS**. There should be room in the eating plan for carbohydrates, protein, and fat, and enough leeway so that **10-20%** of your calories can come from whatever fun or indulgent foods you like. **Hey, life is short!**
- You don't feel **hungry all the time** or obsessed with what you "can" and "can't" have.
- You identify your personal "**calorie budget**" (see the handout "**How Much Food Do I Need?**") and subtract about 20%. More restrictive eating really messes up your metabolism and may trigger eating disorders which can take years to recover from.
- An eating plan should **not** be confused with an opportunity to express control, rigidity, or self-denial.

### Some time-tested **tips from sports nutritionists**:

- Divide your **calorie budget** across the day, instead of doing mostly night eating.
- **Eat slowly and mindfully** and pay attention to hunger and fullness signals.
- Eat some of your **favorite foods** regularly to avoid deprivation.
- The lowest calorie fluid replacement for athletes is **water**.
- **Sleep deprivation** makes weight loss significantly harder.

### For help with a **personalized eating plan** at MIT:

- Contact your physician at **MIT Medical** and ask for a referral to see the MIT Medical **nutritionist**. You must have a doctor's referral to see the nutritionist. Tell the nutritionist that you are interested in a sports nutrition food plan for weight reduction.
- Get tips on making healthy behavior changes and staying motivated, as well as information about eating and body image concerns, from the **Center for Health Promotion and Wellness** at MIT Medical: [healthed@med.mit.edu](mailto:healthed@med.mit.edu)

Adapted from *Nancy Clark's Sports Nutrition Guidebook*

Questions about this topic? Contact Julie Banda at the Center for Health Promotion and Wellness

[banj@med.mit.edu](mailto:banj@med.mit.edu) 617/253-1318