**Calories In vs. Calories Out**

Are you unhappy with your weight? Have you ever looked in the mirror and asked, "How did this happen?"?

Well, the explanation sounds deceptively simple: If we take in more [calories](http://weightloss.about.com/od/nutrition/a/blwhatcal.htm) than we [need on a daily basis](http://weightloss.about.com/od/eatsmart/a/blcalintake.htm), the excess calories turn into extra weight.

Think of food as fuel and your body as a car. Food is the energy our bodies "run" on. Overeating is like over-fueling; any excess fuel you don't "run on" turns into fat. Thus, the cycle of weight gain begins.

Because of this basic principle (calories consumed versus calories spent), the cause of weight loss is just as straightforward as the explanation of weight gain. If you consume fewer calories than you burn, you will lose weight.

Believe it or not, this is the basis of [every weight loss diet](http://weightloss.about.com/od/morediet1/All_About_Diets.htm). Whether you follow a low-fat or low-carbohydrate/high protein diet or you [reduce portion sizes](http://weightloss.about.com/od/eatsmart/tp/aa030405a.htm), these are all varied means to the same end: fewer calories consumed.

**Contributing Factors**

Keep in mind that there are some of the factors that contribute to obesity that you have little - if any - control over, the chief one being genetics.

Research has shown that heredity may be the cause of up to a 30 percent increase of body weight.

Other uncontrollable influences include weight gain due to side effects from medication, extreme inactivity due to medical problems, and thyroid/metabolic conditions.

The good news is, controlling caloric intake will lead to weight loss despite most contributing factors.

**Losing Weight**

How many calories should I eat if I want to lose weight? Technically, there is no magic number of calories we should all eat each day to lose weight. While most people can lose weight eating around 1,500 calories, you can assess your own personal caloric needs with a little math.

**Calculate Your BMR**

Your BMR is the amount of energy your body needs to function. We use about 60% of the calories we consume each day for basic bodily functions such as breathing.

Step one is to calculate your BMR with the following formula:

**Women:**
655 + (4.3 x weight in pounds) + (4.7 x height in inches) - (4.7 x age in years)

**Men:**
66 + (6.3 x weight in pounds) + (12.9 x height in inches) - (6.8 x age in years)

Calculate your BMR (show your work).

**Women:**
655 + (4.3 x weight in pounds \_\_\_\_\_\_\_) + (4.7 x height inches\_\_\_\_\_\_\_-) - (4.7 x age \_\_\_\_\_\_)

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**Men:**
66 + (6.3 x weight in pounds\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) + (12.9 x height inches\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) - (6.8 x age \_\_\_\_\_\_)

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Now that you know how many calories you need in a day for you basic needs like breathing, we need to figure how many calories you consume and how many you burn. First you need to right down everything you eat over the next 3 days and the amount of exercise or physical activity you do. Use the website myfitnesspal.com to help you find the calories for food consumed and calories burnt during exercise.

Before starting your own use the myfitnesspal.com website to add the calories for the sample 3 day plan I’ve included.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Meal or Exercise | Day 1 |  Calories |  Day 2 |  Calories |  Day 3 |  Calories |
| Breakfast | 2 Toast with a tablespoon of peanut butter and a glass of OJ |  | 2 eggs, 2 whole wheat bread, 4 strips of bacon, cup of AJ |  | 2 pancakes with 60ml of syrup, 4 bf sausages, a cup of coffee |  |
| Snack | Activia raspberry yogurt |  | 5 celery and 2 TBSP of ranch dressing |  | A rice crispie square |  |
| Lunch | A bowl of Chicken Noodle soup, 4 crackers, an appple, 500ml chocolate milk |  | A bowl of Kraft Dinner, a cup of Kool Aid |  | A ham and cheese sandwich, a bowl of vegitable soup, 250ml 2% milk |  |
| Snack | Chewy granola chocolate chip bar |  | A plain bagel with cream cheese |  | A wunder Bar |  |
| Dinner] | Caesar salad , 6oz steak, baked potato, 2 dads chocolate chip cookies, glass of water |  | Steamed carrots, 250 ml brown rice, one chicken breast, a bowl of vanilla ice cream |  | A medium Pizza Hut meat lovers pizza, 500ml of coke,  |  |
| Snack | An apple |  | A bowl of cheerios with milk (250ml) |  | A large bag of Old Dutch Ketchup chips |  |
| Exercise | Treadmill running 45 min at a pace of 10min/mile (-) |  | 1 hour of Kickboxing (-) |  | Nothing |  |
| Total Calories (exercise calories are a minus, and minus you BMR) | Day1 |  | Day 2 |  | Day 3 |  |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Meal or Exercise | Day 1 |  Calories |  Day 2 |  Calories |  Day 3 |  Calories |
| Breakfast |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Snack |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Lunch |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Snack |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Dinner] |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Snack |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Exercise |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Total Calories (exercise calories are a minus) |  |  |  |  |  |  |