

RUTGERS FITNESS HEALTHY WEIGHT LOSS GUIDELINES

Weight loss requires a **caloric deficit** in which the number of calories consumed through food and drink is less than the number of calories burned. The number of calories expended includes basal metabolic rate = the number of calories required for the body to sustain itself in a resting state, in addition to calories burned through physical activity and exercise. A daily caloric deficit can be established through the decrease of calories consumed and/or the expenditure of calories through increased exercise. Healthy and effective weight loss programs incorporate a careful balance of these two strategies.

EXERCISE

1. Burning Calories During Exercise

If you want to lose weight, it is recommended that you do **cardiovascular exercise for 30-60 minutes, 4-6 days per week, eventually building up to at least 200 minutes per week** (ACSM).

- The higher the intensity of the exercise (e.g. running, higher levels on the cardio equipment), the more calories you burn. Therefore, if you choose to exercise at a lighter intensity (e.g. fast walking, lighter levels on the cardio equipment), you should exercise for longer. If you are able to exercise at a higher intensity, you can do so for a shorter duration.
- A good way to increase your endurance and the overall intensity of your cardiovascular workouts is to engage in "**interval training**" in which you incorporate short intervals of higher intensity exercise, followed by intervals of more moderate exercise. Always remember to add a 5-10 minute **warm-up and cool-down** to your workouts!
- A good goal for weight loss is to try to build up to eventually burn **300-500 calories per exercise session, for a total of at least 2,000 calories per week**.
- In order to determine the optimal range of intensity for your cardiovascular workouts, please refer to the Rutgers Fitness Handout "**Guidelines for Cardiovascular Exercise and Intensity**".
- Weight training also contributes to calorie usage. Depending on the weight of the individual and the intensity of their strength training routine, a 30-minute session can burn an estimated 150-300 calories (ACE).
- Rutgers Recreation provides **Free Fitness Center Orientations** at each center every Friday, 12-6pm. See a Fitness Assistant to sign up.
- Consider investing in a **Personal Trainer**. The start-up package is only \$50 for students and includes a consultation, fitness assessments, and the development of a workout designed specifically for you. For more information, please see <http://recreation.rutgers.edu/fitness> or look for a copy of our Personal Training Brochure at any of our Recreation Facilities.
- **Recreation offers a variety of cardiovascular fitness classes.** Formats include a diverse selection including indoor cycling, cardio kickboxing, step aerobics, and Zumba. Please see the Recreation Non-Credit Class Brochure for a full listing of offerings, also available at <http://recreation.rutgers.edu>

2. Improving the Muscle to Fat Ratio

The more muscle you have, the more calories the body uses every day.

- **Strength training is very important in weight maintenance and weight loss.** You will burn calories as you perform the exercises and you will also build muscle. **Muscle burns more calories daily than its weight in fat and takes up much less space.** Unfortunately, you lose muscle mass as you age, so it is important to strength train to maintain the muscle you have.
- Aim to complete **2 or 3 full-body strength training workouts per week** on non-consecutive days.

- Choose **8-10 exercises and complete 1-3 sets of 8-15 repetitions** for each exercise. Choose a weight with which you can complete at least 8 repetitions and that causes you to feel completely fatigued after no more than 15 repetitions.
- In order to burn the most calories while increasing your strength, you may choose to complete your strength training in a “**circuit**” format in which you are moving from exercise to exercise, optionally repeating the circuit for a second, and possibly third time.
- Another way to increase the intensity of your strength workouts is to do “**super sets,**” alternating between two different exercises until you have completed the desired number of sets.
- **Fitness Center Orientations are offered at each Fitness Center on Fridays 12-6pm.** Please see a Fitness Assistant to sign up.
- **Rutgers Recreation offers personal training at a reduced rate.** For more information, please see <http://recreation.rutgers.edu> or pick up a copy of our Personal Training Brochure at one of our centers.
- **Recreation offers a variety of fitness classes and workshops that incorporate strength training.** Consider trying out classes such as Total Body Training, Butts and Guts, and Ab Attack. Please see the Recreation Non-Credit Class Brochure for a full listing of offerings, also available at <http://recreation.rutgers.edu>

NUTRITION

1. Know Your Recommended Calorie Range

- Know how many calories your body uses every day so that you are able to effectively control the calories in/calories burned ratio.
- **Rutgers Recreation offers Metabolic Testing that can provide you with an estimate of your caloric needs.** Please see <http://recreation.rutgers.edu>

2. Never Starve Yourself or Skip Meals – It’s all about Moderation

- Starving your body causes your metabolism to slow down and encourages the conservation of existing body fat.
- Attempt to distribute your calories over 4-6 small meals per day. This allows the body to stay energized and prevents your metabolism from slowing down.

3. Decrease Calories Consumed by about 500 per Day

- Aim to reduce your current caloric intake by 500 calories per day, never allowing fewer than 1200 calories per day if you are a woman, 1500 if you are a man (ACSM).
- Every person is different, but general guidelines for weight loss suggest that active men should eat about 1800 calories per day and active women should eat about 1,500 calories per day (ACSM).
- This reduction, along with exercise, should lead to the loss of approximately 1-2 pounds per week.

4. Balance Your Nutrients

- It is important to consume fat, protein, and carbohydrates daily. Depriving your body of any of these components is never a good long-term plan.
- Low carbohydrate diets and those extremely low in fat have not proven to accomplish long-term weight loss.
- Aim for your diet to consist of 10-15% protein, 55-60% carbohydrates, and 20-30% fat (ACSM).
- **Vitabot provides online nutritional counseling that can assist you in analyzing your current eating habits, as well as provide suggestions for how to improve them.** For more information, please see <http://recreation.rutgers.edu>
- **Recreation offers a “Food for Fitness” workshop that includes a 1-hour supermarket tour.** For more information, please see the Recreation Non-Credit Class Brochure, also available at <http://recreation.rutgers.edu>