

Ask The Coach

Q: Dear Coach: I want to lose weight and I want to begin a program – is it better to try to lose weight through my diet or through exercise? – “Slimming Down”.

A: Dear Slim: It’s a challenge to change our habits and while it sounds tough to tackle two things at once –diet and exercise – the combination of the two seems to work best!

To calculate weight loss, we refer to a basic equation:

- loss of 1kg per week = 7700 caloric difference per week or 1100 calories per day.

You can do this by:

- a) Eating fewer calories: less quantity of food overall or fewer calorie-dense foods to account for 1100 calories per day – eg. a serving of chicken curry, chocolate ice-cream, and two lattes;
- b) Exercising more to account for an extra 1100 calories per day without increasing your meal intake - eg engaging in a spin cycling class plus an hour run in the same day, every day!

OR

- c) Exercising more to increase energy output combined with eating fewer calories to account for 1100 calories per day. This is usually recommended - a mix of exercise with sound nutrition. For example, a spin class may help utilize 500 - 700 calories. Eating less rich indulgences – e.g. cheesecake and a glass of wine – may reduce about 500 calories. Combined, the net difference meets the requirements to lose 1100 calories for the day.

I usually recommend "option c)" as the healthiest weight management option. Exercise will increase muscle tone and bone density. With strength-building exercise and aerobic activity, the increase in metabolic rate (energy expenditure) will help with long term weight management. The benefits to your mind, emotion, and self-esteem, also, are a bonus! If you were to over-train without a sound nutritional plan you could be at risk of fatigue, injury, or ketosis - burning up proteins (diminishing your muscle tissue). As such, a combined plan with a sound nutritional plan and gradual, progressive exercise is recommended.

Good luck, enjoy the mix!

Yours in health and fitness
The Coach

Sara Pazell is a strength and conditioning coach, occupational therapist, yoga instructor, personal trainer and group fitness instructor. She is a trainer with Paradise Training.