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t: 604.341.1509 e: info@fitnesswithpj.com w: www.fitnesswithpj.com

Secrets to Keeping the Pounds Off

How come some people are able to lose weight and keep it off, while others continuously ride that weight-loss roller coaster of losing, gaining, losing and gaining? Is weight-loss maintenance purely genetics – simply a matter of luck of the draw or a roll of the dice - or are there habits and strategies that successful losers share that unsuccessful losers don't?

In 1997, two doctors in the United States, Drs Jim Hill and Rena Wing, set out to find the answer to those questions by forming a National Weight Control Registry (NWCR). The NWCR's mandate was to collect online information about the habits and characteristics of people who were successful at losing weight **and** keeping it off. To join the registry and participate in the study, participants had to be of adult-age, and had to have had intentionally lost at least 10% of their body weight and maintained that weight for over a year. Over 4,000 successful "losers" joined the registry, and for close to a decade the doctor's have been analyzing what set these people apart from the rest of the dieting population.

What did they find? Well, first off, over half of the participants lost their initial weight with the assistance of a commercial diet program, physician or nutritionist, and a whopping 89% implemented both diet and exercise to succeed with their weight loss goal. As for **maintenance of this weight loss**, there were four common success strategies that were consistent with every participant:

- They performed regular high levels of exercise.
- They consumed a low-calorie and low-fat diet.
- They weighed themselves either daily or weekly.
- And, they ate breakfast everyday.

The exercises each participant performed for their weight loss maintenance ranged from walking (most popular), to resistance training, to cycling and aerobics. The men reported an average physical activity expenditure of 3,293 kilocalories (kcal) and the women an average of 2,545 kcal per week. To put these numbers into exercise terms, these kcal levels equate to about an hour of moderate-intensity activity everyday. Through the course of the study, the doctor's discovered that once a person decreased their exercise expenditure to about 800 kcal a week there was a tendency for the participants to re-gain some of the weight.

Consuming a low-calorie, low-fat diet was also high on the successful maintainers list, with breakfast eaten every morning (typically cereal and fruit). Consistency was also key to maintenance. There was a distinctive link to participants who maintained the same eating habits during the week and the weekend. They were 1.5 times more likely to keep the weight off, which

led the researcher's to conclude that "allowing for flexibility in the diet may expose the person to high-risk situations, creating more opportunity for loss of control." This is interesting to note for people who give themselves permission to "live it up" on the weekends while trying to lose weight or maintain their weight loss.

What does this study tell us? A lot, but one thing really stuck out for me, and that was that the study clearly shows that there are no special tools needed to maintain a person's weight loss. What it does take, however, is willpower and a commitment to yourself that once you have lost the weight you can not go back to your old bad habits. You need to remain diligent and continue to watch what you eat, keep on eye on the number on the scale and use your body for what it was designed to do... moving!

Find out more nutrition information, as well as the best exercises you should be doing for your body, under your own trainer. Join today and not only reach your fitness goals, but crush them out of the park!