

HEALTH AND FITNESS

THE FACTS

60% of us seriously consider losing weight every year

50% of us are overweight at any point in time

35% of us are deemed obese that is 1 in 3



Mind Power to Help You Shed the Pounds

Is it really possible to think yourself thin? **Mark Shields** takes a closer look.

Many psychologists believe it takes 21 days of repetitive behaviour to create a habit. So if we think about this logistically it can work both ways. We, therefore, should be able to break habits in the same way we create them. Just by changing our behaviour we could create the desired result, maintain this for 21 days and there you have it, change has taken place.

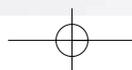
In the world of NLP, neurological pathways are created by habit and repetition. A neurological pathway is a habit forming thought process that occurs unconsciously and links events in our lives to habitual thoughts and behaviour.

To illustrate this point when my daughter was 3 years old we went to play on the beach at Gorey. Suddenly, a large German

Shepherd dog ran towards us and then jumped up to her and this frightened her. The fright was so severe that a neurological pathway was formed and connected my daughter's mind to fear every time she saw a dog in the future. To break that cycle of fear we would need to change that habitual neurological pathway and install a new and different experience in her unconscious mind. This could be achieved through hypnosis and NLP techniques.

So when it comes to creating new behaviours it can be a simple and easy process.

Let's now apply this theory to weight loss and how we view food. If we diet we are continually thinking about the food we miss, and so with any effective weight loss plan deprivation of certain foods and daily weigh-ins are definitely not recommended.



To lose weight successfully and keep it off it is important to realise from the outset that diets do not work. The mere word "diet" brings up connotations of depriving ourselves. By telling ourselves we cannot have something it automatically makes us think of it more. It is a bit like the experiment that Derren Brown did not a group of school children. He put them into pairs in a classroom and sat them down in front of a box which had a huge red button on it. He told each child that under no circumstances must they touch the red button. He left the room and each time he returned the button had been pressed and a jack in the box jumped out and frightened them.

Applying this thought process to dieting if we are thinking about what we must not have all the time it only makes us want it more. So how do we change this?

We change our behaviour. So let us learn a few new behaviours away from dieting that will keep us firmly on the road to sustainable weight loss.

In our clinics we teach people to see their body as a computer and the brain is the nerve centre of all programs. We believe in reprogramming the brain, changing your food and eating program, so that it is how you view food and eating that changes forever.

EMOTIONAL EATING

Emotional eating is the primary cause of obesity. It is a mistake to confuse emotional with physical hunger. Emotional hunger is sudden and urgent. Physical is gradual and patient. Emotional hunger results in sudden cravings. Moments before hunger arrived you were thinking of something that was troubling you. Food makes you cover this up and feel good. This is known as a serotonin high. By having the craving you eat the unsuitable snack (usually low in useful energy for the body) and this gives you a huge rush of satisfaction which equally as fast crashes down and create another craving. This cycle perpetuates and you find it hard to stop.

METABOLISM

Our metabolism is the speed our bodies produce energy. The faster the metabolism the quicker your body does everything. The main example of this is the body's speed in burning off fat. Your current metabolism is known as the basic metabolic rate. This rate constantly changes throughout your lifetime and tends to mirror your overall levels of fitness and wellbeing. The quicker your metabolism the fitter you tend to be and the more energy you seem to have.

EXERCISE

A lack of exercise has always been a major contribution to obesity and weight gain. Over half of gym memberships go unused so we all have good intentions but simply fail to follow through. That's why it is important to keep things as simple as possible.

SOLUTIONS

This process has been running for at least 10 years and has a 75% success rate.

There is no dieting involved, and we thoroughly recommend against using scales, or avoiding the foods you love.

Stop dieting. Dieting calls on fat reserves, unbalances the body's metabolism, and subsequently makes you feel tired and lethargic. We work on the principle that imagination is stronger than will.

Our solution is based on four main principles.

1. Eat when you are hungry

This will reset the body's innate wisdom to eat whenever you're hungry. You will then simply follow your body's signals which will ensure a balance in the respective brain chemicals and avoid any emotional hunger. Never wait until you are starving before you eat and never eat if you are not hungry.

2. Eat what you want, not what you think you should

We are returning once again to the control element in any diet. Remember if you follow your body's signals and eat when you are hungry you have a 75% chance of not only losing weight but keeping it off.

3. Eat Consciously

An interesting test in Switzerland proved by blindfolding people when eating their evening meal with an instruction to stop eating when they were full reduced food intake by 30%.

So, simple things like slowing down your eating, putting your knife and fork down between bites, even chewing for 15 seconds before digesting all apply and reinforce the principle of eating consciously. Often we eat so fast our brain doesn't have time to register with our stomachs we are full hence we overeat and become "stuffed."

Be prepared to leave food on your plate. You don't have to eat it all. Simply stop when you are full.

4. When you are full. Stop eating!

It obviously goes without saying the fourth and final principle is stop when you are full. When you become hungry later on you can eat again.

It all sounds very simple, that's because it is. I have successfully adopted these principles for weight loss in our clinics and they never fail me or my clients.

If you couple the four principles with long walks along the beach and regular exercise, you'll be enjoying a much fuller life, full of energy and renewed enthusiasm for making the most out of our beautiful island this summer.

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