

Conversation Corner



A Newsletter for Fitness Professionals

The Busier We Get, the Fewer Calories We Burn

It's not your metabolism that's the problem, it's your day—and we can fix that!

The old complaint that our metabolism is so slow and this is why we get fat or can't seem to lose weight, no matter how little we eat, has resurfaced – but now we know this weight control issue has nothing to do with one's metabolism.

The problem with the metabolism explanation is that metabolic rates between like-size humans with different parents do not vary nearly enough to match the weight gain differences experienced by many chronic dieters. Furthermore, we have established that heavier people burn more calories than lighter people when performing the same work. We've also established that the vast majority of overweight people dramatically underreport their calorie intake by 35%, and the more overweight we are, the more we underreport. However, almost ALL of us overestimate how much our daily activities, including exercise, contribute to our average daily calorie expenditure.

It is the misjudging of one's total daily energy expenditure (TDEE) that has recently caused the scientific community to revisit the slow metabolism claim. In other words, the scientific explanation behind "slow metabolism" is still valid: small variances in human metabolism are not proportional to the complaint or the weight gain. But the complaint itself ("no matter how little I eat, I can't lose") is valid in a literal sense because of one's TOTAL daily calorie burn or LACK thereof. Ironically, many people are just "too busy" trying to run a successful household to burn enough calories to be able to eat more and not gain weight.

Calorie expenditure estimations are based on old world lifestyles

Once we were able to measure how many calories most people *actually* burn in a day with the Apex bodybugg® armband, we were shocked. I guess it was just hard to imagine that we are constantly on the go—working, running errands, performing family duties, and even exercising up to 3-5 days per week—yet we burn so few calories.

In modern developed nations, total daily energy expenditure in almost all people, including exercisers, is much less today than what it was in previous years without added exercise. And it's far less than formulas predict based on our definition of *active*. For example, 75 years ago an average person might have burned 3000-

4000 calories a day just to live and raise a family, and they NEVER "exercised" or became overweight. Obviously there have been no changes in the human genome (it

takes over 10,000 years for any significant alteration to take place), yet today the average female gains weight on 1600 calories per day and males at 2200--even WITH occasional exercise!

We've now discovered that our daily lifestyles burn so few calories that we can't make up the difference between what we currently expend and what our leaner predecessors burned by simply adding a one-hour workout. No wonder people were thinking "slow metabolism"!!

Your metabolism is fine, you're just too busy not moving

I can't tell you how many times an adult will tell me that they're working out more than ever and eating the same healthy portions but are no longer able to lose weight or maintain weight loss. The simple explanation? It's not the workout or your metabolism, but as your world changes the rest of your daily activities require fewer calories than in previous years. Yes, as life speeds up, we literally slow down. Whether it's your job requiring more sit-down time, you live or work in a smaller area, or you no longer do your own house or garden work, wash your car, chase your siblings (or spouse) around the house, have to get out of your car to buy food, prepare home cooked meals – or like most adults/parents you find yourself having to quickly get from place to place and this requires more time sitting in cars – at some point you are on average simply moving less.

Most families have two working parents (or a single parent) who must sit in order to drive to work to sit in a chair until it's time to once again sit in the car, drive home and sit in a chair, then sit in the car again to transport yourself or others to a place where you will sit down again. And during this time you must acquire food quickly so you certainly have no time to chase, harvest or prepare your food.

Children at least have more opportunities to move than adults, which is why there are significantly fewer overweight children than adults. The average child takes over 12,000 steps daily while the average adult takes fewer than 6,000. And children don't have to drive, they can fight in the back seat, then get out of the car to attend their activities and they still enjoy running around anywhere just because they can. Anyway, you get the point – it's not your metabolism – it's the ever-faster but inactive *days of our lives*.

Exercise is not a license to eat more

Adding a one-hour *intense* workout to anyone's day only increases their calories burned *that* day by about 200-400

(depending on your size). Compare that number to a typical coffee drink or fast food burger (500 calories or more). To make matters worse, life has gotten so busy that we don't have time to walk to our destinations even if we wanted to – hence, as described above, “we have to hurry up to sit somewhere else.” So do the math: if we participate in intense one-hour workouts four times weekly, we would be active four hours/wk, and unless you have a job that requires hard labor, most of us would be considered basically sedentary for the remaining 164 hours. And don't look for the things we discussed here to change anytime soon if you plan on raising a family and making a living. In fact, I would argue that life will be more and more sedentary as the world demands faster information through the use of technology. In summary, most of us, including me, don't or can't move enough each day in order to be able to eat what we feel we should, or anywhere close to the number of calories our earlier generations consumed, without gaining weight. So what can we do?

Time to change the way we structure & think about meals

The manner in which previous generations structured and consumed foods no longer fits our mostly inactive but busy lifestyles. For the vast majority of us, if we want to be successful in achieving and maintaining weight loss, “three squares” a day or the way in which most of us have been taught to eat is no longer an option. Our eating strategies must evolve to fit into the new world, which means breaking with outdated parental advice. And may I remind you that 50% of those “three squares” are now acquired through portion-crazy restaurants and we have NO CLUE as to the true caloric content – even if it's printed on the menu!

Our bodies can no longer “automatically” burn the number of calories we consume, making it more difficult to maintain a small waistline or proper health. This means, to some degree, we need to count calories until we've “re-wired” our brains to be able to identify how much food we need to consume in order to look the way we want.

It is well-documented that successful dieters, celebrities and most athletes consume four or more “meals” a day by consistently using healthy snacks such as meal replacement drinks (MRD), bars or other sources of controlled calories in their daily food planning.

Shrink portion sizes and increase meal frequency

The goal is to manage hunger (meal frequency) and make up for the inability to move as much as our free-eating predecessors. Think four to six feedings a day depending on your caloric allotment. If you're allowed fewer than 2000 calories a day, eat something substantial no less than four times daily, with up to two “meals” being Apex snacks. If you're allowed more than 2000 calories, you should have no less than five “meals” including up to three Apex snacks.

If weight control is the goal, plan your day around two or three traditional meals of your liking and use the many

different Apex fitness fast foods for continuous energy and appetite control. This method gives you plenty of “caloric room” for your favorite foods and keeps you from overeating.

When properly incorporating Apex fitness fast foods into your diet, you should be able to reduce your monthly grocery bill as you begin replacing calories that would usually be purchased in grocery stores, fast food restaurants or other sources. The added bonus is that when you were spending more money the old fashioned way, you were gaining weight—now you should be spending less money and on your way to a better body. Talk about a win-win! Now that's a diet you *want* to live with.

Get creative using the variety of Apex snacks and recipes

We are continuing to expand our fitness fast food line to offer economical alternatives to less healthy fast foods and snacks while making them fit any venue, food plan or occasion.

If we plan on reversing the current weight gain epidemic, it won't happen without a dramatic departure from our current way of viewing and consuming foods. Our lifestyle changes have outpaced our body's ability to evolve our eating habits that would otherwise naturally control our caloric intake in order to maintain health. Incorporating healthy snacks or meal substitutes into our daily caloric allotment in order to control portions and accurately determine calories is only the beginning of how we will have to manage our food in the future if we plan to stay fit and earn a living in the modern world.

The bodybugg® system has helped thousands of people finally understand the “not-so secret” of sustained weight loss: managing calories in and calories out. Apex fitness fast foods make it a comfortable and simple process.

Stay tuned because the best is yet to come. We will keep bringing you what you need to comfortably achieve health and fitness in this ever-changing world.

Until next month—and don't forget your multi!