

Save Money, Spend Calories

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No matter what the state of the economy currently is (yours personally, or ours collectively), there's always room for creatively leveraging ways to *save* money while *spending* calories. After all, who wouldn't want a waist that's slimmer and a pocketbook that's fatter?

This month, we're going to explore some facts about how we use our two types of "currency" – money and calories. Our goal is to begin to recognize and take advantage of simple opportunities to move more and save more that surround us every day. Since this "calorie management thing" never goes away (at least as long as we're alive), it's best to learn to manage it now so that our new choices can lead to habits that make traditional dieting inconsequential and very much unnecessary.

And, if we can become wealthier while simultaneously becoming healthier, we will set a powerful example for the next generation

Common Calorie Intake Choices Today

- On a typical day, 130 million Americans eat outside the home, spending \$1.4 billion
 - In a typical year, Americans spend \$511 billion eating outside the home
 - The typical meal in restaurants is 530 calories higher than eating at home
- Burgers, fries, pizza, and Mexican food comprise ~50% of *all* food purchases
- U.S. average price of restaurant meal: \$32.53
 - The highest was \$128 in a top-rated restaurant in NY. The lowest in a rated restaurant was \$24.45 in New Orleans
- The average person spends \$725 a month on diet food home delivery services
- People make 200 food-related decisions each day; 90% of which are unconscious

From these "fun facts," you can see how weight gain continues despite any significant external forces (i.e., economics) pushing against us. Let's face it; eating on the run can get expensive over time. Fortunately, all we need to do is push back a bit, but this is easier said than done. In order to do this, we need to re-think the way we approach our calorie intake and calorie output habits.

We've said it before – take the path of more resistance – but there's another way to look at it. By adopting a "self-

service", "single-portion-sized" paradigm we can unconsciously burn more and eat less while our waistlines shrink and our bank account grows. What follows are some "real world" approaches to reaching fitness goals and saving money while you're at it.

Get Up!

Since the advent of bodybugg®, we at Apex have been preaching more movement – in any form – to help hasten fitness goals. The principle that a "calorie out cancels a calorie in," immaterial of the calorie consumed, allows us to acknowledge how modern technologies *force* us to move less.

The solution? Spend what you have in your calorie storage "bank account" (body fat) by choosing the path of more movement; to stand instead of sitting, walk instead of driving (assuming it is safe), ride your bike to the gym (assuming it is not too far to do so), go into a restaurant instead of going through the drive-thru, pay inside versus paying at the pump, etc. Creating a deficit in your waistline bank account is a good thing!

Take a "self-service" approach to your weekly tasks by choosing some that you can do yourself, rather than paying someone else to do them. What are some of your "best calorie burn per minute" activities that must get done on a daily or weekly basis that you could stop paying someone else to do? Washing your car, cleaning your house, doing your laundry, mowing your own lawn, etc. Don't pick the things you despise, but rather find those that you could enjoy doing knowing that you're burning up some calories while saving yourself some money.

Get paid to move. Remember – it's hard to eat while you're moving around, so if you have the option, find a way to "get paid" for being active. When comparing employees who get paid to sit versus those who get paid to move we find that the latter burns >20% more calories than their sedentary counterparts. Many people still feel that "an honest day's work" should involve some sort of movement and/or physical effort. Plus, food tastes better after a high calorie burn day because you know you "earned it". If you love taking group exercise classes, get certified and get paid to teach them – you'll still burn the calories while making some extra dough (plus, the practice sessions will contribute to your calorie burn as well). Become a personal shopper, set up a house-cleaning service, or choose any industry where you work on your feet. (*Note:*

Be wary of working in the food industry – just because you're on your feet making the food doesn't mean that the "a nibble here, and a nibble there" calories you consume on the job don't count. It's not a free-for-all.)

These strategies are great for our kids as well – mowing lawns, washing cars and walking dogs can all teach our kids how to earn some extra cash while “ingraining” in them the habits of being physically active.

Save More! Know “how” to shop for good food deals

We are conditioned at a very early age that *more is better*, especially with regard to food. “Look at how much more food I got for just \$2 more!” is often overheard by misguided “deal seekers” who forgot, or were never told, what constitutes a good deal in today’s fast-paced, super-sized, sit-as-often-as-possible modern society. The question that begs to be asked is, “How do I know if I’m getting a good deal on this meal or not?”

Let’s start off with bulk purchases. Interestingly, the history of the “buying in bulk” mentality is more of a marketing concept than a consumer trend. Retailers are far smarter than consumers when it comes to positioning products to sell, and they are willing to make less profit to sell more products. This leads consumers to believe they are getting a “deal” when, in fact, they are buying in to what the retailers want.

For example, when you Super Size a meal for only \$0.67 more – the average cost to “upgrade” your meal – the out-of-pocket cost to you is insignificant, but multiply that times 25 million customers each day who “upgrade.” While you may think you won from a money perspective (and the restaurant most assuredly won), spending like this adds up over time – both in your financial bank account and in your waistline bank account, especially if those calories are not burned off!

In fact, if those extra 200 “deal” calories you just bought and consumed are above what you need to maintain your weight, you just “bought” yourself an extra 45 minutes on the treadmill (to burn it off), or an 15 extra pounds of fat (by eating it five days a week).

When to buy in bulk. Buying large quantities of food to achieve a lower per-serving cost at Wholesale Food Clubs only makes financial and caloric sense if the number of servings consumed per person **DO NOT** increase as compared to purchasing smaller or single serving sizes. To ensure this happens, do what our grandparents had to do and ration out what you need ahead of time. Pre-package individual serving sizes from bulk containers so you don’t find yourself eating a month’s worth of chips during movie night. Share this increased volume with a larger number of people – invite your friends and family over for the movie. Or, just order only what you need at

that time, then take the money you “saved” and set it aside for other things you need, or even put it in your Piggy Bank as a reward. By saving the money you didn’t spend on food you didn’t need you will be rewarding yourself financially while you progress toward your fitness goal.

Additionally, use common sense when purchasing your fast food meals anytime you pay with a credit card.

Researchers found that those who purchased their meals using a credit card spent 30% more and consumed 73 more calories than those who paid with cash. Do that five days a week and you’ll be the proud new owner of 5.5 lbs. of body fat at the end of the year.

Conclusion

What if we re-conditioned ourselves and our children that getting more from the foods we choose *can* be better if we know what “more” we’re aiming for. Once you know how many calories you actually need for a particular meal, you can then search for the best “bang for your buck” deals on the foods available to you by choosing foods that give you more **satiety**, more **energy**, more **nutrient content**, more **volume** for the calories, more **flavor** within your calorie allotment, more **convenience** so you’ll actually stick with it, and more **satisfaction** and feeling of control and accomplishment as you see your waistline shrinking.

The integration of **Apex Fitness Fast Foods** serves as a significant step to both accomplishing your fitness goals and saving money in the process! If half of all meals are consumed outside the home, by substituting just one fast food meal per day with an Apex Fitness Fast Food, it is conceivable that you’ll save >\$150 and thousands of calories per month! Since it appears that the economic structure of our food industry is not likely to change anytime soon (when the cost of the foods we chose to eat are in direct proportion to the calorie content, and in indirect proportion to the amount of nutrients they contain), we need to reprogram what we have been taught about buying food, and what constitutes a “deal”. We need to tweak our food-buying programming to give us the best satiety, energy and volume for our buck.

Until next month,

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