



It's harder to stay fit and lose weight as we age, but there's still time to fix the problem.



Are your tried-and-tested post-winter weight-loss tactics not quite as effective as they used to be? A slow and ageing metabolism could be to blame!

The good news is, it's not too late! Your metabolic rate isn't fixed, which means there are things you can do to help speed it up. Dr Leon Massage from the Body Metabolism Institute (bmiweightloss.com.au), and doctor, speaker and author Dr Cris Beer (drcris.com.au) explain the things to try.

Understanding metabolism

Metabolism is integral to the weight-loss process – but what makes it so important?

'Our metabolism determines how much energy we burn in a day from the food we eat,' explains Dr Beer.

'When our metabolism is unable to keep up, this leads to weight gain. Alternatively, when our metabolism burns more energy than we are consuming, then we lose weight.'

As we age, it's inevitable our metabolic rate slowly reduces. But an even bigger contributor to this decline is a loss of muscle mass caused by a decrease in our level of physical activity as we progress through adulthood.

'When we lose muscle, we reduce our energy-burning ability, and this... reduces our metabolism,' Dr Beer says.

The bottom line is that if you want to efficiently lose weight, your metabolism needs to be firing. There are a few ways you can give it a bit of a boost...

1 HAVE BREAKFAST

Skipping your first meal of the day is a metabolism nightmare. It signals the body to conserve energy and slows down the body's ability to burn fat. 'Eating breakfast kick-starts the metabolism for the day,' Dr Beer explains. Try eating a nutritious breakfast within an hour of waking up.



2 GRAZE REGULARLY

'Eating small portions of food at regular four-hour intervals will keep the metabolism firing throughout the day,' Dr Beer suggests. Rather than eating three monster mains, she recommends having smaller meals more often. 'This allows the body to burn the food we are consuming, rather than storing the excess as body fat.'

3 CHOOSE PROTEIN

A healthy balanced diet laden with fresh wholefoods (and limited processed foods) is essential to maintain metabolic rate. Additionally, Dr Massage stresses the importance of eating foods high in protein to promote the development of healthy muscle tissue, which he explains is 'necessary for improving metabolism'. You can get your protein fix from eggs, fish, lean meats, nuts and legumes.

7 WAYS TO KICK-START your metabolism after 40

Try these tips to rev up your body and shake those hard-to-lose kilos!



Text: Sharon Goldstein Hunt.

4 EMBRACE WEIGHT TRAINING...

Grab those dumbbells! 'Muscle is our most metabolically active tissue,' Dr Massage confirms. Our muscle tissue declines as we age, so it's crucial we make an effort to build it up. 'Weights and resistance exercises are essential for maintaining healthy muscle tissue,' he adds.



5 ...AND DON'T FORGET CARDIO!

While weights build muscle, aerobic exercise plays a more direct role. 'Aerobic exercise can increase metabolic rate by 300 to 500 per cent during the workout – and it remains mildly elevated for several hours,' Dr Massage explains. 'Try 20-minute bursts of interval training, such as fast-paced walking, jogging, cycling,' suggests Dr Beer.



6 GET UP

'If you have a sedentary job, you should make an effort to stand up and walk around at regular intervals. Thirty minutes of walking per day is the minimum target you should be aiming for in order to maintain health, wellness and a healthy metabolism,' Dr Massage recommends.

7 DRINK SMART

Staying hydrated is essential! 'Stick to water, rather than sugar-laden drinks, and keep alcohol to a minimum,' Dr Beer says. While coffee can spike metabolism, Dr Massage says it's temporary and to cap your drinking at a few cups per day.



Drew stays fit in her 40s by eating well and exercising regularly.

NEW Health

'I just think you should eat less of everything. I don't want to live a life where you can't have what you want – it just makes you want it more' – Drew Barrymore, actress, 41

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