



Keeping Your Metabolism Working For You

Your **metabolism** is your *'inner fire'* and the more intensely it burns, the more energy you will burn up during the course of the day. Your metabolism controls the bodily functions that you have no active control over such as digestion, breathing and the functioning of internal organs. A person's metabolism is **not** set at a permanent level; it can fluctuate according to your energy input and output. It is the fluctuation in metabolism that can be responsible for changes in body fat levels as the body tries to maintain equilibrium between energy being burnt through metabolism and exercise / movement and the food that is being consumed. If you restrict your food intake, your metabolism reacts by slowing down and preserving the body fat that you carry. Muscle mass is actually shed when the body is deprived of a normal amount of nutrition for any length of time as a way of further slowing metabolism. This is the reason why **dieting is not** the preferred means of fat loss.

There are a number of ways that you can ***increase your metabolic rate***. The best means is by **exercise and regular food intake**. These are covered in other steps but you can probably now see the link between the steps. If you don't do one of them it has an adverse effect on another and therefore can undermine your attempts at creating a healthy lifestyle and maintaining a suitable weight.

Your metabolism is under your control to a large degree but genetics does have a large part to play. Your metabolism may be naturally fast or slow and this is the reason why some people put on weight more easily than others even though they eat the same amount and type of food. People who have inherited naturally slow metabolism's can speed it up through regular aerobic exercise with the heart rate elevated. **Dieting**, the common way of losing weight only ***slows*** an already slow metabolism even further. Weight comes off but it is largely muscle mass, and when normal eating is resumed the weight comes back on faster than ever.

Obese people have a very efficient metabolism. They require much less food than the lean person who has a wasteful metabolism.