



Weight Loss Myths

By Garrick Transell

MYTH 3 - Thin is Healthy

This is likely to be the greatest myth in the field of weight-loss today. The idea that being thin, slim or skinny is healthier than being chubby or fat. While being overweight does place you at a greater risk of heart disease, diabetes and many other health conditions, being underweight is just as much of a concern.

More and more we are seeing the emergence of the “size zero” and skin and bones diets. These are found plastered on the front cover of almost every rubbish magazine with titles such as ‘how to lose 10 pounds in 10 days’. There are a number of problems with these extreme diets.

Such diets have brought about the emergence of the ‘skinny-fat’ person. Yes you read that correctly. People who are skinny yet fat. How does that work? Well dieting the wrong way will lead to muscle loss rather than fat loss. This often leaves a person with a higher body fat percentage and lower muscle mass percentage. How does this work???

If you weigh 100kg and have a body fat percentage of 30% (which is fairly common) you would have 70kg of ‘lean tissue’ and 30kg of fat. Say you now go on a crash diet and lose 10kg in 5 weeks. Following the average ‘size zero diet’ you are likely to lose about 6kg of muscle and 4kg of fat. This will now leave you with 64kg of lean tissue and 26kg of fat and an overall body fat percentage of 35%. **YOU ARE NOW MORE LIKELY TO GET HEART DISEASE!!!** Technically you are fatter!!!

Not only is this not healthy, this is the worst possible thing for long term weight control, as muscle mass is what determines your metabolism. This means that once you have lost muscle mass, you need less food and will store more fat if you over eat. Our above example of the 100kg person who has 70kg of lean tissue, needs around 2000 calories per day (determined by your lean muscle mass). The 90kg example above only has 64kg of lean mass and thus only needs 1900 calories. If both people eat 1950 calories a day the 100kg person will have lost weight while the 90kg person will gain weight.

The bottom line is its healthier to have a lower body fat percentage, than it is to just weighing less.