

try to accelerate weight and fat loss by increasing the amount of time they spend in the gym, while reducing their daily calorie intake even further. However, there are some interesting hormonal issues that arise when people under-eat and over-exercise, which I've seen and personally experienced over the years, whereby a combination of large deficits and large amounts of activity can slow or completely stall fat loss.

We have all heard about the stress hormone cortisol, which is released by the body in response to all kinds of stress. In the fitness and weight loss world cortisol has had an almost exclusively negative stigma attached to it, but the truth is it does play an important role. For example, the morning cortisol pulse actually helps to promote fat mobilisation, while in contrast, chronic elevations, especially in the face of high insulin levels, tends to promote visceral fat accumulation.

Both exercising and dieting can generally be considered a stressor, which can lead to an increase in cortisol production, and the more extreme you go with each discipline the greater the stress imposed. When you are doing both of these activities in extremes on a daily basis your cortisol levels go through the roof. Chronic cortisol elevations can cause many issues, such as water retention and leptin resistance in the brain.

When the normal leptin signal to the brain is blocked a lot of things can go wrong metabolically. A perfect example is when an avid gym-goer, who doesn't miss a day of cardio and follows a strict calorie controlled diet goes on holiday. This is often accompanied by feelings of anxiety about where to find a healthy meal, how to eat well five times a day and where she will find a suitable place to train. However, this type of person will, more often than

not, come back two weeks later looking amazing - lighter and leaner than when she left. It happens all the time and it has to do with a reduction in these stressors and the positive effects it can have on your body. The point is that if we are willing to take more time and find the correct balance with our dieting and training the results would be much better.

The other issue with excessive exercise is the fact that we tend to crave more food after a heavy cardio or weight training session. If we give in to these cravings then we simply undo all the hard work done in the gym by allowing our calorie intake to exceed our expenditure. This is a major reason why a large percentage of people who work hard in the gym get stuck at the same weight for long periods of time.

Many people also like to reward themselves after a good workout. They reason that since they have had a tough workout they can 'get away' with eating more. Other people will exercise more to make up for eating too much. But this just perpetuates the 'more with more' mentality, which is a big mistake! Don't fall into this trap as it never pays to eat more if you want to lose fat!

You can lose weight without exercise

To be honest, if you were on a strict diet you could get lean without the need for exercise, but you would lose out on the toned and shapely physique, and wouldn't enjoy the benefits of increased health and vitality achieved through regular cardio and resistance training. However, the challenge with exercising is actually getting to do it regularly to create that daily deficit, as there isn't always time in our hectic schedules. My suggestion would therefore be to keep your diet in check at all times, and exercise as often as time and life allows. But if you have your diet right

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Note

400 calories



Take this as an example;

A big muffin contains 400 calories. Do you realise how much exercising it takes to burn those calories? Well, about an hour on the step machine at a moderate pace would do the trick!



you need not spend endless hours on a treadmill, unless you're specifically training for an event or want to get some 'compensation' cardio in before a night out or a long awaited treat.

At the end of the day the equation is a simple one - just keep creating that deficit with your diet, but don't go to extremes. If you do you'll quickly find that you lack the motivation to work out, you'll be tired, grumpy, irritable and, worst of all, you won't achieve the results you want.

By combining this calorie restricted diet with adequate sleep and some exercise that you enjoy doing will yield the best results. I personally love being active, being outdoors and building up a good sweat, which makes the exercise component easier. But I would say that 80-90% of your results in terms of weight loss comes from your diet. Even your health and energy levels will deteriorate if you are not eating properly, and you will never out-exercise a bad diet!

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