

## **Don't Wait to Lose Weight**

By: Nate Dixon, D.P.T.

Knee pain and cardiovascular problems are 2 of the main reasons why it is important to maintain a healthy, optimal weight for both women and men! Make sure your diet plan is keeping you healthy for the long-term and is not just a “quick-fix” and the beginning of a “yo-yo” diet!

Let's get down to the basics of losing weight; ... it is truly a simple thing to do. Just eat fewer calories than you burn in your everyday activities! Simple, right? Well, unfortunately many people struggle with this psychological battle of choosing appropriate foods due to everyday stress, busy lifestyles, and family schedules. We need to make it a priority to prepare nutritious food ahead of time and also fit exercise into our daily lives.

## **The Trick to Losing Weight**

There are many healthcare professionals who can assist you in winning the war on weight, but when it comes down to the psychological battle – only the person who is ready to lose weight will make the right choices when it counts. People who want to decrease their weight should feel empowered by this fact and understand that only they are in control of their decisions and health!

With that said, here is a recommended plan of action:

- 1) Empower yourself and decide that you are ready to make a lifestyle change to become healthy and in shape.
- 2) Choose a healthy diet rich in vegetables, fruits, beans, nuts, grains, lean meats, and fish.
  - Try to stay away from cheese, processed foods (boxed foods), butter, partially-hydrogenated oils (fried foods), and artificial flavors and colors.
  - Supplement with vitamins, minerals, fibers, and anti-oxidants when your diet is not optimal to ensure a healthy cardiovascular system, digestive system, immune system, and all your other body systems.
- 3) Exercise by accomplishing a variety of activities and get a good sweat going 3 –7 days per week!
  - Cardiovascular exercise – running, walking, swimming, biking, climbing, or anything else to get your heart rate up.
  - Weight training – a complete body workout to increase lean body tissue.
- 4) Make it a team effort! Partner up with your spouse, good friend, or hire a personal trainer to help encourage you when you might otherwise choose poorly in the psychological battle! And in turn, help your partner make good decisions as well. Make it a life-long habit!

## **Atkins Diet – No Thanks**

Low carb, high protein and fat diets are “quick-fixes” and not recommended by the American Dietetics Association. These types of diets are not good for the long-term due

to the increased risk of cardiovascular disease, the increased risk of kidney problems, and the increased risk of cancer. A diet loaded with meat increases toxins in the diet and the decreased intake of fruits and vegetables leaves the diet void of crucial vitamins, minerals, fibers, and anti-oxidants.

Nate Dixon, D.P.T., is owner and director of physical therapy at Palmetto Therapy Services.