

Slim Once And For All

Are you tired of the yo-yo syndrome of losing weight and regaining it all plus a little extra after a couple of weeks?

Perhaps you have been striving for the impossible, trying to get your body into the same shape as someone else's, someone who has an entirely different physique, build or body type to you. Having inevitably failed you then feel disappointed and upset with yourself.

The best approach is to treat yourself as individual, unique. Get the results you want, not what somebody else or some fashion dictates to you. Give your self time and space to get to know what works for you.

What Kind Of Results Should You Expect?

Getting into shape is not just about losing weight. It should result in an improved level of health and wellbeing, better muscle tone, skin tone, and increased energy and vitality in the body. These results of course will also enhance your confidence and self-esteem.

3 Steps to a healthier and more shapely you

The components of an effective slimming/shaping up programme include 3 basic steps:

1. Proper Mental Attitude.
2. A Balanced Diet.
3. Regular Exercise.

Let us start with the first step on the road to building a programme to shape up your body, your mind and your life.



Step 1

A PROPER MENTAL ATTITUDE

Start by creating the proper mental environment. A positive mental

attitude plays a huge part in the degree of success of any diet/shaping up programme. The more clearly you can visualise your results the better chance you have of attaining them and so it's important when

starting that you know exactly what you want as your end result. Pick a role model for inspiration, it could be a friend, somebody from a magazine, you as you were a few years ago. It must be an image that will spark off a strong feeling or motivation for success



Step 2

A BALANCED DIET

Crash diets are ineffective as a method of long-term weight control as the body's natural survival instinct

causes the metabolism to slow down when there is a sudden dramatic reduction in the amount of food it's getting. The metabolism does not speed up at the same rate when the amount of food is restored and as a result it is easier to put those extra pounds back on again. Many traditional weight-loss diets, in an effort to attain quick results on the scales, may result in a poorly balanced diet, leading to loss of solid tissue rather than fat loss, leaving you with a lighter but less healthy appearance and condition. Solid tissue in the body - namely the muscles - is what gives you your shape, and protein is what builds this solid tissue. Loss of muscle tissue through lack of protein intake will leave you looking flabby no matter how much weight you lose.

What does work?

A balanced diet for slimming or shaping up should contain plenty of good quality proteins for building solid tissue, adequate carbohydrates for energy and a minimum of fat. Change the proportions of these foods in your diet and you will dramatically change your shape. Men for instance have more fat cells around their tummies. So cutting out fats and eating protein will cause the spare tyre to shrink while toning up the muscles in other parts i.e. shoulders/chest/legs.

What kind of proteins are best?

The best proteins are the ones with the least amounts of fat. Some of the high protein foods can also be high in fat, like most cheeses (except cottage cheese) and eggs (the yolk contains the fat), so it's advisable to familiarise yourself with the low fat proteins such as white fish, round steak, egg whites, cottage cheese etc



food. Are some fats less fattening than others? No. All fats have the same calorific value whether they are butters/oils/margarines or lard.

The Importance of Life Force Foods

A balanced diet helps the body and mind to relax, and cravings for sweet or fattening foods can often result from an imbalance in the diet. A deficiency of complex carbohydrates will cause you to crave sugar for instant energy. High life-force foods such as fresh fruit and raw vegetables are an essential part of a healthy diet, and supply the body with vital vitamins, minerals and fibre, and can also contribute to cleansing the body. Indeed many health experts advocate a diet that is 50% raw food. They maintain that the abundance of life in these foods is what really keeps the body healthy.



Step 3

REGULAR EXERCISE

As I have already mentioned, when you suddenly reduce the quantities of food in your diet your metabolism slows

down (i.e. the rate at which you burn food for energy) However exercise can keep it up, and therefore helps to avoid the yo-yo syndrome.

What kind of exercise is most effective?

There are basically two types of exercise needed to really affect your shape. Aerobic exercise such as brisk walking, jogging, swimming etc. can burn off excess calories, but it won't necessarily affect your shape. You may just end up with a lighter or lesser version of the same shape you had when you started.

What about carbohydrates & sugar?

Carbohydrates are needed for energy, however excess carbohydrates which don't get burned off by exercise will eventually get stored on the body as fat. Complex carbohydrates such as potatoes, rice, cooked vegetables etc. provide more bulk in the system and can be more filling than sweet or sugary products (i.e. simple carbohydrates). Sugary products can also interfere with blood sugar levels and are more inclined to give 'high's and 'low's' in energy, whereas complex carbohydrates supply the body with a steadier supply of energy.

What about fat?

Only fat will make fat, and as soon as you cut it down to a minimum your body fat will decrease. Cutting out the fat may require a little vigilance, as fats may often be hidden or disguised. Many fats advertised as 'Low Fat' although they have less fat than the original products can still have quite high levels of fat in them, so it's a good idea to check the labels for the fat content of the

To change or re-shape specific parts of your body some form of resistance training or weight training would be required. There are specific exercises to affect every part of the body. A combination of both is therefore the most effective way to improve your overall shape, where the resistance exercises re-shape the muscles that give you your shape, and the aerobic exercises burn off the fat.

When starting a new exercise programme always take your personal level of fitness into consideration so you don't overdo it! Now that you have the three basic steps to getting into shape why not put them all together and give yourself every chance to achieve the best results YOU can get? Seek further advice if necessary on your diet and exercise. Above all relax, have fun and enjoy the challenge of reaching your own potential. You'll find shaping up can really enhance all aspects of your life.



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Ita has many years experience of weight-training, diet and teaching shape up and fitness classes. She has competed in many physique contests. Ita was recently placed 2nd in the Miss Health Culture Contest 1993.