



Lose Weight The Natural Way!

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Introduction

I already know two things about you. (1) You are an intelligent person (2) who has a weighty problem. I know that you are intelligent because you are seeking help to solve your problem and that is always the second step to solving a problem. The first one is acknowledging that there is, in fact, a problem that needs to be solved.

You need to lose some weight and it might surprise you to know that how much weight you need or want to lose is not an issue. It really doesn't much matter whether you need to lose 10 pounds, 110 pounds or more....the process for losing weight is exactly the same for every pound that must be lost. Not only is the process the same but the formula for losing a pound is the same as well. We will discuss the process and the formula later in this book.

You have no doubt discovered that there are as many weight loss 'experts' as there are weight loss programs. You can find programs and gurus that will swear that counting carbohydrates is the only way to go and you will find programs and gurus that promise counting fat grams is the only way to go. You can find calorie charts and carbohydrate charts and fat gram charts everywhere. Some of them are even free.

The truth of the matter is that, yes, you are going to have to count something.....calories, fat, carbohydrates...or with some plans 'points'. No matter...you will be counting something. We will be discussing the various counting options and then because you are an intelligent person you can choose for yourself what program will be the best one for you based on the facts that you will learn.

Here we will also be talking about ways to help you stay with your 'healthier eating plan' (never use the four letter word 'diet') long enough to learn how to manage your eating habits and thus your weight for the rest of your life.

Diet pills and physically altering surgeries are an option today. You have seen the 'miracles' of enormous weight loss by prominent people who have opted for these solutions. You will find out what those diet pills and surgeries are and the risks involved for opting for those solutions yourself.

We will begin by discussing the differences between natural and unnatural weight loss. You are an intelligent person. Read and decide for yourself which way is the right way for you.

Chapter I

Natural vs. Unnatural Weight Loss

Natural Weight Loss

Natural weight loss occurs when your body burns more energy than it is supplied with. What I mean by that is that food is the body's energy source. That is what the purpose of food is basically. Energy is measured in calories so I'm not advocating a calorie counting diet for you when I use the word 'calorie'.

The body burns that energy with every movement. Reach up and scratch your nose and you have burned some energy. Our bodies' burn energy even without movement. Our brains alone burn about 400 calories a day just thinking. We burn calories when we sleep.

If you ever watch sporting events, you might have heard sportscasters tell you that a participant in a bicycle race can lose up to 10 pounds just during the race and that is true. Some of that weight loss is fluid but most athletes know to replace lost fluid. Most of that weight loss that the sportscasters are talking about is actually caused by the body burning stored fat because the athlete is burning more energy than he is consuming.

Nobody reading this is likely to be one of those athletes who can burn 10 pounds of weight off while riding a bicycle, swimming or playing football but this is natural weight loss. **Natural weight loss means burning more calories than are being consumed through food and drink over a 24 hour period without the aid of pills or surgical procedures.**

Unnatural Weight Loss

There have been a lot of well publicized weight loss pills and pill combinations in recent years. Many have been proven to be unsafe for extended use while others have been proven to be down right deadly. When overweight patients ask their doctors for appetite suppressant pills, many times these doctors will quickly prescribe them and then fail to oversee their use or, even worse, they will fail to take their time to counsel their patients on the dangers of using these kinds of drugs.

It is very tempting to use diet pills in the quest for weight loss. Imagine the idea of just popping a little pill in and presto the weight is gone. Unfortunately, diet pills don't work like that. There really isn't a little magic pill. Unless a reduced calorie

diet and exercise are used in conjunction with diet pills, the pills themselves will have no affect whatsoever on a person's weight.

Prescription diet pills as well as over-the counter diet pills all have side effects. These potential side effects certainly need to be weighed against any hoped for benefit to be derived from taking them.

Weight loss pills are usually appetite suppressants. Most of the prescription varieties have the potential for becoming habit forming all of them, prescription as well as over-the counter diet pills interfere with normal metabolism.

The Food and Drug administration has approved two drugs for use as diet pills. They are sold under different brand names, of course, but there really are only two drugs. They are orlistat and sibutramine. Sibutramine is sold as Meridia and Orlistat is sold as Xenical. Sibutramine is an appetite suppressant. Orlistat is a lipase inhibitor, which means it interferes with the body's ability to absorb fat.

All prescription diet pills have one or the other ingredient....either orlistat or sibutramine. If your doctor prescribes a diet pill for you, you need to be aware of the possible side effects that the drugs can cause.

The makers of Meridia (Sibutramine) list these side effects on their website:

If you experience any of the following serious side effects, stop taking Meridia and seek emergency medical attention or contact your doctor immediately:

- an allergic reaction (difficulty breathing; closing of your throat; swelling of your lips, tongue, or face; or hives);
- an irregular heartbeat;
- high blood pressure (severe headache, blurred vision); or
- seizures.

The makers of Xenical (Orlistat) list these side effects on their website: "*More common side effects may include:* Abdominal discomfort or pain, anxiety, arthritis, back pain, diarrhea, dizziness, earache, fatigue, fatty or oily stools, fecal urgency or incontinence, flu, gas with fecal discharge, gum problems, headache, increased defecation, menstrual problems, muscle pain, nausea, oily discharge, rectal discomfort or pain, respiratory tract infections, skin rash, sleep problems, tooth problems, urinary tract infections, vaginal inflammation, vomiting"

OK...you say maybe diet pills aren't the way to go. Those side effects sound gross and maybe even dangerous.

There are many surgeries available for very obese people. These surgeries cause the body to not function as it was designed to function and thus they produce

weight loss. There are basically three types of surgeries performed for the purpose of the patient losing weight:

- Reduction of the size of the stomach. This procedure simply reduces the physical size of the stomach by stapling or other methods and makes it impossible for the patient to consume much food at a meal.
- Removal of a portion of the intestines. This procedure removes a portion of the intestine and thus reduces the amount of intestine that comes into contact with food consumed by the patient.
- Reduction of the size of the stomach AND Removal of a portion of the intestines.

There are several different names for these types of bariatric surgeries. You can read about the potential risks [here](#). There are many risks associated with bariatric surgeries. Just the first five of those listed are:

- Bleeding from a tear to the liver, spleen, or blood vessels
- Bowel obstruction, requiring further surgery
- Cardiac problems. Greatest risk in patients who are the most overweight, or who have cardiac disease
- Complications due to anesthesia and medications.
- Deep vein thrombosis. Blood clots in the large leg veins. They become serious when they float up into the blood vessels of the lungs.

Sometimes bariatric surgeries are required for those who are more than 100 pounds overweight and have serious weight related health problems but bariatric surgery should never be entered into lightly. The risks are great.

Diet pills can be tempting but they won't work at all unless a reduced calorie diet is followed and exercise is increased. Bariatric surgeries are sometimes necessary but should not ever be considered if there is an alternative of losing weight naturally.

Unnatural weight loss means burning more calories than are consumed over a 24 hour period with the aid of diet pills or surgeries.

Chapter II

What Causes Weight Loss

Food Consumption Affects Weight Loss

The first thing that you need to know is that 1 pound of body weight is equal to 3500 calories. If you gain a pound that means that you consumed 3500 calories more than you burned. If you lose a pound that means that you have burned 3500 calories more than you consumed. That figure does not change whether the calories are consumed from fat or carbohydrates or whether they were burned by riding a bicycle, swimming or just veging out in front of the TV. A calorie is a calorie. This is important information in your quest for weight loss and weight control so make note of it.

1 pound of body weight gained or lost = 3500 calories.

The trick to losing weight is to eat fewer calories AND burn more calories each day. That is the basis that all 'diets' (there is that four letter word again) are based upon no matter whether you are counting calories, fat grams or carbohydrates.

Even though you may believe that most of the calories that your body burns in a day are from the exercise that you do, you are not right. Only about 30% of the calories you burn each day are from exercise. However, the exercise that you do can influence at what rate you burn calories when you are not exercising. Exercise or the lack of exercise affects your metabolic rate....that is, the rate at which your body burns calories when it is at rest. About 60% of the calories that you burn each day are burned when you are not engaging in physical exercise.

The body burns calories to fuel the thousands of chemical reactions required to maintain body temperature, repair cells and keep your heart, lungs, liver and kidneys functioning.

So, you ask, where do the other 10% of the calories get burned up? 30% during exercise, 60 % the rest of the time....what about the other 10%? Those are the ones that the body uses to actually digest the food you eat that supplies all of the calories needed for everything else.

There is more. All calories are not created equally. Our bodies simply do not process all calories consumed in exactly the same way.

Calories that are consumed in the form of Essential Fatty Acids (EFAs), for example, contain about 9 calories per gram but our bodies don't use those calories as an energy source. These calories are used to rebuild cells and tissues, particularly after an injury. If consumed at very high levels they increase metabolic

rate and increase fat burn off, resulting in loss of weight. (This is the basic theory of the Dr. Atkins Diet). Consumption of high levels of EFAs has been linked to heart disease but that is an on-going debate in the scientific community.

More calories are absorbed from refined foods because it takes so much longer for them to pass through our systems. Natural and unrefined food (an apple for example) usually takes between 12 and 15 hours to pass through our digestive systems. Refined foods can take up to 75 hours to pass through our digestive systems and our systems continue to extract calories from them for the whole 75 hours.

Our bodies require vitamins and minerals to properly digest food therefore empty calorie foods....those that contain no vitamins or minerals.....are stored as fat while our bodies wait for the needed vitamins and minerals to properly process them.

Each human being is unique. All human bodies do not process not use calories in the exact same way. You know at least one of those people who can eat like the proverbial horse and never gain a pound....they make my eyes turn green with envy. Then we all know those people (we may be them) who can just think about eating a donut and gain a couple of pounds. It hardly seems fair but that is just the way it is.

We each have to learn what and how much we can eat in order to lose those unwanted pounds. We can use the available charts to help guide our choices but when it comes right down to it, each of us will have to determine what and how much of it is the right thing for ourselves.

Exercise Affects Weight Loss

It shouldn't come as a big surprise to anybody that you are burning more energy when you are standing than when you are sitting, more energy when you are walking than when you are standing and more energy when you are running than when you are walking. That is just common sense.

When you begin your 'eating healthier' plan, you really need to include an exercise plan to go along with it. You can only eat just so many fewer calories than you burn each day and exercise allows you to burn more for the time you are exercising plus increase your metabolic rate for several hours after you are through exercising. In addition, vigorous physical exercise causes our brains to produce dandy little hormones called endorphins that lift our moods and make us feel happier.

As a couple of examples of the rate that physical exercise causes us to burn calories, I am including two charts:

This information was obtained from Reebok Instructor News, Volume 4, Number 2, 1991.

<u>Activity & Calories/10 min.</u>	<u>125 lbs</u>	<u>150 lbs</u>	<u>175 lbs</u>	<u>200 lbs</u>
Aerobics (traditional at high intensity)	95	115	134	153
Gardening	41	49	57	65
Racquetball	75	90	105	120
Running (9 min/mile)	109	131	153	174
Shopping	35	42	49	56
Sitting (reading or watching TV)	10	12	14	16
Sleeping	10	12	14	16
Standing (light activity)	20	24	28	32
Volleyball	28	34	40	45
Walking (15 min/mile)	44	52	61	70
Walking upstairs	150	175	202	229

Men and women don't burn calories at the same rate. I know....that doesn't seem quite fair either, but there you have it. This information was taken from Reebok Instructor News, Volume 5, Number 2, 1992.

<u>Activity & Calories/10 min</u>	<u>123 lb women</u>	<u>170 lb man</u>
Basketball	77	106
Cycling (5.5 mph)	36	49
Cycling (9.4 mph)	56	74
Cycling (racing)	95	130
Dance Exercise (High Impact Aerobics)	94	124
Dance Exercise (Low Impact Aerobics)	80	105
Football	74	102
Racquetball	76	107
Rope Skipping (slow)	82	116
Rope Skipping (fast)	100	142
Running (8 min/mile)	113	150
Running (11 1/2 min/mile)	76	100
Skiing (Cross Country)	80	106
Stairmaster	88	122
Step Aerobics (4 inch bench)	48	66
Step Aerobics (6 inch bench)	58	80
Step Aerobics (8 inch bench)	67	92

Step Aerobics (10 inch bench)	75	104
Soccer	78	107
Swimming (back stroke)	95	130
Swimming (breast stroke)	91	125
Swimming (fast crawl)	87	120
Swimming (slow crawl)	95	130
Swimming (side stroke)	68	90
Swimming (treading water)	35	48
Tennis (singles)	61	81
Volleyball	28	39
Weight training (super circuit)	104	137
Weight training (muscular strength)	44	60
Weight training (muscular endurance)	58	80
Walking (3.5 mph)	45	59

The one exercise that most people can do and not need any special equipment of place to do it is simply walking. Walking at a brisk pace will just naturally burn more calories during the time that you walk but even walking at a moderate pace serves to burn calories and increases the metabolic rate.

That after dinner walk around the block is better than no walk at all. Any exercise program that you begin should, of course, be approved by your doctor. It isn't wise to begin to exercise after years of being sedentary without first being pronounced fit enough to do so.

All exercise programs need to be started slowly and increased gradually to prevent physical harm or even just muscles that are so sore that you have to skip the exercise altogether.

Exercising with a partner is preferable to exercising alone. Get your significant other or your best friend to join you in a walk during lunch or after your evening meal.

Conclusion: Reduced food intake and increased exercise cause weight loss.

Chapter III

Low Fat Diets

Let me begin this chapter by saying that SOME fat is essential in our diets to help our bodies absorb fat soluble vitamins like Vitamin A and to supply two types of essential fatty acids (EFAs) that our bodies need but don't produce.

Many people claim that their diets are absolutely fat free but that is virtually impossible. Foods that are labeled 'fat free' still contain up to ½ gram of fat per serving and there is some fat in all fruit, vegetables, and grains. Skim milk is not fat free, either. While it is possible to eat a low fat diet it is impossible to eat a no fat diet.

Actually calculating how many grams of fat that you should consume in a day in order to lose weight sounds like you need a degree in higher mathematics but maybe it isn't quite as hard as it sounds. The entire process begins with the number of calories that you intend to eat in the first place. When you determine that number then you must calculate the number of grams of fat that you have consumed in a day (each gram contains 9 calories) and multiply by 9. Divide that number by the number of calories that you have consumed. Now, you multiply that answer by 100 and you will have arrived at the percentage of fat calories contained in your diet. You need to aim for a fat gram consumption that equals 20-30% of your total caloric consumption. You can find calorie and fat gram charts on the Internet and in real world book stores. I found this one on [Weight Loss Resources](#):

Daily calorie restriction	Recommended intake of fat grams where...		
	...20% of calories come from fat	...25% of calories come from fat	...30% of calories come from fat
1,100	24	31	37
1,200	27	33	40
1,300	29	36	43
1,400	31	39	47
1,500	33	42	50
1,600	36	44	53
1,700	38	47	57
1,800	40	50	60

1,900	42	53	63
2,000	44	56	67
2,100	47	58	70
2,200	49	61	73

You can also find resources on the Internet that can help you to effectively substitute one food for another and thereby decrease your fat intake. Some handy substitutions are:

- Use 1 cup of applesauce rather than 1 cup of butter or oleo in baking
- Use 8 ounces of yogurt rather than 8 ounces of cream cheese
- Use 4 cups low fat stock, fruit juice or wine for sautéing rather than 1 cup of oil. Sauté until all of the liquid evaporates.
- Use 2 egg whites instead of 1 whole egg
- Ground turkey rather than ground beef
- Low fat frozen yogurt rather than ice cream
- Canadian bacon, turkey bacon or lean ham rather than bacon

Remember that the object of a low fat diet is LOW fat and not NO fat. Also remember that if you are counting fat grams you will also be counting calories.

A low fat diet is considered one of the healthiest diets. It is one that is recognized by the American Heart Foundation as well as by the American Medical Association.

A low fat diet is considered very beneficial for heart patients and for those with diabetes or at risk for stroke or heart attack.

Those who follow low fat diets have lowered their blood pressure as well as lost weight and both are very good things.

Conclusion: Low fat diets will product weight loss mainly because they are reduced caloric diets, as well.

Chapter IV

Low Carb Diets

The Dr. Atkins Diet Revolution

The first low-carb diet broke onto the weight loss scene in 1972 and changed the world's beliefs about dieting forever. According to the Dr. Atkins diet plan a person could eat all of the protein and fat that they wanted....there was no limit. Have a dozen eggs scrambled in a whole stick of butter and an entire pound of bacon for breakfast.....just NO toast or bread of any kind....no orange juice either. JUST protein. For lunch have a whole pig and for dinner have a whole cow...just no vegetables, no bread, no potatoes, no rice, no pasta, nothing that contained sugar or starch in any form. America said, "WOW! You mean we don't have to live on 500 calories a day and eat nothing but lettuce, boiled eggs and grapefruit?" The Dr. Atkins Diet became all the rage and the diet world quickly learned three important things:

1. All calories are not created equal.
2. Eliminating carbohydrates from a diet causes weight loss.
3. A high protein diet produces the worst case of halitosis (bad breath) in the universe and breath mints are not on the Dr. Atkins Diet plan.

The medical community was appalled. Doctors just knew that all that saturated fat was certain to cause major health problems....and the battle lines were drawn. The benefits and risks of the Atkins Diet still rages today.

Recent research results suggest that the high protein, high fat, low carbohydrate diet does not cause serious health concerns about an increased heart attack or stroke risk. Abdominal cramping caused by the lack of dietary fiber and bad breath are the most commonly reported side effects of the Dr. Atkins diet.

Dr. Atkins died at age 72 from head injuries sustained when he slipped on an icy sidewalk. At his death he weighed 258 pounds and was six feet tall....a height and weight combination that is considered to be obese. He had several heart attacks and suffered from heart disease. His wife and others claim that the weight was due to bloating and that the heart disease was the result of a viral infection.

Dr. Atkins did make changes to his diet plan between the time it was first published in the 1970's and the latest edition that was published in 2002. He recommended a reduction in the consumption of red meat but that fact was never widely publicized.

The Dr. Atkins Diet Revolution book can be purchased in book stores and online. It remains one of the best selling books of all time.

The South Beach Diet

Dr. Arthur Agatston designed The South Beach Diet in the mid 1990's. Dr. Agatston is a cardiologist and was concerned with the high fat diet Dr. Atkins diet plan than many of his patients were following. He believed that the 20 grams of carbohydrates that were recommended in the Dr. Atkins diet plan was too low. He recommends 30 to 40 grams of carbohydrate consumption each day and insists that there is a difference between kinds of carbohydrates. He divides carbohydrates into 'simple carbohydrates' and 'complex carbohydrates' and asks dieters to choose the complex carbohydrate variety.

Some foods that contain simple carbohydrates and should be avoided according to the South Beach Diet are:

- Table Sugar
- Cakes
- Biscuits
- Jam
- Chocolate
- Candy
- Honey
- Soft Drinks

Some foods that contain complex carbohydrates and are allowed in moderate quantities on the South Beach Diet are:

- Pasta
- Brown Rice
- Potatoes
- Turnips
- Carrots
- Whole wheat bread
- Whole grain cereals
- Corn
- Yams
- Peas
- Beans

You can find a good list of foods and their carbohydrate values [here](#). The South Beach diet has proven itself to be popular, as well as, effective providing the dieter limits portion sizes and chooses complex carbohydrates rather than simple carbohydrates.

One of the most famous South Beach Dieters is former President Bill Clinton.

The Zone Diet

The Zone diet was developed by Barry Sears, Ph.D. He is not a medical doctor or a dietician. He is a biochemist. His theory is that if a person eats the correct ratio of carbohydrates (40%) to protein (30%) to fat (30%), their hormonal balance will be established and thus their health, weight and athletic performance will be maximized. They will be in 'the zone'....hence, the name.

The basic concepts of the Zone diet are that the dieter is to eat small meals frequently...no more than 5 hours between meals and foods such as sweets, chips and junk food are eliminated while foods such as grapefruit, nuts and lentils are increased.

The food plans in the Zone diet average between 1200 and 1300 calories per day for an average size woman. Since most women would lose weight on that daily caloric intake, the diet does work.

Dr. Sears (biochemist) makes some clinically unsubstantiated claims as to health benefits produced by the Zone diet. His claims of more efficient fat burning and reduced incidences of disease are unproven. Dr. Sears blames insulin resistance as the cause of all obesity and there is clear scientific evidence that this is simply not the case.

However, even though Dr. Sears' conclusions are seriously flawed, the diet does in fact produce weight loss. It does so because it is a low calorie diet and the meal recommendations are balanced. It will do you no harm. If you choose to follow the Zone diet, by all means do so, just remember that most of the hype is.....well....hype.

Conclusion: There are many versions of the low carb diet. I have listed only three of them here. The body deals with carbohydrates derived from protein in a different way than it does those derived from carbohydrates. Low carb diets work but one needs to be aware of health concerns related to prolonged consumption of foods high in saturated fats.

Chapter V

Reduced Calorie Diets

I remember years ago when my mother would go on a diet. She would live for weeks at a time on nothing but lettuce, boiled eggs and black coffee. There weren't many diet foods on the market back then apparently. The first 'diet' soft drink was introduced by Coke in 1963. It was called 'Tab'. Since then the diet food industry has exploded. You can find reduced calorie, reduced fat, no fat, low carb, reduced carb etc. etc. etc. on the shelves and in the coolers of every grocery store in America.

The sad obesity statistics are that there are 58 Million Overweight; 40 Million Obese; 3 Million morbidly Obese and it isn't getting any better. The number of overweight children in America tripled in less than 30 years. Most of those who are over weight are on some kind of weight loss diet....apparently these diets aren't working wonders.

We have counted fat grams and carb grams. We have eaten low fat, no fat, low carb and no carb and yet we are still the most obese nation on the face of the planet. It seems that no matter what kind of diet comes into vogue weight control always boils back down to calories consumed versus calories expended, doesn't it?

You can find advice by the ton on the Internet and in every book store in every strip mall in America on weight loss. Still, when you take out all of the hype losing weight means that you must consume fewer calories each day than you burn.

You've most likely guessed by now that I am not a big fan of higher mathematics but I can add and subtract. I'll bet you can, too. On a good day, I can even balance my checkbook so here is a simple mathematical formula to determine how many calories you can consume in a day and maintain your weight based on your height:

Start with 1000 calories for your first 5 feet of height and add 100 calories for each inch of height over 5 feet. If you are 5 feet 5 inches tall, you can have 1500 calories a day to maintain your weight. That wasn't hard, was it?

Now for some more math. In order to lose 1 pound of body weight you must reduce your caloric intake by 3500 calories. To lose 1 pound of body weight in a week's time that means that you must reduce your caloric intake by about 500 calories a day....OR expend 500 more calories in exercise a day....OR a combination of both reducing calorie intake AND increasing caloric expenditures by exercising more that totals a 500 calorie reduction.

If you are a woman who is 5'5" tall using a combination of reduced caloric consumption and increased caloric expenditure, this means that you will consume 1250 calories a day and do about 40 minutes of aerobic exercise a day for a week and lose 1 pound of body weight. These calculations are based on the average. They are not hard and fast rules. We aren't like check books or ATM machines. What goes in versus what comes out is not set in stone. Each of us is different and our metabolisms are different. Some of our bodies burn calories more efficiently than others.

You can find many reduced calorie diets that include meal plans for diets of various daily caloric values each day beginning with a 1000 calorie daily diet plan through a 2000 calorie daily diet plan. These plans are available through your private physician's offices, on the Internet and in most places that sell books.

There is a free online calorie counter available [here](#). You do need to remember that calories are based on the size of the portion, however. We will discuss portion control later in this e-book.

Today packaged foods are labeled with calorie, fat and carbohydrate content. It hasn't always been like that but thanks to new labeling laws this information is required to be put right there on the labels where we can read it. Remember, though, that the totals are usually listed PER SERVING and above that is information telling you just what a serving consists of. Most of the time the serving size is listed as ½ cup or 1 cup but sometimes the serving size is listed in ounces.

You can find liquid diet plans, as well. Slim Fast was the first but it has a lot of competition out there on grocery store shelves now days. Most of these liquid meals contain about 300 calories each which means that you can replace all three daily meals with a liquid meal and have a few saltine crackers each day to consume only 1000 calories a day. Most of these liquid diet plans suggest that you use them to replace only one or two meals each day.

The single most important thing that you can do in order to gain control over your weight, however, is to learn about food. Learn what foods contain sugars and starches, which foods contain protein and fat.

A healthy diet isn't a 'diet' at all. It is a healthier way of eating that you can stick to long enough to lose the weight you need to lose and when you reach your goal weight you will know enough about food and how your body reacts to it so that you can maintain your weight loss for life.

Conclusion: Low fat and low carb diets are still low calorie diets. It takes eating fewer calories that you burn to lose weight. Weight can be lost through eating less and exercising more.

Chapter VI

Weight Loss Support Groups

When we set out to change our weight we are in reality changing much more than our weight. We are taking the first steps toward a drastic life style change. This is especially true for those who have more than a few pounds to lose. A person who loses thirty, forty, fifty or more pounds will not be the same person they were before they lost the weight. They will not react to the world around them the same and the world around them will not react to them the same. They will not want to participate in the same activities that they participated in when they were heavy. They won't even laugh at the same jokes.

It is true, as well, that successfully losing weight requires a lot of outside support. We all look to our family and friends for support in many aspects of our lives but losing weight is one endeavor that really does require the support of others who are traveling or have traveled the same path. Although our family and friends may well want to give us their full support while we lose those many unwanted pounds, they aren't the ones who can understand or appreciate the day to day (sometimes minute to minute) struggles and temptations that we face.

When you combine the facts of life style change with the need for support, the obvious solution of the combined needs is a weight loss support group.

A weight loss support group need not be one of the well-known ones that we will be discussing here. A weight loss support group can be a loosely knit group of people who join together in a joint effort to lose weight and support one another in the process. Many such groups are formed just among groups of friends or among groups of co-workers everyday and many are very successful.

Weight loss support groups offer the opportunity for those wanting and needing to lose weight to form new friendships, to learn about food and exercise from one another, to give and get support, and one more important thing....they provide an opportunity to win.

Friendships are naturally formed between people who have common goals. Solid bonds can be formed between people who under other circumstances would never become allies when they are faced with a common enemy....in this instance over weight....the battle of the bulge.....food temptations. These things become the common enemy of a weight loss group and friendships are the natural product of fighting a common enemy.

Learning about food and how it affects weight is one of the main goals of most weight loss support groups. Important and helpful information is presented at

meetings of weight loss support groups on many topics that affect the loss of weight as well as the problem of keeping on keeping on in the face of adversity. Programs are presented on such varied topics as 'The Importance of Drinking Water' to 'How to Spot a Diet Sabotage in the Making'. Most weight loss support groups teach the importance of keeping food diaries. They give instruction about counting calories, fat grams and carb grams, as well. Usually programs are presented by different members of the group from week to week and, as we all know, you learn more by teaching than you ever learn by being taught.

Exercise is not only encouraged in weight loss support groups, many groups provide for group exercise or group walking sessions. Exercise not only makes you sweat it is usually downright boring....and misery loves company. It's a lot easier to put on those walking shoes and go for that walk if your friends are waiting for you and will be walking with you than it is to just get out of your comfy easy chair and go alone.

Support given and received from the members of a weight loss support group is an invaluable asset in the pursuit of weight loss. Everyone who has ever had to lose more than a few pounds knows all about the dreaded 'plateau' of weight loss. You will go along for a few weeks and lose one or two pounds at a steady clip and then all of a sudden and for no apparent reason, you lose not one ounce even though you have done the same thing as you have done in weeks past. A word of encouragement can help you stick with your plan when it doesn't look like it is working. Having a friend to call when that piece of cake in the fridge is calling to you to help you resist temptation is priceless.

The opportunity to win a challenge or a competition is another thing that weight loss support groups provide. When most people are faced with a competition they immediately want to win that competition. It's just human nature. Our own success is always measured against the success of others who are trying to gain the same goals that we are. We start really young learning all about competition through sibling rivalry and we never stop needing to win throughout our lives. Winning equals success. That's why we play games. We don't play for fun...we play to WIN!

It has been proven time and time again that those who face the need to make big behavioral changes in their lives are much more likely to make those changes if they have the support of a group of people who need to make the same changes. Natural weight loss means that behaviors need to be changed. You have to learn to think like a thin person and see food the way that thin people do. A support group can help you make those changes.

There are many organized support groups to choose from. I am not advocating any particular group here. You many well want to visit different groups and see where you feel the most comfortable and which one you think will help you the very most. We will discuss three prominent programs here (Weight Watchers, Tops, and Overeaters Anonymous) but be aware that there are others.

Weight Watchers International

Jean Nidetch was a very overweight housewife who lived in Queens, New York. She weighed a whopping 214 pounds and wore a size 44 in September of 1961.

Jean had been going to a free diet clinic that was sponsored by the New York City Board of Health and had managed to lose a total of 20 pounds but her resolve was flagging and she knew that this was about to become just the last of many failed diet plans. She had been trying every fad diet to hit the scene for years and had failed miserably at each and every one of them.

So what did Jean Nidetch do? She did the natural thing. She called her friends for help. She invited a few of her overweight friends over and made her 'cookie confession'. Come to find out all of her overweight friends were fighting their own diet monsters and they discovered by sharing their problems they each made the other stronger.

This group of women began to gather at Jeans apartment every week and they all began to lose weight. Word spread, naturally, and it wasn't long before Jean was cramming 40 women into her apartment each week.

By discussing their weight control problems these women soon discovered that successful weight loss wasn't just a matter of eating less and exercising more. They discovered that weight loss was more about changing old (bad) habits and getting and giving support and encouragement.

Jean and her friends were so successful that they formed a corporation. They had their first public meeting at a loft in Queens in May of 1963. The meeting wasn't advertised and Jean had only rented 50 chairs for the occasion. When over 400 people showed up, she had an immediate problem. She quickly pulled a friend aside and enlisted her help. They spent the whole day meeting with groups of 50 people at a time of those who were waiting.

The rest, as they say, is history. Weight Watchers International has chapters in all 50 states and in countries all over the world.

If you ask yourself how one woman in Queens with a weighty problem could turn a few phone calls to her friends into an Internationally known corporation, the answer is really rather simple. It was an idea that worked. It worked on a small scale and it works on a large scale. It worked then and it still works today. The idea of people helping people solve a problem wasn't new in 1961. It's just that nobody had ever thought about applying the solution to weight loss and weight control before. Jean thought of it.

Fees: Weight Watcher membership isn't cheap. Prices vary in different parts of the country and, of course, there are differences in other countries, but you can expect

to pay about \$180 dollars every 3 to 4 months in membership fees. This price does not include the price of meals.

Weight Watcher food products cover the entire range of every packaged food product sold in grocery stores ever where. There are breakfast bars, cookies, frozen and non-frozen desserts, frozen and non-frozen meals, bread, etc. All Weight Watcher food product labels contain the information required by law concerning content as well as their 'point' values. 'Points' are the Weight Watcher term for calories.

In all honesty, I have never attended a meeting of Weight Watchers but I am told that weigh-ins are done in private and that the meetings are conducted in a business like manner and conclude with a program meant to provide information and encouragement to the members of the group.

Contact between members is encouraged. Phone lists of the members of a group are provided to all members. Contests are often held to promote weight loss and encouragement as well.

Most people join a local Weight Watchers chapter and attend weekly meetings but there are online chapters for those who find it inconvenient or impossible to physically attend weekly meetings. These online chapters can be found by using your favorite search engine and typing 'Weight Watchers Online' into the search box. Those who participate in online Weight Watcher chapters are still required to pay the usual dues and fees.

New Weight Watcher members are assessed by the group leader as to their height, weight and activity level and assigned a diet that consists of a set number of 'points'. These points are based upon caloric value, as I understand it. A certain number of points are equal to a 1000 calorie a day diet....a few more points and you have the equivalent of a 1200 calorie a day diet.

**The problem that I see with this point system is that foods other than those produced by Weight Watchers do not have points listed in the required information on the label so it seems that determining how many points were in a serving of say a canned vegetable might be a bit of a problem. On the other hand, how many calories are in a serving of that same vegetable is always plainly listed on the label as is information about carb and fat content.

Weight Watchers is, however, a long standing weight loss support group. It has been around for well over 40 years now and you just can't argue with that kind of success.

Weight Watchers is a for profit corporation.

Take Off Pound Sensibly (TOPS)

TOPS (Take Off Pounds Sensibly) is the oldest of all weight loss support groups. It was founded in 1948 by Ester Manz. She was a Milwaukee housewife. TOPS is and always has been a non profit organization. There are currently 300,000 members 11,600 chapters in the United States and around the world.

Ms Manz believes that successful weight loss and weight control go far beyond simply eating less and exercising more. She believes that loving and caring support are essential ingredients that are too often over looked by others. That philosophy is adhered to by local TOPS chapters.

The first two meeting that a potential new TOPS member attends are free. To continue attending and participating in TOPS meetings the cost is a mere \$20 per year for International membership and \$1 per week in local chapter dues. Each new member is required to have a doctor provide a note on a prescription page stating their ideal weight. There is no prescribed diet provided by TOPS. TOPS does not sell nor recommend any kind of food or supplements.

Officers of local chapters are elected each year and every member is encouraged to take an office or a chairmanship of a committee.

Weigh-ins are done in private before a weekly meeting begins. Typically, if a meeting is scheduled for 10 AM, weigh-in would begin at 9 or 9:30 depending upon the number of members of the chapter. Most metropolitan areas have TOPS groups that meet at several different locations and at morning or evening time periods to make it easy for members to choose a chapter that meets at a time and place most convenient for them.

A TOPS meeting always begins with the members standing and reciting the TOPS pledge:

I am an intelligent person
I will control my emotions
And not let my emotions control me.
Every time I am tempted to use food
To satisfy my frustrated desires,
Build up my injured ego
Or dull my senses,
I will remember:
Even though I overeat in private
My excess poundage is there
For all the world to see as I
Take Off Pounds Sensibly.

Members are required to keep food charts in which they list all of the foods they eat between meetings. These food charts are turned into the weight recorder each week and then destroyed unless the member wants them returned.

The first part of a TOPS meeting is always a business meeting in which normal group business and reports on group projects are given. The second half of a TOPS meeting consists of a program that is usually presented by a different member each week. Sometimes speakers are asked to give talks related to health matters or topics of other mutual interest to the group. Sometimes games are played and almost always there are songs that are sung.

Each week awards are given at the local chapter meeting to the best loser and the runner up. These awards are most often just printed papers but sometimes small gifts are included.

Each member brings a low calorie food item with them to the meeting. These items are placed in a basket and the best loser is awarded all of the food items.

Members are asked to contact at least two other members between weekly meetings either, by phone, by mail or in person to give encouragement and support. This is not a requirement but it is encouraged.

Local chapters are encouraged to participate in local civic causes. Many local chapters 'adopt' a grandma or grandpa at a local nursing home and/or they buy and distribute gifts to underprivileged children at Christmas. Local chapters often participate in fund raising activities for local worthy causes. These kinds of activities are designed to encourage members to become fully vested in the world around them, to get them out of their homes and into the community they live in.

Once a TOPS member reaches their goal weight and maintains that weight for two weeks they are graduated and become a member of KOPS (Keep Off Pounds Sensibly). There is a 10 pound weight range that is acceptable to maintain KOPS status....3 pounds over goal weight or 7 pounds under goal weight. KOPS members recite the KOPS pledge at each meeting of the TOPS chapter:

I am an intelligent person
I have controlled my emotions
And not let my emotions control me.
Every time I have been tempted to use food
To satisfy my frustrated desires,
Build up my injured ego
Or dull my senses
I have remembered that
I am to be an example of what TOPS can do
As I Keep Off Pounds Sensibly.

Overeaters Anonymous (OA)

Overeaters anonymous is based loosely on the premise of Alcoholics Anonymous. Since full names are never given, the only thing that is known for sure about how Overeaters Anonymous started is that it was started by three people in Southern California in 1960 for the purpose of helping each other with their compulsive overeating. There are no dues and there is only a casual membership list.

Overeaters Anonymous is not a religious organization. It is a program that uses spiritual principles but each member approaches their compulsive eating problem with their own interpretation of the Higher Power that guides them.

Most Overeaters Anonymous meeting last between 1 and 2 hours and since there are no dues, a basket is usually passed for donations to be made. There is usually a speaker for the first few minutes and then the members are encouraged to discuss their own successes and failures with the group. Members are encouraged to seek medical and psychological help for their problems and for dietary and nutritional plans and instructions.

During a meeting of Overeaters Anonymous after a speaker has spoken for 10 or 15 minutes to open the meeting, new members introduce themselves. New members may or may not have sponsors...that is their choice. All members pledge to hold in confidence whatever is shared by members at meetings. Members are encouraged to communicate with each other between meetings but addresses and phone numbers can only be supplied by the members themselves and are never provided by the group.

Additionally members are encouraged to participate in the meetings as a means of giving back to the group as a whole. They are asked to serve as a secretary, treasurer or as a greeter at the meetings. Sometimes they are simply asked to help set up chairs or to help serve the coffee that is always available at meetings. The organization believes that it is important for the recovery of members to feel like they are a participating partner in their own recovery as well as the recovery of others.

Overeaters Anonymous promises:

- Acceptance of you: as you are now, as you were, and as you will be.
- You will achieve an understanding of the problems you now face- problems almost guaranteed to be shared by others in the group.
- Communication will come about as a natural result of the mutual understanding and acceptance from group members.
- You will achieve recovery from your illness.

- You will obtain power to enter a new way of life through the acceptance and understanding of yourself, the practice of the Twelve-Step recovery program, the belief in a power greater than yourself, and the support and companionship of the group.

I am not advocating any one weight loss support program. The above is only meant to inform and not to advise. However, a support system when you are making a major life style adjustment, like losing weight is very helpful. It might even be considered vital for those who don't have a support system in place in their daily lives.

While receiving support is important, giving support to others is equally important. We gain strength by giving strength. We all need encouragement and a cheering section inspires us to do our very best.

Check out local chapters of weight loss support groups in your area. You can attend meeting, meet the people who are in charge and judge for yourself which, if any, of the groups are right for you.

Weight Watchers and TOPS have online groups that can be joined as well. Maybe that option will prove to be the right one for you. You won't know until you try.

There is one more important thing to remember about weight loss support groups. Simply attending and even participating in any weight loss support group will not cause you to lose a single pound. You must count the calories, fat grams or carb grams, keep your food diary, and exercise in order for you to lose weight.

Chapter VII

Diet Programs

It seems every time I turn on the television lately there is another advertisement for a weight loss system that is guaranteed to change my life and be absolutely painless to boot. It has, however, been my experience that nothing is easy OR painless when it comes to losing weight. Some ways are less painful than others though and we can all use all of the help we can get.

Here I will review some of the better known weight loss programs...ones that have at least been around for awhile. All of these programs can be considered natural weight loss programs because they do not advocate diet pills or bariatric surgeries.

NutriSystem®

It has been more than 30 years since NutriSystem was founded and it has since proven that it does have staying power. The NutriSystem program consists of prepackaged meals and unlimited consultations with weight loss councilors.

For many years there was no means provided by NutriSystem for their customers to communicate with each other. Now there are message boards provided on the Internet where members can post their success stories and exchange information and ideas with other NutriSystem customers.

The prepackaged meals that are provided are nutritionally balanced. About 55% of the calories in these prepackaged meals come from carbohydrates, 25% come from protein and about 20% come from fat.

There are prepackaged meals that are designed for men, women, children, type II diabetics and vegetarians. There is, additionally, an incentive program to get a free week's supply of meals if the patron orders and pays for a month's supply online.

There is no membership fee and there are no dues. The only cost is the prepackaged meals. At this writing the cost for the meals was about \$280 per month. A month of packaged meals consists of:

28 breakfasts
28 lunches
28 dinners and...
28 snacks/desserts

The biggest advantage of the NutriSystem program is that it removes all food making decisions. The portions are controlled and there is the convenience factor to consider.

The biggest disadvantages are that the NutriSystem meals are rather expensive and there is little education about food and lifestyle changes provided.

Diet Center®

The Diet center has been around quite awhile, too...almost 30 years now. I had a little trouble deciding whether to include them in this report and call them a natural weight loss program but I finally decided that since they do not advocate the use of diet pills or bariatric surgeries they do qualify as a natural weight loss program.

There are two programs offered by the Diet center. They are:

1. Exclusively You- Personalized Diet Plan

When you enroll in the Exclusively You Diet Plan you receive free:

- 1 wk of Multi-Vitamin Supplement
- 1 wk of Anti-Oxidant Formula
- 1 wk of the Cal-Mag Formula
- 2 Instant Shape-Up Shakes
- 2 Instant Shape-Up Bars

In order to continue with the program, a patron is required to purchase additional kits for \$14.95 each. Each kit contains a week's supply of the vitamin supplement, the anti-oxidant formula and the Cal-Mag formula.

2. Instant Shape Up

When you enroll in the Instant Shape Up plan you receive free:

- 2 week supply of chewable diet supplements
- 2 week supply of new Fiber Capsules

In order to continue with the program, a patron is required to purchase additional Shape Up kits at \$19.95 per two week supply.

On their website, the Diet Center provides a 16 week program that includes, weigh-in reminders, diet plans, meal plans, recipes, dieting information and a member's forum. The cost of the 16 week program is \$96.

Out in the real brick and mortar world, when you visit a Diet Center, buy the above listed supplements and join their program, you receive daily weigh-ins and one-on-one counseling, as well as, dieting guides and meal plan assistance.

The main problem that I have with Diet Center is the heavy reliance on supplements. Not that supplements can't help because they can. They just should not be used as a replacement for information about the relationship between food and weight. Also, I found that the Diet Center plans did not emphasize the importance of physical exercise to weight loss and weight control.

That said, the Diet Center program does recommend a balanced natural diet and does not advocate the use of diet pills or bariatric surgeries in their weight loss programs so, if you think that the Diet Center can offer you the assistance you need for natural weight loss, by all means contact them.

Health Management Resources®

Health Management Resources® has been in existence for about 20 years. The HMR approach to weight loss is the use of a very low calorie diet with the use of low calorie shakes or entrees as meal replacements. Their specialty is the very fast loss of a significant amount of weight. Health Management Resources is associated with the Mayo Clinic and expense of the diet is often covered by health insurance providers.

Participants in the Health Management Resources program are required to attend weekly meetings that last about an hour and a half. These classes are designed to teach the specifics of weight loss and weight management.

Participation in the Health Management Resources 'Very Low Calorie Diet' (VLCD) requires the written approval of the participant's personal physician. There are no exceptions.

I looked for but could not find the price for the shakes that are included in the program requirements. The cost of 11 entrees is \$39.50 plus a shipping charge of \$9.95.

This is a direct quote taken from the Health Management Resources website:

"HMR® weight loss foods should not be used as a sole source of nutrition without medical approval. These products are not to be used without medical supervision if total daily calorie intake is less than 800 calories. These products are not intended for use by infants, children, or pregnant and lactating women. Consult a physician before starting any diet."

There is no doubt that the HMR® program does produce very rapid weight loss. The problems that I see with the program are that there is a very heavy commitment to exercise required (burning 2000 calories per day through vigorous physical activity), the use of prepackaged foods and shakes that are on the pricy side and the possibility of problems with an intolerance to cold, dizziness and headache caused by such a low calorie diet.

Jenny Craig®

You can't call Jenny Craig ® the new kid on the block exactly but in relation to other weight loss programs they are relatively new. The Jenny Craig weight loss program began in Australia in 1983. Neither Jenny nor her Australian born husband, Sidney Craig had any formal training in nutrition, yet they developed a weight loss program that eventually developed into a multi-million dollar weight loss company.

The advertisements say that the Jenny Craig ® weight loss program is based on healthy eating, self-awareness and exercise and those claims do seem to be substantiated.

The prepackaged meals that must be purchased by patrons are balanced. They are 60 % carbs-20% fat-20% protein. These prepackaged meals do help patrons with the problem of portion control and they are, without a doubt, very convenient.

Patrons have weekly consultations with coaches. These coaches are not formally trained dieticians but rather they are trained by the Jenny Craig Company. Their purpose is to track the progress of the patrons, assist in changing old habits, teach new skills, and help patrons to stay motivated.

Physical exercise is promoted and rather enthusiastically. Patrons are encouraged to increase their physical activity and instructed about how to get the most out of a half hour of daily exercise.

The Jenny Craig program offers a membership for \$49 to lose all the weight a patron wants to lose....the \$49 does not include the required prepackaged meals. These prepackaged meals cost between \$11 and \$15 dollars per day...which is a little more than what most other programs cost.

Jenny Craig does offer a transitional program to help patrons go from eating the prepackaged, portion controlled meals to eating meals that they prepare at home or eat out in restaurants once they have reached their desired weight goals.

The only real problems that I see with the Jenny Craig weight loss program is the lack of support between members and, of course, the high price of the prepackaged meals that patrons are required to purchase.

In the world of weight loss companies, I would rate Jenny Craig as one of the good guys of the industry. Pricy but good.

Conclusion: The diet programs listed here are only the tip of the iceberg. The weight loss industry is a crowded place and new programs surface daily. The fact is that these programs offer nothing that a dieter could not accomplish on their own if they were motivated. They do, however, offer a way for a dieter to jump start their weight loss program. No weight loss program, particularly one that advocated a very low calorie consumption, should be started without the consent of your personal physician.

Chapter VIII

The Importance of Weight Control

Obesity Affects Adults and Children

Our attitudes and beliefs about the consumption of food and its relationship to weight is something that we all learned at the family dinner table in our formative years. Those ideas and the habits that were formed came early into our lives and they are coming early into the lives of our children and our grandchildren. Food consumption ideas and habits seem to be passed down from generation to generation, don't they? There are exceptions, of course, but have you ever noticed that whole families either tend to be of normal weight, below normal weight, or obese? Part of that is genetics, no doubt, but part of it is caused by the food consumption habits that are passed down through families.

It is a fact that America is the fattest nation on earth. Not one single 'expert' disputes it. We are an obese nation. In America today there are 58 Million people who are Overweight, 40 Million people who are Obese and 3 Million people who are morbidly Obese. Those numbers are scary, for sure, but that isn't even the worst of the problem.

An even worse part of the American obesity problem is that we are raising obese kids. **A whopping 13% of American children five years of age and younger are obese.** It gets worse.

The following statistics were taken from Heart Check at the American Heart Association website:

Overweight in Children AHA Recommendation

Overweight children are more likely to be overweight adults. Successfully preventing or treating overweight in childhood may reduce the risk of adult overweight. This may help reduce the risk of heart disease and other diseases.

When defining overweight in children and adolescents, it's important to consider both weight and body composition.

Among American children ages 6–11, the following are overweight, using the 95th percentile or higher of body mass index (BMI) values on the CDC 2000 growth chart:

- For whites (only), 11.9 percent of boys and 12.0 percent of girls.
- For blacks or African Americans (only), 17.6 percent of boys and 22.1 percent of girls.
- For Mexican Americans, 27.3 percent of boys and 19.6 percent of girls.

Among adolescents ages 12–19, the following are overweight, using the 95th percentile or higher of BMI values on the CDC 2000 growth chart:

- For whites (only), 13.0 percent of boys and 12.2 percent of girls.
- For blacks or African Americans (only), 20.5 percent of boys and 25.7 percent of girls.
- For Mexican Americans, 27.5 percent of boys and 19.4 percent of girls.

Obesity is reaching epidemic proportions in America. We can't do anything about what other families do, of course, but we can take control of our own family's eating habits. We can learn about the relationship of food consumption to weight and pass that information along to our own children and our grandchildren. It might just be our greatest legacy.

Obesity Affects Us Physically

The truth is that obesity is at least as dangerous to our health and the health of our families as smoking. No sane parent would ever serve cigarettes up to their children but these same otherwise responsible and intelligent parents will serve up meals that are high in fat and low in nutrients. Big Macs and fries are not home cooked meals but it seems that most of today's kids think of them that way.

Obesity causes a 50% to 100% increase in mortality rates for all reasons. White men between the ages of 20 and 30 with a BMI (Body Mass Index) of 45 will shorten their life expectancy by 13 years. Obese white women between the ages of 20 to 30 with a BMI of 45 can expect to die 8 years sooner than if they were of average weight.

Many common human diseases are said to be 'obesity related'. The dictionary defines an Obesity-related disease as: "Any disease for which obesity is a significant risk factor." Some such obesity related diseases are:

Type II Diabetes: Type II Diabetes is sometimes referred to as insulin-resistant diabetes, non-insulin dependent diabetes, and adult-onset diabetes. Obesity is considered to be one of the main risk factors for the onset of Type II Diabetes by all leading medical authorities.

Hypertension: (High Blood Pressure) About 75% of cases of hypertension is linked directly to obesity. There are many theories as to why obesity is such a high factor in the causes of hypertension and there has even been debate about whether the hypertension and obesity should even be classified as two different problems.

Stroke: There are three causes for a stroke. They are:

- Clogging of arteries within the brain (e.g. lacunar stroke)

- Hardening of the arteries leading to the brain (e.g. carotid artery occlusion)
- Embolism to the brain from the heart or an artery

The first two of these listed causes are directly related to obesity. The fat in the blood stream attaches itself to artery walls where it hardens and reduces blood flow.

Heart Attack: These are many factors associated with the cause of a heart attack. Obesity is one of the major ones. Obesity raises the risk of heart disease and, thus, heart attacks, because it's associated with high cholesterol levels, high blood pressure and diabetes, not to mention all of the additional living flesh that must be supplied with oxygen carrying blood that must be pumped by the heart.

Cancer: Some forms of cancer are directly related to obesity. Obesity is thought to be a major contributing factor in breast cancer, cancer of the prostate, cancer of the rectum and cancer of the colon, for example.

Gallbladder Disease: Obesity is a major contributing factor to the onset of gallbladder disease. Some studies in animals suggest that saturated fats and refined sugars are the culprits but most studies conclude that obesity itself is the problem and not specific foods. According to the American Obesity Association, "Gallstones are common among overweight and obese persons. Gallstones appear in persons with obesity at a rate of 30% versus 10% in non-obese."

Gout: Obesity causes an increase in the production of uric acid and a decrease in the amount of elimination from the body. This causes the deposit of uric acid crystals in joints and tissue and causes what we call gout.

Osteoarthritis: Osteoarthritis of the hand, hip, back and especially the knee is directly linked to obesity. A weight loss of only 10 to 15 pounds has been proven to relieve the symptoms and delay the progress of the disease.

Rheumatoid Arthritis has been found to be directly related to obesity in both men and women, as well.

Birth Defects: Maternal obesity has been linked to an increased incidence of neural tube defects in newborns.

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome: The risk is about four times higher for a person developing Carpal Tunnel Syndrome if they are obese. Obesity was found to be a larger risk factor for the development of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome than repetitive motion or a workplace activity. In a recent study of the disease, more than 70% of the test subjects were obese.

Renal Disease: According to the American Obesity Association, “Obesity may be a direct or indirect factor in the initiation or progression of renal disease, as suggested in preliminary data.”

Liver Disease: Obesity is as much of a contributing factor of liver disease as alcohol abuse. Obesity is the major factor for nonalcoholic steatohepatitis.

Body Pain: Those who are obese have body pain more often and it is much more acute than those of normal weight. Joint pain and foot pain are reported more often by the obese.

Pancreatitis: Those patients who are obese with Pancreatitis develop significantly more complications, including respiratory failure, than non-obese patients.

Sleep Apnea: Upper body obesity is the most significant factor for obstructive sleep apnea. Sixty to Seventy percent of those with obstructive sleep apnea are obese.

The above list of obesity related diseases is only a partial one. There are many other diseases that are either caused by or made worse by obesity.

Obesity Affects Us Mentally and Emotionally

Does depression cause obesity or does obesity cause depression? That question is much like the age old ‘which came first....the chicken or the egg’ question. The fact is, though, that depression, as well as anxiety is much more prevalent in those who are obese than either are in the general population. Obesity can and does cause low self-esteem which in and of itself can cause many mental and emotional problems.

While I am certainly not minimizing the mental and emotional problems that obesity can cause for adults, these problems are many times larger for obese children. Adults generally refrain from making cruel and cutting remarks to obese adults but children are blunt and sometimes even cruel when it comes to other children who are obese.

When I speak of ‘depression’ here, I am not talking about the common garden variety depression that all of us experience from time to time. Those ‘blue’ days that just happen, and sometimes for no apparent reason, happen to everybody.

Deep clinical depression is a different thing altogether. Clinical depression doesn’t just last for a few hours or even for just a day or for a few days. It moves in lock, stock and barrel and it stays.

The dictionary defines ‘Clinical Depression’ as: “A psychiatric disorder characterized by an inability to concentrate, insomnia, feelings of extreme sadness, guilt, helplessness and hopelessness, and thoughts of death.” A complete loss of appetite might be a symptom or extreme overeating might be a symptom as well.

Depression of obese people is well documented. In studies done by reputable groups, obese people reported that they were treated with less than their due respect even by medical professionals.

Depression is a downward spiral. What begins as just mild depression can descend into the depths of clinical depression. Clinical depression is more prevalent among the obese than it is in the general population.

According to the American Journal of Public Health, Volume 90, Issue 2 251-257 the study, Relationships between obesity and DSM-IV major depressive disorder, suicide ideation, and suicide attempts: results from a general population study done by KM Carpenter, DS Hasin, DB Allison and MS Faith Division of Epidemiology, Joseph L. Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, New York, NY, USA, **“Relative body weight was associated with major depression, suicide attempts, and suicide ideation, although relationships were different for men and women. Among women, increased BMI was associated with both major depression and suicide ideation. Among men, lower BMI was associated with major depression, suicide attempts, and suicide ideation. There were no racial differences.”**

******We will discuss BMI (Body Mass Index) in the next chapter but briefly, it is the indicator used by most physicians to determine obesity.

Low self-esteem can affect those who are obese and that low-self esteem can cause them to engage in risky or destructive behaviors. This risky and destructive behavior is more prevalent among obese teenagers with low self-esteem than in other obese populations. Obese teenagers with low self-esteem are more apt to engage in promiscuous sexual activity and alcohol and drug abuse than their average weight peers.

Because obese people are more apt to be discriminated against in housing and employment opportunities, their low self-esteem is exacerbated by society in general. Their self-esteem might have been low when they applied for that job or that apartment and when they are rejected, they blame the rejection on their weighty issue (whether that was the real reason for their rejection or not) and their self-esteem sinks to a new low. This exercise is repeated again and again over the years. It isn't hard to see why obese people are plagued by low self-esteem.

Obesity Affects Us Socially

It is sad but all too true fact that society in general views those who are obese as fat, lazy and gluttonous. I wish that weren't true. People should be judged by the fine personal qualities that they have rather on how much they weigh but, unfortunately in the weight conscious world we live in, that simply isn't the case.

Obese individuals are discriminated against in housing markets and in the work place. They are also discriminated against in social situations. Discrimination starts early and lasts a lifetime. The overweight 10-year-old isn't invited to a birthday

party. The overweight teenager doesn't have a date for the prom. The overweight young professional isn't included in the after work beer bash. In general, obese people are not included in social events and their invitations didn't get lost in the mail....the invitations were never mailed.

Some obese adults do learn to just accept themselves as they are. They call themselves BBW (Big Beautiful Women) or BHM (Big Handsome Men). Because they do accept themselves they find an acceptable social life....and that is fine if it's true. Others, however, can't accept their obesity with a positive attitude. These obese people find themselves alone and lonely and they aren't happy about it.

Legalizing Obesity Discrimination

"No shoes, No shirt, No service" signs might one day be replaced with signs saying "Not Thin don't come in". Already airlines can legally require obese people to purchase two seats on an airplane. Some selected quotes from The Sleaze in the UK are, "The government is adopting a radical new strategy in its war against the scourge of obesity, abandoning attempts to tackle the root causes of the problem directly, it instead aims to stigmatize the overweight. "Look, it's worked with smoking," says Health Minister John Pucker. "By forcing people out on to the street to have a cigarette, the workplace ban on smoking is making it clear to smokers that they are, quite literally, social outcasts." Pucker is keen to see similar measures applied to the grossly overweight, and has welcomed proposals from top doctors to deny fertility treatment to the obese."

"First England and then the rest of the world", as the old saying goes, may apply to legalizing obesity discrimination.

Conclusion: Obesity affects adults and children physically, mentally, emotionally and socially. Obesity discrimination is becoming legal in more and more circumstances.

Chapter IX

BMI (Body Mass Index)

BMI (Body Mass Index) is the test by which the medical profession and insurance companies assess obesity and thus risks for obesity induced health problems. You can measure your own BMI and your obesity related health risk with nothing more than a tape measure and the following BMI Table. You will need three numbers; your height in inches, your weight in pounds and your waist measurement. Don't panic....there is no math involved here! :)

Measure your waist in inches. Don't pull the tape measure tight but you shouldn't be able to insert your first finger between the tape measure and your skin. The key information that you need to make note of is whether the measurement is greater than or less than 35" for women and 40" for men. Those are the 'magic' numbers that BMI is based upon. Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute:

BMI	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	35	40	45	50
Ht. (in.)	Body Weight (lb.)															
58	91	96	100	105	110	115	119	124	129	134	138	143	167	191	215	239
59	94	99	104	109	114	119	124	128	133	138	143	148	173	198	222	247
60	97	102	107	112	118	123	128	133	138	143	148	153	179	204	230	255
61	100	106	111	116	122	127	132	137	143	148	153	158	185	211	238	264
62	104	109	115	120	126	131	136	142	147	153	158	164	191	218	246	273
63	107	113	118	124	130	135	141	146	152	158	163	169	197	225	254	282
64	110	116	122	128	134	140	145	151	157	163	169	174	204	232	262	291
65	114	120	126	132	138	144	150	156	162	168	174	180	210	240	270	300
66	118	124	130	136	142	148	155	161	167	173	179	186	216	247	278	309
67	121	127	134	140	146	153	159	166	172	178	185	191	223	255	287	319
68	125	131	138	144	151	158	164	171	177	184	190	197	230	262	295	328
69	128	135	142	149	155	162	169	176	182	189	196	203	236	270	304	338
70	132	139	146	153	160	167	174	181	188	195	202	207	243	278	313	348
71	136	143	150	157	165	172	179	186	193	200	208	215	250	286	322	358
72	140	147	154	162	169	177	184	191	199	206	213	221	258	294	331	368
73	144	151	159	166	174	182	189	197	204	212	219	227	265	302	340	378
74	148	155	163	171	179	186	194	202	210	218	225	233	272	311	350	389
75	152	160	168	176	184	192	200	208	216	224	232	240	279	319	359	399
76	156	164	172	180	189	197	205	213	221	230	238	246	287	328	369	410

On the left hand side of the chart below, find your height in inches. Five feet is equal to 60 “, so if you are 5’5” tall, you would find the number 65 in the left column. Go across the column and find your weight. Look at the top of the chart to find your BMI.

Example: If you are 5’5” (65” tall) and weigh 138 pounds your BMI is 23. If you are 5’5” tall and you weigh 180 pounds, your BMI is 29. See the chart below for what these numbers mean to doctors and insurance companies.

So what does your BMI number mean and how do doctors and insurance companies use it? Here is where that waist measurement that you took comes into play. Doctors and insurance companies use a combination of BMI and waist measurement to determine your risk of an obesity related illness and/or early death.

Source: National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute

Risk of Associated Disease According to BMI and Waist Size			
BMI		Waist less than or equal to 40 in. (men) or 35 in. (women)	Waist greater than 40 in. (men) or 35 in. (women)
18.5 or less	Underweight	--	N/A
18.5 - 24.9	Normal	--	N/A
25.0 - 29.9	Overweight	Increased	High
30.0 - 34.9	Obese	High	Very High
35.0 - 39.9	Obese	Very High	Very High
40 or greater	Extremely Obese	Extremely High	Extremely High

The health risks of obesity are great. The difference that only a few pounds of weight can make in your health risks is obvious if you study the table above.

Excess weight is a sneaky snake. It can slip on you over a period of months or years without you even realizing that you are gaining weight. Although you can unconsciously add weight, you aren’t likely to lose it unconsciously.

Reducing calories consumed and increasing calories expended is the way to lose weight. The use of diet pills while reducing calorie intake to make you less hungry isn’t safe and can be habit forming. Bariatric surgeries are extremely risky. By far the best and the safest way to lose weight is to learn about food, how it affects your body and learn to control the number of calories you consume each day.

Chapter X

Obesity Research

We are all waiting with bated breath for the scientific community to finally come up with the reason for obesity and a magic pill that will just FIX it. There are naturally thin people that walk this planet. Why doesn't somebody just put them under a microscope and figure out why THEY can eat everything but the stove and still be thin and the rest of us can't and then find the way to make all of us like that?

Actually research into the reasons for obesity and possible cures for it are going on all the time. If you really want to become part of an obesity research project, you can find which ones are looking for test subjects by going to Google and typing in "obesity research clinical trials" or going to the [American Obesity Association](#) website's research page.

You will find that most of the research projects and studies being done are related to behavioral changes. That is because most obesity is caused by over eating or under exercising or both.

There are other studies and research projects in progress now or planned for the future that focus on physical reasons for obesity as opposed to behavioral causes and there are those that really looking for that magic pill we all dream of.

Several such studies that are now recruiting test subjects are:

- The Role of the Orexin System in Body Weight
- Chronic Sleep Deprivation as a Risk Factor for Metabolic Syndrome and Obesity
- Body Heat Content and Dissipation in Obese and Normal Weight Adults
- Peripheral Thyroid Hormone Conversion and Glucose and Energy Metabolism
- Eating Behavior in Children
- Effects of Metformin on Energy Intake, Energy Expenditure, and Body Weight in Overweight Children with Insulin Resistance

The above list is a partial one. There are always research projects and studies being conducted at medical facilities and research departments at colleges around the country. Someday maybe somebody will come up with a magic fix for the problem of obesity but I won't be holding my breath on that one.

All research proves that reduced intake of calories and increased expenditure of calories equals weight loss and that accomplishing those two things naturally is the best and safest way to lose weight.

Chapter XI

Tips and Tools for Natural Weight Loss

If you have read what has been written in the book so far, there shouldn't be much doubt in your mind that losing those excess pounds is the wisest course of action for you and that losing that weight naturally is by far the safest way to go.

Here are some tips and tools to help you lose those unwanted pounds and do it the natural way. Let's start with tools:

1. **A Pair of Scales:** It is imperative that you have a method to chart your weight loss. You need a starting weight and then you need to see progress to help you maintain your resolve to continue. You can purchase a pair of bathroom scales for a small amount of money at your nearest discount store. Of course, you can pay any amount that you choose to pay for a pair of scales. You can even get them that talk to you but it really isn't necessary to have an absolute accurate weight. What matters is that you can measure weight LOSS. Even if the scales weigh a little heavy or a little light, it doesn't matter much. They can still tell you if you are gaining or losing weight.
2. **A Tape Measure:** On the morning that you begin your quest for weight loss and finding a way to eat healthier, take your body measurements. Measure your chest, waist and hips, of course, but you also need to measure your thighs, calves and upper and lower arms. You can most likely accomplish this yourself in the privacy of your own bathroom but you need to write those measurements down so that you can see the reductions in the measurements as you progress. Many times you will not see a weight loss on the scales but can measure a loss of inches with a tape measure.
3. **A Set of Measuring Cups:** The number of calories/fat/carbohydrates in food is determined by the quantity...not just by the name of the food. In order to effectively measure the number of calories/fat/carbohydrates in the food you consume, you are going to have to measure your portions. ****Note:** all food is measured loosely not packed. A half cup of rice, for example, is first fluffed with a fork and then spooned into a measuring cup and leveled with the back of a knife.
4. **A Food Scale:** You can purchase a simple food scale at your nearest discount store for just a few dollars or you can buy one that will not only weigh the food but calculate the calories in it. This is another one of those items that you can spend as much as you want to on. You can even find them that can be mounted on a wall. Nothing elaborate is really needed if you passed third grade math, however. If you know how many calories are

in an ounce of cooked beef, you can easily multiply by 4 if there are four ounces in what you are planning on eating.

These are the only four tools that you will ever need to successfully lose weight and then keep from gaining it back. Even if you are going to use a diet plan that provides prepackaged meals to lose weight, you will eventually need to be able to weigh and measure foods that you prepare at home. A pair of scales and a tape measure are needed no matter what kind of diet you are going to use.

Tips for Natural Weight Loss Success

1. **Make a Plan:** Those who fail to plan, plan to fail...that is an old saying but it is an accurate one. Unless you are following a diet plan that provides prepackaged food, you will need to sit down each evening after dinner and plan what you will be 'allowed' to eat the following day. This plan will help to keep you from overeating or eating things that are not on your list for the day.
2. **Keep a food diary:** Calories are so sneaky. They are everywhere even in the most innocent looking food. The rule you need to follow to keep your food diary is that before you put anything into your mouth you write it down. Keep your food diary handy...you don't want to have to look for it. A food diary can tell you many things. You can find the hidden calories or you can find the ones that you can eliminate painlessly if your food diary is complete and accurate.
3. **Keep a Journal:** This can be kept in the same notebook that you use for your food diary or it can be separate. I have found that each relates to the other but do it your way....just do it. Start your diet journal by writing down the date and your feelings about yourself. Use your journal to record the foods that you eat, when you eat them and why you eat them. This journal can be a key that will help you unlock your inner feelings that cause you to overeat and help you to overcome temptations when they arise...and they WILL arise. Write something in your journal everyday whether you think it relates to your diet or not....EVERYTHING relates to your diet. A call from a friend, a work related problem or a spat with your sister all affect how you feel about yourself and how you feel about yourself affects every aspect of your life including your diet.
4. **Set Goals:** Goals come in two varieties. There are long term goals and there are short term goals. Long term goals are realized by achieving short term goals. For example: Let's say you want to lose 40 pounds. Losing 40 pounds is a long term goal. It isn't going to happen next week. A short term goal is to lose 1 pound. That is a doable short term goal. So make two lists....one for long term goals and don't limit this list to just weight loss....think about what you would like to accomplish in your life. You might want to learn a foreign language or travel abroad or learn to knit. It doesn't matter what your long term goals are as long as they are things that will make you feel happier. The second list will have to be made every week. This short term list are the baby steps

that you need to take in order to reach your long term goals. Look at your long term list and make your short term list. For example: You might put 'lose 1 pound' on your short term list. You might also put, 'check out French Lesson Tapes from library' or 'Get travel brochure. The way that long term goals are met are by meeting short terms goals often enough to get there. It's the way that all great things are accomplished by human beings. Only God can create instant miracles.

5. **Make an Exercise Plan:** You can only reduce your intake of calories just so far. You have to eat so a plan to eat less AND exercise more is the better way to plan to lose weight. Exercise can't be done only when the mood strikes you....it won't strike. You need to set aside a time (or more than one time) each day to exercise in whatever way you choose. Remember when you were a kid? You exercised then...you just called it 'play' and it was what you did that was fun. The same is true now that you are all grown up. Your exercise shouldn't be a burden but rather something that you can enjoy and challenge yourself with. Choose an exercise that will give you satisfaction and even pleasure. If you choose walking as an exercise then find a walking partner that you love to be with and one that can make you laugh.
6. **Reward Yourself:** Remember those goals we talked about? When you reach a goal...a short term one even....give yourself a pat on the back. It might sound silly but buy yourself some stick on gold stars and put one on your journal page when you lose a pound or when you exercise every day. Write in big bold letters YEA! GOOD FOR ME! Reward yourself even more for each 5 pounds of weight lose. Buy yourself a new pair of earrings or a new scarf or a wallet. Have you nails done....whatever makes you feel good about yourself is a reward....just NOT FOOD. Never ever use food as a reward. For a 10 pound weight loss make the reward even bigger and better.
7. **Get Support:** Losing weight is a hard and sometimes lonely thing. When we are in the midst of doing battle with ourselves and effecting life altering changes we need support. We can't do it all by ourselves. Join one of the Weight loss support groups that we discussed back in Chapter VI....either one in the brick and mortar world or one that is as close as the computer that you are reading this book on.
8. **Forgive Yourself:** We all fail sometimes. One little failure, however, is not reason enough to quip altogether. So you had a weak moment and ate something that you shouldn't have or you got lazy and skipped an exercise appointment with yourself....just forgive yourself, promise you that you will do better and stay with your weight loss program. The rewards for success are worth every bit of the effort.