

Letter to the Editor: The Pundit Speaks

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“Exercise: Is it Key to Weight Loss?”

We have heard for countless years that the key to weight loss is diet and exercise. However, experts are now questioning the effectiveness of exercise in weight loss. No doubt, exercise has repeatedly been shown to have a wide spectrum of health benefits, but weight loss does not appear to be one of them. Experts now say that you can't outrun your forks and the notion that moving more will translate to weight loss is a dangerous one. Two things result from this flawed notion: 1) for individuals, it may effectively discourage exercise when results aren't seen on scales and 2) for the media and entertainment industries, it often leads to the perpetuation of the "people-with-obesity-are-just-lazy" stereotype. So, do we need to unhitch exercise from our weight-management wagons? According to some, physical activity has little role in combating obesity and instead public health messages should primarily focus on unhealthy eating. Three international experts claim it is time to "bust the myth" that exercise is the key to tackling obesity. Instead, they say sugar and carbohydrates are the key. One expert blamed the food industry for encouraging the belief that exercise could counteract the impact of unhealthy eating. Cardiologist, Dr. Aseem Malhotra said, "An obese person does not need to do one iota of exercise to lose weight, they just need to eat less." Researchers have shown that diabetes increases 11-fold for every 150 additional sugar calories consumed compared to fat calories. The journal, *Lancet*, pointed out that unhealthy eating was linked to more ill health than physical activity, alcohol and smoking combined. In plain English, you can not outrun a bad diet and advertisers erroneously suggest that you can eat what you like as long as you exercise. Still, seeking good overall health can not rule out the importance of exercise and physical activity. According to Dr. Yani Freedhoff, "To lose a pound of weight each week would require roughly a marathon of effort each and every week, as the calories burned running those 26.2 miles would likely be in the neighborhood of a pound's worth." Shockingly, a 2007 study found that it would require 91.5 hours of exercise per pound lost.

In the America that I love, it has been said, "If weight is your concern you're much more likely to lose it in your kitchen than you are in your gym." But, if it is good overall health you seek, you need both exercise and a good diet. Please check out my latest book, *Exercise & Reactive Oxygen Species: Likely The Only Health Miracle Out There*, available at www.amazon.com. Clearly, exercise is central to your overall health, but your diet primarily rules your weight gain and weight loss.

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