

Break Free From the Diet Trap

We too often are influenced—actually, controlled—by the diet schemes of today. Unfortunately, it creates a long-term cycle of defeat and potential health risk. We do not have to live this way, though. Here are four key tips to break free from the diet trap:

1. Activate your metabolism. It's not the calories you take in but the calories you burn that count. Our new millennium lifestyles have slowed our metabolic rate down to a snail's pace, resulting in fat being stored rather than burned for energy. This "cocooning" effect is the result of constant stress demands and not enough energy supply to meet the needs. Our body was created to slow itself down as a protective response so that our erratic, catch-and-catch-can eating patterns keeps our metabolism stuck in low gear, storing away every meal we do eat as if it's our last.

2. Tell your slowed metabolism to take a hike! Eating smart is only half the picture of an activated metabolism. Regular exercise is also a key to keep the body burning calories at a high rate. It allows the body to bust out of the "cocoon," gearing up its calorie and fat-burning potential by fanning the metabolic fire.

3. Watch fat, not calories. Just cutting calories is too broad. What you most need to do is cut fat calories. As you've just read, it's the kind of calories you eat more than the sheer number that has the most impact. Calories consumed as fat are converted into fat on the body more readily than the same number of calories consumed as protein or carbohydrates. In other words, 100 calories of butter (1 Tbsp.) are more likely to go to your hips than 100 calories of whole wheat bread (about two slices).

4. Don't set up any food as a forbidden fruit. There are no

good or bad foods, and there is no such thing as a legal or a cheat food. Food is simply food. It's the power it lords over us that is the problem. Setting our focus on what we shouldn't do and what we shouldn't eat only sets us up for failure. Our eyes are so fixed on the negative behavior or food that it becomes an obsession and only a matter of time before we fall headfirst into it. We must learn to let food be food and to let God be our God.

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