



Tokyo Physio

G'day once again injured gaijin. This summer we decided to write about something people are always asking us about: achieving and maintaining a healthy weight. Aside from Michael Jackson's nose, nothing has received more regular press over the past 20 years than diet. Recent dietary advice flies in the face of what we've been told, so if you were thinking "*I wonder what those crazy kids at Tokyo Physio, with their degrees in Sports Science, Medical Science and Physiotherapy reckon of this new diet recommendations stuff*" so..... here is our take on diet and exercise. We all know that obesity is quickly developing into an epidemic in most developed countries – particularly in English language countries! A newly opened Obesity Surgical Centre in Sydney, providing removable bands to decrease stomach size received 200 patients and 600 phone calls in their first week of opening. Companies producing extra-large products (everything from toilet seats to wheel chairs) have been cashing in on the epidemic. We believe that remaining obese and sedentary for a long period is probably one of the most dangerous things you can do to your body. Quite possibly more dangerous than smoking and drinking, but not quite as dangerous as a man walking into an Australian Outback pub and ordering a Lychee infused Daiquiri in a loud voice – now that's what we'd call *roolly dangerous*.

For those wanting quick and easy points without reading the waffle and bad jokes here is our "top ten" list of things to do to decrease your body fat:

- Eat lots of green foods
- Cut down on refined carbohydrates (sugar and starchy carbs – High G.I)
- Match your carbohydrate intake with your activity level
- Eat at least 1gram of protein per kg per day (consider whey-protein supplements)
- Eat unsaturated fats, avoid refined and saturated fats
- Always eat breakfast (try fruit salad first thing in the morning)
- Drink >2litres of water per day (Just plain water nothing else added please! Boring we know but it *WILL* help you lose weight....)
- Consider fibre supplements if you are not eating enough veggies (Metamucil / psyllium husks)
- Exercise at a high intensity >30mins 3+ times per week
- Try to increase muscle mass with strengthening exercises

According to statistics compiled using extremely haphazard anecdotal evidence, painstaking guesswork and stringent leaps of reason the average expatriate worker will put on 3kg a year while living in Japan. We all know that in the US, UK and Australasia the serving sizes are too large and, in general, so are the people. However with a larger range of healthy foods available and smaller serving sizes in Japan why are gaijin putting on weight? The answer is that too many spend a large percentage of their day sitting down, and when away from work our favourite social activities are eating and drinking, with good reason as along with skiing and swanning around in boats shaped like swans they are some of the best leisure activities for Tokyoites.



ENERGY IN

We have reviewed a number of publications and compiled this summary. For those wanting further information please email us and we can send you some original publications.

CARBOHYDRATES

Everyone's talking about Carbohydrates! And with good reason - carbs have mistakenly been seen as the cornerstone of our diet for way too long; remember the old diet pyramid with grains and bread at the bottom— *it should have been left in the same era as the pyramids!*. So are carbs good or are they evil? Well that depends on what type of carbs and what you do with your day. If your day is predominantly sitting behind a desk then they are definitely more on the Darth Vader side of the force - for the late Star Wars episodes anyway – well maybe not the last of the last episode, but the ones in the middle for sure.....well- not the middle in release date but in chronological order, - episodes 3-5 he was definitely evil – phew.... In general many Carbohydrates are bad - naughty even - so try and stay away from them when you are trying to cut fat, even if you are packing a light saber.

How much carbohydrate should we eat and which ones should we eat? Let's discuss a little about how to rate carbs ☞ the famed Glycaemic Index (G.I). The G.I is basically the rate at which carbs are broken down and released as glucose into the bloodstream. That's right every time you eat Carbohydrates you are effectively eating sugar – it may not look like sugar, but that's what it ends up as in your bloodstream. G.I value is a number between to 1 and 100. Low numbers (less than 55) mean they are released slowly into the bloodstream, so the body can use them as they are provided. High numbers are delivered to the bloodstream quickly and if the body can't use them at the rate they are being delivered– it stores that “energy” for later - *guess how and where it's stored!* The restriction of high G.I food is critical for people wanting to lose weight.

To keep it simple Carbohydrates are fuel. So unless you are burning fuel, be careful how much and what type of fuel you're putting into your engine.

Some examples of foods that have a high G.I are:

Corn flakes, instant rice, white bread, rice cakes, potatoes, wheat bread, carrots, raisins, bagels, muffins, pasta and oranges.

Examples of low GI food are: Peanuts, plums, pears, strawberries, cherries, grapefruit, apples, chick peas (mmmm. hummus...), figs and lentils.

So when people ask us “Should eat less carbs if I want to lose fat”, the answer is almost always yes- particularly high G.I carbs.

For a more comprehensive list of common food GI rating see:
<http://diabetes.about.com/library/mendosagi/ngilists.htm>

For a food calculator see: <http://www.glycemicindex.com>



PROTEIN

Protein is the new black baby! Almost all recent literature and experts recommend eating more protein. Considering our heritage as hunter-gatherers without mass agriculture to eat and the presence of canine teeth in our mouths – it makes sense to us that our bodies are tuned to eating meat. Grrrrrrr.....This can be great news for residents of carnivorous Tokyo. Try to eat lean-meat and chicken, and not over 250 grams of meat in a single meal - *sorry Outback Steakhouse, no upsizing to the 500gram Fair-Dinkum Sheila-Loving Beauty-Bottler size for us!* Fish and nuts are great also but be careful of mercury levels if you are eating fish regularly, see this site for mercury levels: <http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov/~frf/sea-mehg.html>. A good rule of thumb is one gram of protein per kilo of your body weight per day and up to double that if you are trying to put on muscle bulk. For vegetarians we would recommend considering whey protein supplements, which have come a long way in the last 5 years, and are now a great dietary addition.

FAT

The low fat diet as the cornerstone of losing weight has been discredited by almost all current dietary experts. Unfortunately many who have been spruiking this to people for years continue to stick with their recommendations. Basically having the right type of fats will NOT make you put on weight and are, in fact essential in diets.

Fats can be broken down to:

- 1) Saturated Fats: Solid at room temperature e.g. mostly animal and dairy products
- 2) Unsaturated Fats: Liquid at room temperature. These can be divided further into mono-unsaturated e.g. Olive Oil, and poly-unsaturated fats e.g. flax seed oil, corn and sunflower oils.
- 3) Trans Fatty Acids: Incorrectly processed fats which are the most dangerous of all e.g. margarine, French Fries, some store bought cooking oils, refined canola or vegetable oils. Any products that states hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oil on the label. These fats have been indicated with cancer; macular degeneration and heart disease (avoid them regardless of your fitness or dietary goals!).
- 4) Other Fats: Fish oil, which has plenty of Omega 3 and is high in anti-oxidants - try a can of Sardines once a week!

Saturated fats will make you fat and at risk to a myriad of diseases, unsaturated fats are heart healthy FAT BURNERS with many additional benefits (i.e. eat fat to lose fats)

ENERGY OUT (Activity)

This is the easy part (in theory anyway). If you want to lose fat you need to get your heart rate up and keep it up for over 30 minutes as often as possible, at least 3 times a week. If being obese is the worst thing you can do for your body, exercising regularly is probably the BEST. We've always thought that if there was a pill that gave you the same benefits as 30minutes exercise it would be viewed as the most miraculous drug ever invented, preventing and curing all types of ailments. In fact some doctors had the same idea and have developed and are marketing a form of growth hormone as a substitute to exercise, but of course there are side effects – *you get nothing for nothing!*



Before commencing an exercise program be sure to see a doctor for a general check up. If you are beginning from a low level of fitness you will need to build up your exercise tolerance slowly. If you have a background in sport, are reasonably fit and have no health problems then the higher you can get your heart rate up and the longer you can keep it up there the better it is for burning fat. Forget about the mysterious “fat burning zone” on your treadmill display panel that will often leave you without sweating or puffing. *The more you sweat the more you get!*

If you are able to remain active away from exercising this will help things considerably. Little bits of activity throughout the day add up. If you have a 10 step walk to your car / scooter, then a 50 step walk to your desk – you’ll probably need to exercise 5 times a week.

Hiring a personal trainer is a great idea to ensure the effectiveness and frequency of your work outs. Please contact us if you are interested as we can recommend some excellent trainers in the Tokyo area. If you can increase your muscle mass by weight training this can help increase your metabolism and help you burn energy more rapidly.

Whatever exercise that gets your heart rate up and keeps it up is OK – it’s not rocket science, just get moving in some manner that you enjoy! (Or at least don’t utterly detest).

Best of Luck!

Feel free to send any feedback, pieces of conjecture, abuse or requests for further information to physio@gol.com

Physiotherapy for the English speaking population of greater Tokyo

Open Monday to Friday 7am to 7pm

Saturday 8am to 5pm

#104 Atrium Shirokane 5-12-27 Shirokane Minato-ku Tokyo Japan 108-0072 Tel/Fax: 81-3-3443-6769

www.TokyoPhysio.com

Physio@gol.com