

### **Weight loss explained**

It is summer time, time for holiday. For most of us this means getting out our best summer frocks, sexy shorts, sleeveless tops and even .... swimwear.

Are you struggling to lose a few pounds, but you just do not know why it seems so impossible?

Our biggest enemy is the fact that most of us lead fairly sedentary lifestyles and our calorie (energy) needs are not as much as we think they are. Even eating just a small amount more than what you need will eventually result in a slow and steady weight increase. Research has shown that eating just 100 calories a day more than what you need will result in an annual weight gain of 4.7kg. Examples of 100 calories are – a banana, one large chocolate biscuit, a two finger Kit-Kat, and one slice of bread with low fat spread. This doesn't seem much, does it?

As we get older (more or less after 30) we naturally become less active and our basal metabolic rate (the calories we burn when doing no physical activity) slows down. It is not always true that overweight people have slower metabolic rates, in fact the more you weigh the more your body needs to work and the more your requirements will be. Once such an individual loses weight the metabolic rate will gradually slow down.

It is all about the amount of calories consumed versus the amount of calories used per day. In order to lose weight your body needs an energy deficit, not only for one or two or three days, but over a significant period of time. One pound of body fat equals approximately 3500 calories, meaning that for every 3,500 calorie deficit you should lose a lb in weight. You have several options, it is your choice. You could either consume 500 calories less per day, or you could aim to burn off 250 calories by exercising and eat 250 calories less per day, and you should have the same end result. For some individuals it may seem impossible, life is not a race, you do not have to lose a lb a week, you could take it steady, make serious changes to your diet, save 100 calories from your diet per day and burn off 150 calories through some fun exercise. If you are consistent with this approach, you should lose 1 lb a fortnight. The math of weight loss seems so simple, yet remains a big challenge. It is essential to realize that the accumulative effect of extra calories will lead to weight gain and the opposite, the accumulative effect of less calories will lead to weight loss.