

Getting Into Shape

Scientific fact: If one thousand humans attempt to get into shape, *most* will **fail**.

Scientific opinion: If one thousand humans attempt to get into shape by adhering to the next three pages, *most* will **succeed**.

Why: 1. Facts, not fancy. 2. Easy, not hard (thus *increasing* probability of success).

Unfortunately: Most humans will continue to fail by ignoring the facts and clinging to fancy.

Where do we get our Facts?

The National Weight Control Registry is an ongoing study through Brown University School of Medicine that has studied more than five thousand people from *across* the United States who have done the *unusual* – lost an average of 65 pounds and *kept* it off for an average of five or more years. They were studied in order to find out what traits they shared. **Others will benefit from emulating them.**

These are not the *unimpressive* people who have taken a lot of weight off and *regained* it. These are the winners. **To the extent one deviates from what these people have done, one increases the probability of failure.**

Just the Facts (and opinions)

Fact One: People who take weight off and *keep* it off, exercise.

Opinion One: One should exercise *at least eight minutes, 365 days per year.*

Behavior scientists have found acquiring a *new* habit is most likely when consistency is achieved by: **“breaking the desired behavior down into a unit of work so *small* that success is virtually guaranteed”.**

About 15% of adults have been good, steady exercisers since high school – always have been, always will be. These need read no further in this section – rather just keep up their good work. The other 85% can be called “recyclers”: since high school, off and on exercise programs (probably mostly off). A lot of “woulda, coulda, shoulda, gonna” language.

Typically, if a recycler decides to exercise, he will most likely rely on *motivation* (bad) and go back to efforts similar to what he tried, and *quit*, before. The result will almost *surely* be the same (non-exercise), so instead, he should rely on *strategy* (good). **Strategy: *at least eight minutes, 365 days, no exceptions.***

Once one has proven talent at exercising *at least eight minutes every day*, he should strive to achieve 200 minutes per week, but in no case ever go below eight minutes every single day.

Fact Two/Opinion Two

Fact Two: People who take weight off and *keep* it off, eat lower, but not low-low fat.

Opinion Two: One must develop a taste preference for eating lower, but not low-low fat.

In the same way many have developed a taste preference for diet sodas and lower fat milk, one can develop a similar taste preference for lower fat meals, one meal at a time.

The amount of fat needed in any one meal will depend on lifetime taste preference, amount of recent fat intake, emotions of the moment, location of the meal, occasion of the meal and type of

food available. If one does not develop a pattern of eating less fat over the weeks, months and years, he will almost certainly fail at taking weight off and keeping it off.

Those who have no idea how to do this can learn by participating in Weight Watchers. The program is perfect to learn how to eat any food, anytime, anywhere and eat lower, but now low-fat food. However, it is slightly too deprivational, (resulting in too-rapid weight loss) so adding a bit more fat than advised will *increase* the likelihood of long-term success.

One can learn from their system *how* to eat, even if he does not ultimately decide to utilize their point-count system (wrong for some people). He will have the tools to eat right, one meal at a time.

Fact Three/Opinion Three

Fact Three: People who take weight off and keep it off “self-monitor”.

Opinion Three: One should self-monitor ten seconds, 365 nights per year, briefly recording exercise and diet.

Ten Seconds

Five seconds should be spent recording the *number of minutes* of exercise done that day.

Also, five seconds to record eating. If one prefers not to count calories or Weight Watcher points in his head throughout the day and then record them in the evening, he should record a simple “grade” for the day’s eating of A, B, C or D. Elaborate self-monitoring increases the probability of quitting; therefore, it should be kept simple.

Fact Four/Opinion Four (A fair return on investment)

Fact Four: Humans who diet and exercise lose ten to twenty pounds per year.

A summary of sixty five studies between 1974 and 1990 involving almost 5000 humans who were approximately 50% overweight found, with diet and exercise, they lost an *average* of ten to twenty pounds per year *and* did not tend to keep it all off. More recently, Tufts University researchers found four very different popular diets resulted in about the same amount of weight loss in a year – 5% of body weight.

This does not mean one *cannot* lose thirty, forty or even more pounds per year. It *does* mean if one does, he is exceeding what is characteristic of his fellow human beings and his chances of regaining weight will *increase*.

Opinion Four: One should set a goal to lose *AT LEAST* one pound per month until at ideal body weight, even if it takes years.

If one wants to lose weight *and* keep it off, he *might* succeed at whatever rate he chooses, but a rate characteristic of what other humans do is *easier* and more likely to succeed long *and* short term.

Summary

1. **Exercise – 365.**
2. **Eat lower fat.**
3. **Write it – 365.**
4. **Lose *at least* 12 a year.**

One who follows the Four Facts/Opinions emulates those who succeed. One who deviates, diminishes his prospects.

Three brief pages, easily adhered to, change one thousand humans headed to probable failure into one thousand humans headed to probable success. Like gravity, finances and many of life's other realities, one always has a choice between fact and fancy, with their respective rewards and punishments.