Sobering Thoughts About Alcohol

Weight can be impacted negatively by alcohol use. The body does not store alcohol and alcohol makes it difficult to metabolize fats and sugar as effectively. Drinking alcohol can slow down your metabolism (and thus your weight loss). Alcohol is essentially “empty” calories and has little nutritional value. Alcohol consumption increased appetite more than any other type of drink in one study. Fat contains 9 calories per gram and alcohol contains 7 calories per gram. A frozen margarita has calories similar to a cheeseburger. A glass of wine has calories similar to a slice of cake.

Bariatric surgery patients must be particularly careful about alcohol use. Many surgeons advise against any alcohol for at least 6 months post-op. Drinking alcohol soon after surgery can cause stomach irritation and ulcers. Because alcohol is converted readily in your blood as sugar, a post-op gastric bypass patient may experience dumping syndrome (vomiting and diarrhea) after drinking alcohol. After bariatric surgery the stomach “pouch” is small and you can become inebriated quicker than normal. The time it takes to “sober up” after drinking is also delayed in bariatric surgical patients. One study demonstrated that gastric bypass patients absorbed alcohol four times faster than non-gastric bypass patients. Many gastric bypass patients feel the effects of alcohol after just a few sips. One survey of post-op gastric bypass patients reported that 5% had received a DUI after one drink in the early post-op time frame. Studies also suggest that gastric bypass patients may be at increased risk of alcohol abuse post-op. This risk is often not apparent until 2 years post-op. Vitamin absorption (especially the B vitamins) is decreased by alcohol. Because alcohol also acts like a diuretic (increases frequency of urination), drinking can lead to dehydration post-op. Patients with fatty liver disease (common in the obese population) may not clear alcohol as well from their liver (where 60-90% of alcohol is metabolized).

Some obese patients are socially isolated and after they “slim down” they may lead a more active social life. Drinking responsibly is a priority for all of us. If you are experiencing difficulty with alcohol please seek attention early from a medical/mental health professional. Be sure to take your vitamin supplements as directed as well. Lastly, do not drink and drive.
How to Choose a Personal Trainer

What should I look for in a Personal Trainer?
Many people who are looking to start an exercise routine are in need of a personal trainer. They find value in having an experienced and qualified professional guide them through an exercise session. Personal Trainers have been around for years but have recently grown in popularity, especially in the Greater Charlotte area. Individuals repeatedly ask this question “What should I look for in a personal trainer”? This article is aimed at providing several key aspects in regards to finding an appropriate personal trainer for any individual’s needs.

Where can I go to find a personal trainer?
There are several places that one can go to find a personal trainer. Most fitness facilities offer personal training sessions for their clients upon signing a contractual agreement for the term of their membership. Some examples might include the local YMCA, 24 hour fitness, LA Fitness, and Fitness Connection. Some fitness facilities are exclusively for personal training sessions in small studios such as Shape Up Fitness & Wellness Consulting, Studio 1 on 1, or Prescriptive Fitness. Some facilities do not offer any personal training such as Planet Fitness.

Do they have a certification?
It is important to find out if your personal trainer has a certification and which organization the trainer is certified with. Not all personal training certifications are created equal. Requirements for each certification can vary drastically. Some certifications only require a 2 hour online course, and some require an advanced degree from a major university with multiple internships. Educational background with a bachelor’s degree in kinesiology, exercise science, or exercise physiology should be a minimum requirement for those seeking a personal trainer. Certifications from the following nationally recognized organizations are respectable within the fitness community: American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), National Strength & Conditioning Association (NSCA), and American Council on Exercise (ACE).

How long have they been training?
Having a certification from a nationally recognized organization is not enough. Experience is important to consider when finding the right personal trainer for you. Asking this question will help you understand if the personal trainer has had relevant experience in working with a large number of individuals. A more experienced trainer should mean they are more knowledgeable, practiced, and proficient in their craft.

Do philosophies and goals match up?
Each personal trainer has their own unique philosophy on training. It is important to find out what their views are on cardiovascular fitness, resistance training, body composition, and flexibility etc. This will ensure that you are spending the proper amount of time on each category of fitness to reach your desired goal. Each personal trainer should know and understand their client’s objectives so they can assist them in reaching their goals. Sometimes a trainer is unaware of goals and unwilling to adapt their training techniques for individuals. It is essential to your search in finding a satisfactory personal trainer that you are on the same page with the trainer’s methods and how they will assist in achieving your own goals. Asking the trainer if they have had any documented success in the area of your goal would be an appropriate question to ask as well.

Are they patient, professional, and creative?
These are three attributes of a suitable personal trainer. Patience is a sign that the fitness professional is willing to wait for the desired results. They have confidence in their training and are not going to abandon their philosophies if they are not working initially. Every personal trainer needs to develop a good rapport with their clients or they will not want to come back and train with them, but they also need to maintain a level of professionalism as well. One way that this will be evident is the way that they communicate with their clients. Being able to communicate their knowledge is continued on page 5
Food Journals: A Tool That Works!

If you tried to recall everything you ate and drank yesterday, chances are you would forget a lot of things and that is totally normal. Unless you consciously set out to think through everything you put in your mouth it’s easy to forget about a free sample at the market, a few nibbles while cooking, or a taste from your partner’s plate. Trouble is, those unacknowledged extras can add up quickly and get in the way of weight loss and health results. What’s more, you may be engaging in unhealthy patterns you’re not even aware of. The solution: start keeping a journal. Studies have shown that people who keep food journals lose twice as much weight over six months than those who don’t. When you start, try and be clear about the purpose of the journal. The journal could be used to become aware of hidden food triggers, to help notice problematic eating patterns, or to identify if you’re eating a healthy diet.

Why you eat when you’re not hungry
When using a food journal it is important to record how much you eat, how you feel emotionally at mealtimes, and your hunger and fullness ratings before and after eating. Many people realize they are triggered to eat because of emotional reasons, not by physical hunger. They are eating instead because they are bored, sad, angry, or worried. Others notice that they eat to pass time when procrastinating, or out of habit, such as always having a snack while watching TV. This kind of insight is invaluable, because triggers and patterns are often unconscious, and you can’t change something you don’t even realize you’re doing. Keeping a journal changes that, because it allows you to identify the “whys” of your choices, which can help you to systematically work on forming new habits, and find non-food ways to cope with emotions.

How your dining companions affect your habits
Sometimes after starting a food journal you realize that you may eat more with certain people than when alone or with friends. Sometimes friends or spouses can become “eating buddies” who enjoy indulging in things like ice cream or going to a buffet together. Other times females realize they are splitting even portions with spouses or partners even though women generally need to consume a lot less calories. Ever notice that when you start a relationship or move in with someone you tend to gain weight?

How much are you really eating?
Cornell University researchers used a hidden camera to spy on patrons at an Italian restaurant. Just five minutes after the meal was over, they asked diners how much bread they had consumed. Most people ate about 30% more than they thought, and 12% of people who were seen eating bread on camera denied having any at all. The results aren’t shocking, because eating is often mindless. When you’re chewing food and distracted at the same time—whether by carrying on a conversation, checking e-mail, or watching TV—it’s easy to lose track of what or how much you downed. Journaling your intake as you eat would be a way to prevent forgetting your portions or misrepresenting them.

How fast you chow down
If you notice that you are a fast eater, it may be important to note the time you begin eating and the time you stop eating. Most people do not realize they are fast eaters until they begin eating with others who eat a slower pace. Eating and drinking too quickly can lead to heartburn, uncomfortable fullness, and, can lead to weight gain if we are consuming too much. Some tips for slowing down: place your fork down between bites, sip water throughout the meal and chew your food for longer than you do now. Generally, most people don’t feel satisfied when they eat too quickly. You may start to notice as you slow the pace of your eating that this can lead to an improvement in the enjoyment of the food, can allow for decrease in thirst as we are sipping water more throughout the meal, can help decrease digestive upset that comes with eating and drinking too fast such as indigestion and acid reflux and may help lead to weight loss if we are consuming less.

How you feel after eating certain foods
One of most important insights gained from food journaling is connecting what and when you eat to how your body feels. If you start to assess and write down energy, mood, mental clarity, and digestive problems in your food journal you might be amazed at the connection between what you are eating and how you feel. A high protein lunch may help with that 2pm slump, while on the contrary if we ate a donut for lunch, we may need a nap at 2pm.

Do your perceptions match reality?
You may think you don’t eat or drink much or that you are eating the right amounts of healthy/unhealthy foods. Remember, everything you consume contains calories whether you are eating it or drinking it, and a lot of people tend to leave drinks off of their food journal. Drinking caloric beverages such as soda, tea, coffee, juice or alcoholic beverages count just as much as eating does and can add up quickly. When you begin to track both food and drinks, you may realize just how far off perceptions were from reality. It’s essentially human nature—we like to recall our successes and perhaps even exaggerate them. But telling yourself nutritional white lies can hold you back from reaching your goals, or even cause you to...
Do I Really Need to Measure My Portions?

This is a common question that we hear again and again as dietitians. Many people say they don’t know how to measure their food, or it takes too much time, or they know how to eyeball it. The simple answer to the question of do I need measure my food portions is, YES! Being consistent with calorie intake results in consistent weight loss and it is very difficult to be accurate without measuring. It only takes an excess of 100 calories each day to gain 10 pounds in a year.

To begin, one thing we do know is that people who journal their food intake on a regular basis are more successful at losing weight and maintaining weight loss. However, journaling is only as accurate as the information you provide. Many people tend to underestimate their portion sizes, which can lead to overeating and weight gain.

One thing to realize is that there is a difference between portion size and serving size. A portion size is the amount of food/drink a person chooses to eat/drink at one time. Whereas a serving size is a standard measurement that a food company designates. Often times a portion we eat is multiple servings. As an example, a 20 ounce soda today is often considered a typical portion but when you read the food label you will realize that it actually contains 2½ servings as the food/beverage company designated 8 ounces as a serving of soda. If you consume the entire bottle, you’re drinking 2½ times the calories and sugar recommended just because of the portion size provided.

We live in a culture of great portion distortion. Portion sizes have greatly increased over the past 20 years resulting in higher rates of being overweight or obese. Many foods we regularly eat have grown to more than twice the calories they previously had. We often live by the philosophy of more food for your money instead of looking at the quality of our food. They even call some portions terms like “super sized” or “super gulp” and this is becoming normal to us. Because of this portion distortion it is more important than ever to measure our foods to change our skewed idea of what a portion truly should be.

There are a variety of ways to measure food—from basic portion control containers, to measuring cups/spoons, to food scales. Although not the ideal, the plate method can be a great place to start. This is a way to monitor your intake without necessarily measuring. We recommend using a 9-inch plate. ¼ of the plate should be protein, ¼ starch or fruit, and ½ the plate non-starchy vegetables. Although this is not accurate for counting calories and macronutrients, it is a start.

The easiest method for measuring is by using measuring cups and spoons. They are inexpensive and can be found almost anywhere, including the Dollar Store. They are very easy to use but are not practical for all foods. It isn’t difficult to use a measuring cup in place of a serving spoon for something like rice or pasta but not so simple with some deli turkey. Measuring spoons are also great for oils, dressings, and creamer. Oils average around 120 calories in 1 tablespoon. You may think you are only pouring one tablespoon in a pan but may be actually adding 3 tablespoons or 360 calories. Without measuring you would be getting in 240 calories more than you weren’t accounting for.

The best thing you can use for measuring your foods is a food scale. Food scales range widely in price. Just get one that fits in your budget. The most basic digital food scale ranges from $10.00-25.00 and can be bought at Amazon, Target, Walmart, Bed Bath and Beyond, etc. There are also more expensive scales that can tell you the calories and macronutrient content of your food items which are great but the most basic digital scale is fine. The food scale allows you to measure almost any food item without having to chop it up and put it in a cup. They are good for meats/fish/poultry, fruit, bread, cheese, snacks, or any other food that can be difficult to quantify otherwise. For nutrition content always weigh your foods after they have been cooked. It is appropriate to weigh/measure a food prior to cooking when following a recipe but it will need to be weighed again after cooking to assess the nutrition. You can place your food directly on the scale or on a separate dish being sure to press “tare” before adding food—this will zero out the scale. Many scales come with removable dishes making for easy cleanup.

Food items are not always consistently sized so it’s important to weigh them. Things like fruits, bread, nuts or chicken breasts can be different each time you get them. An ounce or two difference can drastically change the calorie, protein, fat, and carbohydrate content of a food. For example when you look up a banana in my fitness pal...
How to Choose a Personal Trainer

Continued from page 2

integral to the personal training sessions, especially as a client (in case you might not understand something). Other evidence of professionalism could be in the manner the trainer dresses. Are they upholding a level of dress code and modesty with their attire? Creativity and innovation is another trait to consider because many fitness facilities have limited resources. A proficient personal trainer is able to utilize the resources that they have and keep the client interested.

Shop Around

Always remember that you are the client and the trainer needs you. They would not have a job if it were not for your voluntary selection of them as YOUR personal trainer. They are offering a service at your expense. Do your homework and shop around at different locations. Do not feel that you have to have a personal trainer at a specific gym because you attend that gym. Other facilities may offer a better price or a better training package. Do not pay too much for a personal training session. The average cost should be around $50.00/session.

Do I Really Have to Measure My Portions?

Continued from page 4

you will find that you can measure it in cups, grams, ounces or inches ranging from extra-small to extra-large and everything in between. This is very confusing and the calories for a serving range from 70-135 and carbohydrates from 19-35g. This is a big difference when you are trying to be consistent with your calorie intake and lose weight. Without weighing you can only guess the size and will not be accurate.

Measuring foods may take some time but it is well worth it. It will become easier and you may realize it does not take as much time as you think. Make it easy on yourself and portion foods into “single serving packs” right after you get them home from the grocery store. Serve your food with measuring spoons/cups appropriate to the portion you want to eat and serve on portion control dishware. Measure meals right after you cook them and package leftovers in the amount you want to eat at future meals. Most of us are not as accurate as we think when it comes to measuring. Remember consistent weight loss comes from consistent calorie intake which will only be accurate with consistent measuring.

Bacon Wrapped Guacamole Stuffed Chicken


Tender chicken breast stuffed with creamy guacamole and wrapped in bacon that's grilled until the bacon is nice and crispy!

Ingredients
- 4 (6 ounce) chicken breasts, butterflied or pounded thin
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1/2 cup guacamole
- 8 slices bacon

Directions
1. Lay the chicken flat, season the outside with salt and pepper, spread 1/4 of the guacamole on each of the chicken breasts, roll them up and wrap each in 2 slices of bacon
2. Grill over indirect medium heat, with the lid down, until the bacon is crispy and the chicken is cooked (160F to 165F), about 20-30 minutes, or bake in a preheated 400F/200C oven on a wire rack on a baking pan until cooked, about 20-30 minutes, turning the oven to broil for the last few minutes to ensure that the bacon is crispy.

Nutrition Facts: Calories 338, Fat 17.5g (Saturated 3.6g, Trans 0), Cholesterol 104mg, Sodium 670mg, Carbs 4.3g (Fiber 2g, Sugars 1g), Protein 44.5g
abandon them altogether. The point of a food journal isn’t to judge or police yourself, or even to grade yourself; it’s to learn about yourself, which is the first step toward adopting healthy changes that stick.

Tips for keeping a food journal:
- **Format**
  Fill out what works for you or what is most convenient so you continue to do it! Should you choose an electronic journal like Myfitnesspal.com or keep a hand written one? Regardless of your choice, make sure you are recording time, food, amount, portion, how hungry you were and how you felt. You can also add things like water intake, sleep, location of meal, exercise for that day, medications you took that day, how long it took you to finish meal. Remember the more detail the more insight into emotional triggers for eating habits, as well as times of day and places where healthy and unhealthy foods are most likely to be consumed or craved. You may also find out when you are more likely to eat fast or overeat if that is a barrier to you losing weight. You can also work with your dietitian on how important it is to keep track of carbs, fat, protein, sodium, or fiber if you have health or medical conditions like diabetes or hypertension.

- **How to Update Your Journal**
  The most accurate way to fill out a journal is when you are eating. Some people opt to fill out their journal the night before and follow it because they are meal planning. Others choose to fill it out at the end of each day. Whether you are filling in your journal before you eat or after, neither are as accurate as journaling as you eat because you are more likely to forget items this way leaving an inaccurate representation of your day. Record everything – even if that seems painful. It can be tempting to avoid recording an unplanned indulgent dessert or binge episode, but this is the most important time to record. Something to watch out for: As time goes on, dieters tend to become more relaxed about how often they update their food diaries and go longer after eating or drinking before logging the information.

- **Decide How Detailed You Want to Be**
  If you just can’t bring yourself to fill out a detailed food journal form each day, that’s OK. Just writing a minimum amount of information in your food journal will help you self-monitor. Some patients believe that if they do not keep a “perfect” food log with every detail, they have failed. Any attempt made at recording gets you one step closer to paying attention to your food choices and habits.

- **Accuracy about Portion Sizes**
  If you’re just trying to get a general idea of what, when, and why you are eating, this tip may not apply to you. But if you want to get a precise picture of your intake, make sure the amounts you record in your journal are as accurate as possible. Measuring out your portions can help give you a picture of what a normal serving size looks like. Measure portions regularly at first, and then on occasion after that.

- **Include the 'Extras' that Add Up**
  The more thorough you are when recording what you eat -- that handful of M&Ms at the office, the mayo on your sandwich, the sauce on your entree – the more ways you’ll eventually find to cut those extra calories. When you look back over your food journal records, look for those nibbles and bites that can really add up. Did you know that 150 extra calories in a day (that could be one alcoholic drink or a slather of spread on your bread) could result in a 15- to 18-pound weight gain in one year?

- **Beware of Common Obstacles**
  Are you embarrassed or ashamed about your eating? Do you have a sense of hopelessness, feeling that it won’t help to fill out a food journal or that weight loss is impossible for you? Does it seem too inconvenient to write down what you eat/drink? Do you feel bad when you “slip up”? These are the four most common obstacles to keeping a food journal. How do you fix this? All of these obstacles can be overcome by remembering the usefulness of the journal, not trying to be perfect, acknowledging that slips will happen, and staying motivated to use tools that promote health and well-being.

  Food journals are most helpful when you look back and review what you wrote. You can do this on your own or with a therapist or dietitian at Carolinas Weight Management. They can help point out patterns that are keeping you from your goals and suggest alternatives to try. Happy Journaling!
# June 2016

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          MCB Cares 5K – Charlotte  
          NoDa 5K – Charlotte          |
| 5      | 6      | 7       | 8         | 9        | 10     | Heroes in Recovery 6K – Charlotte  
          Race to the Taste 5K – Charlotte |
| 12     | 13     | 14      | 15        | 16       | 17     | Brew Dash 6K – Charlotte  
          D.R. Fitness Walk/Run for a Cause – Charlotte  
          Healthy Achievement 5K – Charlotte  
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