

# The 30 Pound Club

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## Little Changes—Big Results

In background research for yesterday's message on sugar and salt, I happened across a very interesting study in the February 2009 *Journal of the American College of Nutrition*. Researchers asked 116 overweight and obese subjects to make a couple of little changes in their habits to see if they could maintain them for a week. They asked the subjects to reduce their energy intake—how much food they ate—by 100 calories per day as well as increase their exercise by 2,000 steps per day. The researchers compared a week without the intervention with the week the subjects followed the program. They reported that total energy intake was lower during the intervention week including protein, carbohydrate, and fat, meal sizes were smaller, and sugar, soda, and sodium intake were reduced as well. The number of steps was increased during the week the subjects were keeping track.

The interesting thing about this study was that all the researchers asked the subjects to do was make small changes and record those changes. In short, the researchers asked them to pay attention and the subjects did—at least for a week. It's the first time ever that the idea of recommending small changes in diet and exercise was shown to be successful. Little changes can be effective—like reducing your caloric intake by 20%.

I talked with a woman the other day, a former Mrs. Michigan America. She said what almost every woman says: "I'd just like to lose 10 pounds." She's already extraordinarily lean and fit, but not in her eyes. I looked her in the eyes and said this: "In order to be leaner and healthier, it takes just a little effort every day. In order to look great, it takes a big effort every day—watching every calorie and exercising at a much higher level than it takes to be fit." The more challenging your goal, the more effort it takes to achieve it.

Here's my challenge to you as we near the end of our fourth month: if you've reduced your calorie intake by 20% and stuck with it, can you reduce it a little more—maybe another 5%? If you haven't stuck with it, now's your time to get back on track. If you've increased your exercise and maintained it, it's probably time to kick it up a level because your fitter body has adjusted to your new degree of fitness. You don't have to train for a marathon—unless that's your next goal—but step it up. If you've been slacking off, get off it and get after it.

The point is that every goal is noble if it's meaningful to you. Little effort or big effort, you can get results. It all comes down to just one thing:

What are you prepared to do today?

**Dr. Chet**

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