

The 30 Pound Club

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Track It

I got an email from a 30 Pound Club member who suggested that tracking what we eat is a good idea—even if we do it for only a week or so. He based it on a chapter of a book he read called *The Compound Effect* by Darren Hardy, the publisher of *Success* magazine. I'm in the process of reading the book as well. Hardy is a big believer in tracking your actions so that you know what you're doing in order to change them. I agree.

For example, I don't think we realize how much we eat throughout the day; we think in terms of only the meals we eat. When people say, "I really don't eat that much," I believe them; when you examine their meals, it's usually true.

But what about the latte on the way to work? Even a skinny latte (skim milk) can be 150 calories depending on the size. Add flavors? Fuggeddaboutit!

How about the handful of nuts or Skittles you took from the bowl at a co-workers desk? That could be 200 to 400 calories depending on the amount you grabbed.

How about the creamy salad dressing you put on your salad? That can be up to 80 calories per tablespoon, and how much did you really use? Two of the little containers restaurants usually serve dressing in would be about a quarter cup—that's 320 calories. If the salad had fried chicken and a lot of cheese, the total is really starting to climb.

How about the condiments you used on that turkey sandwich on whole wheat? Mayonnaise is 100 calories per tablespoon, and the typical amount used is two per sandwich.

We haven't covered behaviors such as sampling foods in the grocery store, tasting foods as you cook dinner, grabbing some grapes when you're going past the fridge, or finishing the last two bites in the bowl or what the kids don't eat. Just because it wasn't a sit-down meal doesn't mean the calories don't count.

Take the next seven days and track everything you eat or drink. Get a little notebook you can keep in your pocket and write down everything that goes in your mouth. Estimate the amount; if you can measure it, so much the better. Everything—starting today and for the next seven days. Then, next Wednesday night, review what you ate and drank; calculate how many calories you took in outside of the meals. You can get calorie counts from nutritiondata.self.com or some other website. I'm doing the same thing.

Once you're done, let me know if there were any surprises. Send an email to 30poundclub@drchet.com. I'll use what we find in a 30 Pound Club message in February.

One more thing. Let me know if you avoided eating something because you didn't want to record it. If tracking prevents you from eating something, that shows the power of tracking your results. Get the notebook and get started today.

One and Done.

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

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