

The 30 Pound Club

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How Much?

One reader sent in a question that I don't remember addressing before: how much weight should we lose per week? Is one-half pound good? Or should it depend on how much weight a person has to lose? Excellent questions. If you've ever watched *The Biggest Loser*, you see some major weight losses in a week with the record being over 30 pounds. While that's unreasonable, even for someone who weighs 400 pounds, the amount of weight lost per week depends on several factors.

First, how hungry are you willing to be? There's a diet floating around out there that's 500 calories per day. People lose weight, but that can't be sustained for very long or the body starts digesting its own muscle and organs. What a pleasant thought! Bringing things closer to reality, if you hit 1,200 to 2,100 calories per day, most people can start to lose weight. Keep in mind that the 2,100 calories is for someone over 250 pounds; most of us will be around 1,500 calories per day. That's a deficit of around 500 calories per day and should equal a weight loss of one pound per week.

Second, how much time do you have to spend on exercise? I'm not talking about your 30-minute walk at lunch or a 10-minute total body workout. If you can spend hours a day in activity, you'll burn more calories. Madonna prepares for her tours by dancing and working out six hours a day; you invest that much time in exercise, and you'll burn enough calories to really make a difference. For most of us, if we can get 30 to 60 minutes a day four days a week, that's about it.

Put those together and a reasonable weight loss is one to two pounds per week if you're starting at 30 or more pounds overweight and maybe less if you have less to lose.

But there's one more thing. Weight loss is not linear. You won't lose one pound every week. You may lose three or four, then hold, lose one, lose none for a couple of weeks, etc. Remember, you didn't put it on overnight and you won't take it off that way. The single most important thing is to be consistent. If you are, that 30 pounds will be a reality this year.

One and Done.

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

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