



# Commentary

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# Feed Your Mind

## Write Off More Weight by Writing Down Food Intake

A recent study by Kaiser Permanente's Center for Health Research found that keeping a food diary can double a person's weight loss. The findings were published in the August 2008 issue of the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*.

"The more food records people kept, the more weight they lost," said lead author Jack Hollis, Ph.D., a researcher at Kaiser Permanente's Center for Health Research. "Those who kept daily food records lost twice as much weight as those who kept no records. It seems that the simple act of writing down what you eat encourages people to consume fewer calories."

The study is unique in that a vast percentage of study participants were African American (44 percent). African Americans are at a higher risk for chronic diseases associated with overweight and obesity, including diabetes and heart disease. The study found that the majority of African American participants lost at least nine pounds, which is higher than in previous studies.

Participants were asked to follow a heart-healthy DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet rich in fruits and vegetables and low-fat or non-fat dairy, attend weekly group sessions and exercise at moderate intensity levels for at least 30 minutes a day. After six months, the average weight loss among the almost 1,700 participants was about 13 pounds. Dieters who kept a food diary six or more days a week lost an average of about 18 pounds in six months, compared with about nine pounds for participants who did not keep food diaries. Although nine pounds may seem like a modest weight loss over a six month period, it was enough to reduce participants' health risks and qualify for the second phase of the study, which lasted 30 months and tested strategies for maintaining the weight loss.

Previous research has shown that even a five to 10 percent reduction in body weight can improve blood pressure, diabetes, cholesterol levels etc. "More than two-thirds of Americans are overweight or obese. If we all lost just nine pounds our nation would see vast decreases in hypertension, high cholesterol, diabetes,

heart disease and stroke," said study co-author Victor Stevens, Ph.D., a Kaiser Permanente researcher.

"I think the most powerful part [of keeping a food diary] is accountability and the next most powerful part is increasing awareness of where those extra calories are coming from," says Stevens. "You're accountable to yourself when you're writing it down and you're accountable to other people who are looking at your food record," added Stevens.

Visit [www.caloriecontrol.org](http://www.caloriecontrol.org) to find an online food diary and get started logging food and beverage consumption today. More personalized weight management tools and calculators may be found at: [www.caloriescount.com](http://www.caloriescount.com).



## Tips for Keeping an Online Food Diary

Recent research shows that recording food and beverage consumption could be key in losing or maintaining weight. Studies have also indicated that online record keeping is just as effective as pen and paper writing. The key is to record as accurately as possible all foods and beverages consumed. The following tips can help make the online food diary successful and help shape up record keeping!

1. **Record the food when eaten.** If a computer is not easily accessible, jot it down on a piece of scrap paper for later. Waiting to record things until the end of the day may result in a less accurate account.
2. **Learn portion sizes.** Research has shown that most people who keep food diaries under report what they are actually eating because they record the incorrect portion size. Practice learning portion sizes at home by using measuring cups and scales when cooking. The more accurate the portion size recorded on the food diary, the more likely to lose or maintain weight.
3. **For the first few days, try to make the majority of meals at home.** This will ensure a better understanding of exact portion size. It also allows you to make healthier options by using low calorie substitutions for traditional high calorie foods and herbs and spices to flavor food instead of sodium.

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4. **Remember to record serving sizes.** If the serving size is 20 chips and forty chips are eaten, this should be recorded as two servings of chips. Eating something in one *sitting* does not mean it is one *serving*.

Just because it isn't written, doesn't mean it wasn't

eaten. The purpose of a food log is to record as accurately as possible the foods and beverages that were consumed. Keeping a food log does not have to be a permanent practice. Being consistent and accurate with a food diary allows people to pinpoint "problem areas" such as a lack of balance, stress eating, the time of day someone may be more likely to overeat, etc.

## Sweet Substitutes

### **Polyols: Sweet Oral Benefits**

According to a nationally projectable survey by the Calorie Control Council, over half of American consumers report a desire for a greater variety of reduced calorie foods and beverages. "Polyols" or "sugar alcohols" help lower the sugar and calorie content of foods and beverages.

Polyols are low-digestible carbohydrates with many of the physical properties similar to sugars. Polyols also assist in maintaining excellent oral hygiene and products containing polyols are approved for the "Does not promote tooth decay" health claim. Further, polyols do not cause sudden increases in blood sugar levels and are safe for use by people with diabetes.

Polyols are "bulk" sweeteners, since they can be used as equal volume or equal weight replacements for table sugar or corn syrups. A wide range of products

contain polyols, including chewing gums, candies, ice creams, baked goods and fruit spreads. Fillings and frostings, canned fruits, beverages, yogurts and tabletop sweeteners, as well as toothpastes, mouthwashes and pharmaceutical products, also contain polyols.

Erythritol, hydrogenated starch hydrolysate (HSH)/ polyglycitol/polyglucitol, isomalt, lactitol, maltitol, mannitol, sorbitol and xylitol are the eight approved polyols for use in the United States. Polyols are listed in the "Nutrition Facts Panel" as "sugar alcohols" and help provide sweet taste while providing fewer calories and the added benefit of improved oral health.



## Experts Weigh In

### **Industry Funded Studies Have Higher Quality of Reporting than Non-Industry Funded Studies in Long Term Weight Loss Trials**

Recently, many questions have been raised about the validity of industry funded research results. Approximately two thirds of long-term weight loss studies are paid for by industry and a recent research study, published in the August 2008 issue of the *International Journal of Obesity*, evaluated the quality of industry vs. non-industry related research. The study, "Industry funding and the reporting quality of large long-term weight loss trials" found, "industry funding is associated with higher reporting quality."

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the association between the funding source for research and the quality of reporting (QR) of long-term obesity randomized clinical trials.

The authors analyzed studies of long-term weight loss trials conducted from 1966 to 2003. Authors of the current study used the CONSORT checklist to assess QR (the CONSORT checklist is considered the medical standard of reporting and contains parameters used to evaluate the methods of research trials). Results found that QR tended to be higher for industry funded studies compared to non-industry funded studies and that industry funded studies are



associated with a higher QR on average. The study concluded, “A benefit of the greater funding offered by industry, the greater scrutiny of industry, or perhaps the greater concern or training of industry personnel for rigorous reporting may be an enhancement of the overall reporting quality in the literature, at least for long-term weight loss studies.”

Visit <http://www.nature.com/ijo/journal/vaop/ncurrent/full/ijo2008137a.html> to read the entire study.

### **Chew Your Way to Stress Reduction**

Gum lovers may be in luck. A recent study, “An investigation into the effects of gum chewing on mood and cortisol levels during psychological stress” presented at the *10th International Congress of Behavioral Medicine* in August 2008, suggests gum chewing may assist in relieving anxiety; increasing alertness and reducing stress. In addition, Andrew Scholey, professor of behavioral and brain sciences at Swinburne University in Melbourne, Australia and his team, found chewing gum was also associated with improvement in overall performance on multi-tasking activities. The forty person study investigated how chewing gum affected the Defined Intensity Stressor Simulation (DISS) score of the participants. The DISS induces a stress stimulus and assesses performance measures while chewing and

not chewing gum. Anxiety, alertness and stress levels were measured before and after participants completed the DISS. Results found that when participants were chewing gum, their reported anxiety levels were 17 percent lower for mild stress when compared to non gum chewers. The study also found the gum chewers were 19 percent more alert and had physiological stress markers that were 16 percent lower compared to non gum chewers. Also according to the results, chewing gum resulted in a “*significant improvement in overall performance on multi-tasking activities.*”



## **What's New and What's True?**

### **Weighing In on Low-Calorie Sweeteners and Weight Gain**

With an increasing amount of misinformation on the web and television, it's hard to tell whether the information is scientifically sound. “Fueling the Obesity Epidemic? Artificially Sweetened Beverage Use and Long-term Weight Gain,” a recent study published in the August 2008 issue of the journal *Obesity*, alleged a link between “artificially sweetened” beverage consumption and weight gain by correlating diet soda consumption with an increased risk of metabolic syndrome (which can lead to an increased risk of heart disease and diabetes). However, findings of this study do not reflect the majority of scientific literature confirming the benefits of low-calorie sweeteners and the products that contain them, and what people may not know is that the study contained some major flaws.

Although the data provide no definitive conclusions, the authors speculate that low-calorie sweeteners may be “fueling” the obesity epidemic. Such speculation only serves to further misinform the public and is not helpful in developing appropriate, scientifically based messages regarding the obesity epidemic. Further, the study findings are illogical. It is physiologically impossible for foods and beverages without calories to cause weight gain.

While this research certainly makes a sexy headline, it has little relevance to “real world” dieting/weight control. The bottom line is that if people substitute a lower calorie item for a higher calorie item and do not compensate for those calories, they will lose weight.

Low-calorie sweeteners and the products that contain them are not “magic bullets” for weight loss.

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Instead, light products and low-calorie sweeteners are tools to help people reduce and control their caloric intake. Leading health authorities agree that “light” products can be used as “tools” as part of an overall weight control program, which includes a reduction in calories and an increase in activity. No major health group is making a change to its dietary recommendations based on this observational study. Visit [www.caloriecontrol.org](http://www.caloriecontrol.org) for additional information about the use of low-calorie sweeteners in the diet.

### Secrets of Successful “Losers”

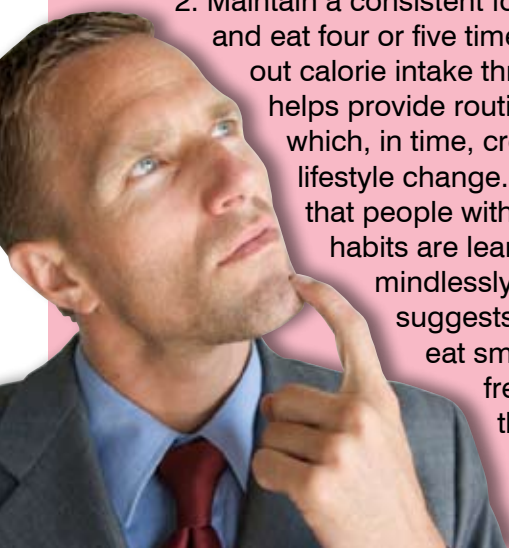
Looking for ways to lose and maintain weight? Look no further than the National Weight Control Registry (NWCR) for secrets of successful “losers.” The NWCR houses information related to over 4,000 adults aged 18 and older who have successfully lost at least 30 pounds and maintained the loss for more than one year. The database serves to identify people who have been able to lose and keep off a large amount of weight as well as classify the methods they used to achieve the loss and maintenance. Approximately 55 percent of participants in the NWCR lost weight by joining a formal weight loss program and the other 45 percent lost and maintained the weight by themselves. Below are the seven key tactics these dieters used to lose and maintain their weight.

1. Consume a low calorie, low fat diet. Participants in the registry consume between 1,300 to 1,680 calories per day with about 25 percent of calories from fat. Experts agree that successful weight loss is a calorie in, calorie out equation. Eat fewer calories than burned: weight loss. Consume more calories than burned: weight gain. Portion control and moderation are two key ingredients in controlling calorie intake.

2. Maintain a consistent food intake each day and eat four or five times per day. Spreading out calorie intake throughout the day helps provide routine eating habits which, in time, create a healthful lifestyle change. Research suggests that people with consistent eating habits are leaner than those who mindlessly eat. Research also suggests that those who eat smaller meals more frequently are leaner than those who consume large and infrequent meals.

3. Breakfast really is the most important meal of the day! Many health professionals suggest eating breakfast everyday to help kick start metabolism as well as prevent overeating later in the day. Dieters in the NWCR also report eating breakfast everyday.
4. Get Physical! Dieting is not the only component of successful weight loss and maintenance. Recent physical activity guidelines suggest adults need 30 to 60 minutes of activity each day to maintain weight and longer if wanting to lose weight. On average, participants in the NWCR exercise about 60 to 90 minutes per day and take about 11,000 to 12,000 steps if walking for physical activity.
5. Pay attention to the scale. According to registrants in the NWCR, frequent weighing plays an essential role in weight management. Monitoring weight provides accountability and a means of self-monitoring. Pay attention to other weight loss markers as well, such as how clothes are fitting or the notches on a belt loop.
6. Keep television watching to a minimum. Research indicates an association between weight loss and less time spent watching television. About 62 percent of registrants in the NWCR report watching 10 or fewer hours a week of television and 36 percent report watching five or fewer hours. According to *Today's Dietitian*, the average American watches about 28 hours of television per week. Also, these habits are formed at a young age. Leaders in childhood obesity cite a direct link between pediatric weight control problems and excessive television watching.
7. Take corrective action right away. Most dieters say the hardest part of maintaining weight is not the initial weight loss, but preventing weight regain. Commercial weight loss programs report dieters usually regain weight three to five years after the initial weight loss goal is achieved. Dieters in the NWCR suggest keeping up with all aspects involved in behavior modification to ensure adequate weight maintenance. Managing the day to day aspects of weight loss makes it much easier to correct a small amount of weight regain rather than waiting until it becomes unmanageable.

Successful weight management involves healthful eating habits and positive lifestyle changes, including regular physical activity and frequent weight monitoring. Healthful habits coupled with sustained self control give any dieter the tools to be successful.



# Get Physical

## Strength Training for Bone and Muscle Maintenance Important in Aging

Although aging is usually associated with gaining weight, it is also associated with losing bone/muscle strength as well as muscle mass. Research has shown that regular strength training can help delay and reduce age related strength losses.

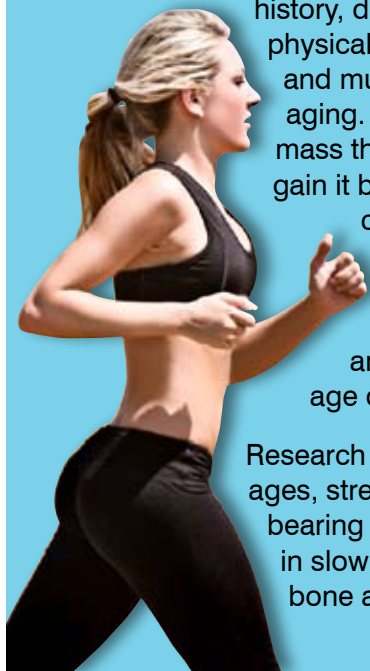
Bone strength can be affected by factors such as family history, diet and lifestyle, gender, and physical activity. Loss of muscle mass and muscle strength also occur with aging. However, the more muscle mass that is lost, the easier it is to gain it back. Research studies have consistently shown a capacity of older muscle to adapt to exercise, resulting in increases in muscle strength and muscle size, regardless of age or gender.

Research has indicated that as the body ages, strength training and weight-bearing activity could play a role in slowing age-related changes in bone and muscle. Strength training

provides the stress that stimulates a gain in muscle or bone strength, which helps build more muscle mass and greater strength. Activities that are considered strength training include: Bench Press, Lat Pulldown, Overhead Press, Bicep Curl, Tricep Pulldown, Squat, Leg Extension, Leg Curl, Abdominal Crunch.

Strength training can be site-specific (i.e. a particular muscle group) and individualized. Also, gradually adding more weight helps muscles become stronger as well as adapt to greater stress. Regular strength training also provides other benefits, such as improved balance and coordination. It's important to know not to work the same muscle groups two days in a row. Just like anything else, muscles need time to recover. By not allowing adequate recovery time (about one day in between for muscles to rest) more harm than good may be done.

If starting an exercise program for the first time, consult with a physician or health professional to determine overall health. Then, consult with a qualified sports or exercise scientist/trainer to devise a plan that fits your needs and lifestyle. For more information visit: [http://www.acsm.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Current\\_Comments1&Template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=8654](http://www.acsm.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Current_Comments1&Template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=8654).



## Commentary: “Lite” Reading from the Calorie Control Council

The Calorie Control Council (the “Council”) is an international association representing the low-calorie and reduced-fat food and beverage industry. Companies that make and use low-calorie sweeteners are among the Council’s members. Now, more than ever consumers are seeking diet and health information from credible and reliable sources. The Calorie Control Council serves as a reliable health information resource with experts available to assist with questions and concerns from consumers, health professionals, and the media.

Please use the Council as a resource when looking for information on low calorie and “lite” ingredients and the products that contain them. For more information, visit the Council’s website at [www.caloriecontrol.org](http://www.caloriecontrol.org).

## Calorie Control

### commentary

Providing timely information on low-calorie and reduced-fat foods and beverages, weight management, physical activity and healthy eating.

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