

FITNESS FORUM

Are you kidding? I'm not letting you see that!

Wow, what a week of fitness! After churning out 9 total miles on the treadmill, 2 group strength classes and countless crunches to keep that stubborn midsection in check, it's inconceivable to think the scale won't be kind today.

Respectfully, you approach it with reverence while removing all extraneous clothing that could hamper your results. Gingerly, a foot is placed on top and the second gently next to it. Standing on the outside of your feet, you exhale any remaining weight in your lungs and begin the ritual.

By now, you instinctually slide the counter weight to exactly where it needs to be in order to balance the scale. "Impossible!" you utter under your breath... "Not a single pound again! What more can I do?"

Unfortunately, this individual's results are unlikely to change any time soon. The problem doesn't stem from their workouts but rather their diet. Many exercisers are simply unaware of their overall caloric intake during the day and unknowingly eat (and drink) away their potential weight loss throughout the day.

I once had a client swear up and down that it was impossible for her to lose the final 5 pounds needed in order to achieve her goal weight. Given that in most instances, there are two main factors affecting weight loss (or a lack thereof), poor diet and insufficient exercise, we ruled out the latter as she trained with me!

In order to obtain a clearer picture of her eating habits, I challenged her to keep a food journal for the week. She was to log everything that she ate and drank from the time she woke until she retired for the day. I told her to be as brutally honest with herself as possible. Nothing was to be overlooked. She agreed.

When we reconvened the following week to review her journal she simply said, "I understand." I was surprised because we hadn't even spoken about specifics. When I asked her to see the journal, she replied, "Are you kidding? I'm not letting you see that!" It was real-

ly comical because up until that moment, I had never known her to be self-conscious or embarrassed about anything, but clearly the task forced her to take notice of what she had been unaware of before.

She stated that she hadn't realized how much unconscious snacking she did throughout her day. Whether it was a handful of peanuts or M&M's in a waiting room or finishing the remainders on her kid's plate after dinner, she was constantly picking on something throughout the day. Even more intriguing was the fact that, in most cases, she wasn't even hungry. It was just something to do to pass time or simply because it was there.

We created a simple plan that helped to get her back on track.

1. **Keep a food journal** – If you simply can't seem to drop those few extra pounds this simple exercise can help shed light on where those extra calories are coming from. Honesty is a must though. Write it all down.
2. **Plan your meals (and snacks)** – Pack your lunch and snacks daily or plan at the beginning of each day when and where you will be eating. It's nearly impossible to make a healthy food choice when you're already hungry.
3. **Beware of liquid calories** – Drink plenty of water. There's no magic formula for how much water you should drink throughout the day but generally more is better. Beware of juices, soda's and sports drinks with high sugar contents that can easily add inches to your waistline.

Although I never did see that journal, the message was received loud and clear. She eventually lost those pesky 5 pounds and reached her goal weight. For more information visit us online at www.ptsprinceton.com.

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