

Weight Loss Coaching - Step 2

Welcome to Step 2.

Step 2 topics include:

- Body Mass Index
- The importance of exercise
- The importance of water

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Body Mass Index

The body mass index or BMI as it is commonly called, is a measure of body fat based on height and weight that applies to men and women over the age of 18 years.

For anyone who is extremely muscular or athletic, the results may be skewed and the BMI is not relevant for pregnant women or for children. But for the rest of us, it is used to determine to what extent our weight is affecting our health.

A BMI of 25 or more indicates you may have a greater risk of having a stroke or developing high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, or diabetes.

Is your BMI showing your health to be at risk?

To calculate your BMI you need to know your weight (in kilograms) and your height (in metres).

Your BMI is determined by your weight divided by your height squared.

Workbook Activity

Page 1 of your workbook shows you how to calculate your BMI. Calculate it for yourself then check the table provided to see the range in which your BMI falls and what effect it is having on your health.

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The Importance Of Exercise

That simple little word - exercise - may send many of you running for cover, and while anything that gets you running, is not such a bad thing, exercise is *not* something to be feared.

If exercise is a word that fills you with dread, then please pay particular attention to what is written here. Exercise really doesn't have to be so scary and hopefully we can begin to change any negative thinking that you have in regards to exercise.

Regardless of your age and weight, exercise is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. And if you are on the path of attaining slimness, it is vital that you incorporate some type of regular, preferably daily, exercise into your life.

A healthy and well-proportioned diet can take you so far, but you need to combine it with exercise to really see the results you are hoping for.

There are so many benefits to be gained by making exercise part of your daily routine. Consider the benefits listed below:

Exercise increases your energy levels, meaning you can actually do more physical activity than before.

It reduces stress.

It strengthens and tones your muscles.

It burns fat.

It regulate your appetite.

It improves your circulation.

It reduces blood pressure.

It reduces the risk of heart disease.

It lessens the symptoms of menopause and PMT.

And most importantly - it makes you feel great!

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Introducing regular exercise into your week will benefit you mentally, emotionally and physically. You will feel more positive and uplifted.

Exercise can help you gain a new sense of achievement and pride in yourself and that benefit alone makes it all worthwhile.

And remember, exercise *doesn't* have to mean running for mega-miles every day or hours sweating it out at the gym. What it is about, is getting your body moving. And there are so many ways you can accomplish that.

Think about what type of activity appeals to you. Do you like to walk, swim, dance, play tennis, do yoga, ride a bike, roller blade, or play basketball? There are so many activities to choose from.

What games and sports did you enjoy as a child? Perhaps you can rekindle an old passion.

Alternate between different activities and keep it interesting and varied. Don't be afraid to try something new. And don't forget that vacuuming, scrubbing the bathroom and gardening can be great exercise too.

My personal exercise of choice is walking. I do that for 30 minutes, 6 or 7 times a week. I have been doing this for many years now and on those rare days when I don't have my walk, I really miss it. For me, walking is not only exercise but it's my time out. I am away from my desk and computer, away from emails and phone calls. It's my time to just be with me.

If your family commitments and schedule make it difficult for you to have any time for yourself, then consider combining these two activities as I do and use your exercise time as you time.

If on the other hand you are looking to expand your social network, or would prefer to spend your time with friends, realise that exercise is a great way to do that too.

You could consider putting together a walking group, or join a yoga class, go to aqua aerobics, or gather some friends together for a fun game of tennis. Not only will you receive all the benefits regular exercise has to offer, but your social needs will be satisfied as well, meaning you look forward to your exercise time even more.

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If you already belong to a gym, then that's great, and as long as you do actually go to the gym, then that membership is worth having. But if you don't belong to a gym, that's fine too and there is no need to rush out and join one.

Walking is about the cheapest activity there is. All you need is a pair of comfortable and supportive shoes (which you should own anyway) and you can be on your way. Cost is no excuse to avoid exercise!

So how often should you exercise? Ideally 30 to 40 minutes every day. For the first 10 minutes of any aerobic exercise you burn sugar. After the 10-minute mark you begin burning fat.

If you haven't been exercising up until now, please start yourself off gradually and build it up slowly. If the best you can do right now is to walk for 15 minutes, twice a week, then do that. When you are ready, make it three times a week, then four times, then extend it to 20 minutes and so on.

Slow and steady progress is what you need to aim for. Gradually build on your current level of exercise but you must never exercise beyond your capabilities or to a level that causes you pain. Be sensible with what you expect yourself to accomplish.

Doing a series of stretching exercises before and after you exercise is a must. And also look out for other times during the day when you can squeeze in some stretching. How about when you are talking on the phone, or taking a coffee break at work, or during the commercial breaks when you're watching TV? Stretching will help keep you feeling toned and flexible.

So how hard should you push yourself when you exercise?

When you are making the time to exercise, you want to make sure you are getting value from your workout but you must not push your body beyond a safe point. To determine what is a safe point for you, calculate your maximum heart rate and your target heart rate.

The maximum heart rate is calculated by 220 minus your age.

So for a 30-year-old person, the maximum heart rate would be 220 minus 30 , which is 190 . So the maximum heart rate would be 190 beats per minute.

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For a 40-year-old person, the maximum heart rate would be 220 minus 40, which is 180. So the maximum heart rate would be 180 beats per minute.

Remember this is the maximum heart rate and exercising constantly at your maximum heart rate is *not* safe.

The target heart rate is what you need to aim for throughout the majority of your workout time.

The target heart rate is 60-80% of your maximum heart rate.

So for that 30-year-old person, the target heart rate is calculated as 60-80% of 190, which would be 114-152. For a 40 year old, it would be 60-80% of 180, which would be 108-144.

Workbook Activity

Instructions on how to calculate your maximum heart rate and target heart rate, are on page 2 of your workbook. Calculate your personal rates and keep those numbers in mind when exercising.

Throughout your workout, check your heart rate regularly to ensure you are working within that target heart rate zone and not going beyond the maximum recommended rate.

To check your heart rate simply count the number of beats in six seconds, then multiply by 10 to determine the number of beats per minute.

The average resting heart rate for one minute is 70 for women, and 75 for men.

Workbook Activity

On page 2 of your workbook, note your resting heart rate for one minute. How does that compare with the averages mentioned above?

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You will now find a way to incorporate exercise into your daily life and as your fitness levels improve, you will be able to exercise even more. However, you will never exercise beyond your limits, or in any way that may cause you an injury or experience pain.

Exercise is important in achieving your weight loss goals, but it doesn't have to be a chore. Look for ways to make it fun and enjoyable so that exercise becomes part of your day that you actually look forward to.

Workbook Activity

On page 2 of your workbook make a note of your current exercise routine and list the types of physical activity that you enjoy, such as walking outdoors, playing tennis, gardening, cycling etc.

In Step 3 we will look at formulating specific goals in regards to exercise.

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The Importance Of Water

I'm sure you are well aware of the fact you are "supposed" to drink 6-8 glasses of water a day. How often do you drink enough water? Everyday? Some days? Never? Do you know why it is that water is so important to your body?

We can only survive a matter of days without water, although we can go several weeks without food. Water does not get stored in the body, meaning it needs to constantly be replaced.

Did you know that your body is composed of approximately 60% water?

Water balances our core body temperature and has the job of transporting nutrients through our bodies. Drinking plenty of water will guard against dehydration and constipation, and it can help slow down the ageing process.

Water is vital for the cycle of digestion, absorption, circulation and excretion. An inadequate water intake can contribute to excess body fat and digestive problems. When you are trying to shed those extra kilograms, drinking enough water each day is essential.

Water will help you to gain slimness and to remain healthy. It provides hydration for your body's cells and it keeps you refreshed and relaxed.

An excellent habit to develop is to slowly drink a glass of water prior to your meal. As well as giving your body the water it needs, doing this will help you feel full quicker.

An inadequate water intake can reduce the functioning of the brain leading to mental confusion. Fatigue, joint pain and water retention can also result.

Water also helps to clear the bad things such as food colouring and pesticides, out of your blood stream.

When the body's water content drops, so does the blood volume. This in turn triggers the hypothalamus to send out a message that we are thirsty.

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By the time you feel thirsty, your body is already dehydrated. For this reason, it is important to develop a habit of drinking water regularly throughout the day, rather than waiting for that signal of thirst to hit.

The recommended 6-8 glasses of water does **not** include tea or coffee or other caffeine beverages. In fact every time you drink one cup of a caffeine beverage or alcohol, you then require two cups of water to prevent cellular dehydration.

Drink or sip water slowly as gulping it down may trap air in the intestines and that leads to a very uncomfortable feeling. Be careful not to drink more than 1½ cups of water at one time, as to do so may upset the body's electrolyte balance.

To begin with, you may have to remind yourself to drink your 6-8 glasses throughout the day but stick with it and it will quickly become a habit.

Try leaving a water glass in a prominent position in the kitchen or on your desk, to remind you to drink your day's requirement of water. Or begin to carry a drink bottle with you throughout your day.

You can also encourage other family members to develop this habit of drinking more water, by placing a jug of water on the kitchen bench or on the table at meal times.

And remember to always drink plenty of water before and after exercise, and drink even more water than usual if it's a hot day.

Workbook Activity

On page 3 of your workbook make a note of your current daily water intake (the approximate number of glasses); your target daily water intake; and the strategies you are putting in place to increase your water intake.

One final note on water intake – if your water intake is currently very low (or non-existent), increase gradually to 6-8 glasses over several days or weeks and give your body time to adapt to this change. To go from zero to eight glasses within 24 hours might be a shock to your system.

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And that brings us to the end of Step 2.

What's Next?

Coming up in Step 3 we will look at:

- Goal setting
- Weight Loss Goals
- Life Goals
- Exercise Goals
- Staying the same or making changes

Have a fantastic week as you begin to incorporate more exercise and drinking water into your daily routine. Also remember to keep focusing on your new self-image and that mental photograph of yourself that you created in Step 1. Use that new self-image to remind yourself of why you are making these wonderful changes, and celebrate the new path you are now on.