

REALHEALTH

THE GUIDE TO BLACK WELLNESS
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How She's Doin'
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On Her Scary
Thyroid Disease
Experience

IONIC THIS
IONIC THAT
Can These Styling
Tools Really
Help Heal Hair?

STEP
OFF!
Walking
Works

More
Power
to Her
PAM
GRIER
She's a
Cancer
Survivor!

Ouch!
WHEN SEX
HURTS
Find Out
Why and
Stop the Pain



Calorie Countdown

A little food mathematics can add up to lost pounds.

Counting calories isn't easy, but it can lead to a leaner you. Not sure how to get started? No worries. Just follow these basic principles.

If you want to burn more calories, exercise to build muscle mass. The more muscle you have, the more calories you burn, even at rest, says clinical nutritionist Tara Coleman.

Because men have a higher percentage of muscle mass, they typically have a higher metabolic rate than women—that is, men burn more calories at a faster rate. That is why the average caloric intake requirement for men each day is 2,300 to 2,500 calories and only 1,800 to 2,000 for women.

But while you can't change your gender, you can jump-start your metabolism. Simply add more cardiovascular exercises, such as jogging and cycling, to your daily

routine, and watch what you eat.

"When it comes to weight loss, a pound of fat is 3,500 calories," Coleman says. "If you want to lose a pound a week, just eat about 500 less calories each day."

Once you've reached your ideal weight, it's important to eat enough calories to maintain it. In other words, don't burn more calories than you eat.

To find out the specific number of calories you need each day, you must calculate your resting metabolic rate (RMR), which is the rate you burn calories when your body is not in motion—for example, while sitting or resting. But to calculate the most accurate RMR, you have to head over to your local fitness facility or make an appointment with a nutritionist.



Weight management may not be quick and easy, but it can be less challenging if you start counting calories, exercising regularly and eating a healthy diet. And you won't need advanced calculus to do it.

—Kat Noel

13



The number of extra calories each day that can cause you to pack on one pound in one year.

Source: Office of Minority Health, Department of Health and Human Services

COOKING RIGHT

Get the most from your meals with these tips.

Fried foods may taste good, but the combination of oil and batter pack on extra calories and fat. These low-calorie and low-fat preparation methods will help your food retain nutrients without compromising taste. —KN

FOOD	PREPARATION	BEST COOKING METHODS
Meat and Poultry 	Don't chew the fat. Trim visible fat off meat and poultry and remember to take off the skin, except when roasting a whole chicken or turkey. In those cases, leave skin on during cooking and remove before eating.	Take it low. Grilling, broiling, roasting, sautéing and baking are low-fat cooking methods that melt away the excess fat.
Vegetables 	Clean it up. Thoroughly wash vegetables before eating. If they aren't organic, peel off the skin and discard.	Full steam ahead. Vegetables retain more vitamins when steamed than when boiled. Also, slightly cooking veggies, such as carrots, zucchini and broccoli, helps them retain antioxidants.

Chow Time

It's not when you eat—it's how many calories you consume.



"Whether you eat them at 7 A.M. or 7 P.M., a calorie is still a calorie," says Janet Brill, PhD, RD, LDN, nutritionist and author. "The magic formula for weight loss is just to eat fewer calories and burn more."

You also have to consider what you eat and how much physical activity you get, Brill says. Why? Because these factors, combined with the total number of calories consumed, determine whether you gain, lose or maintain your weight.

For both health and weight control, Brill recommends eating small, low-calorie meals every three to four hours plus two snacks throughout the day.

—Willette Francis