

It's best to start with a plan

Hopes. Dreams. We all have them — for lots of things. The difference between a dream and a goal is a plan. We mistake taking action with being effective. Our health is no different — it requires a plan.

Any effective plan for wellness (especially weight management)

starts with understanding some health fundamentals. Physical health can be impacted when we are out of balance in our lives. To improve our health, we need to know how to be healthy. And we need to have a plan — without one, consistently good health is just a dream. Just hope.

There is so much information out there that it's easy to be unsure of what you "should" be doing. Without knowing some health "basics," you can't make or carry out an effective plan. Imagine for a moment that you were planning to go on a diet. In this case, a fundamental you'd need to know about is calories.

We talk about them all the time, but do you know what a calorie is — or how many of them you need each day? If you can't answer this, then you can't really have a weight management plan — you just have hope.

At least 90 percent of the people whom I work in my health, fitness and rehabilitation center don't know the answer.

HEALTHY BOTTOM LINE



Mick Bates

(If you're curious about the technical definition of a calorie, go to the home page of our Web site, bodyworkshfr.com.) Here's the bottom line — calories matter. The amount of total daily calories you consume impacts your health in many ways. While there are health benefits to a well-balanced diet, the body converts all food products to basic units of energy.

At a BASIC level, your body doesn't care if you eat chicken nuggets or carrot sticks — it converts all food products to basic units of energy.

However, eating too much of the right or the wrong things makes it harder to achieve your ideal weight or optimal health.

What's the right amount of calories? Mine is 1806. My wife's is 1624. It isn't fair — but the right amount is different for everyone. Caloric needs are determined by your weight, height, age, gender and activity level.

These factors impact the amount of lean body mass you have (which determines the basal metabolic rate).

To know what your lean body mass is, you need to consider the amount of muscle, fat, bone and water your body has. Body composition analysis gives you a useful starting point for your weight management and health plan. Every Friday in March, we'll measure your lean body mass at no charge.

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Call 304-255-2376 to schedule this complimentary service for readers of this column. Another way (less accurate but still worthwhile) to calculate Basal Metabolic Rate/Daily Calorie Needs is to link to the site shown on the home page of bodyworkshfr.com.

Good information drives good decisions. Start your plan by identifying the daily calories you need; then compare that to what you typically consume. Keep in mind that tracking calories can be tricky for three reasons.

1) The amount of calories listed on food products is often based on serving sizes that are much smaller than we typically eat.

2) The percentage of total daily calories on a label is based on 2,000 calories a day (which is what a very active 36-year-old female would need).

Good information drives good decisions.

3) Whenever you eat at a restaurant or a fast food place, you probably don't know the amount of calories in your total meal.

How many total daily calories should you consume? Find out today and begin making different choices about what you eat — or eating smaller portions — so you can reduce your total caloric intake effectively and turn your health dream into a reality.

What will you do this month to start to make your bottom line healthier?

— *Bates owns and operates BODYWORKS in Beckley. Columns from previous months can be viewed at www.register-herald.com, search Healthy Bottom Line or under the articles tab under the news drop down at Bodyworkshfr.com.*



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