

# Jeni's Health & Fitness Tips

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Hi Everyone!

I hope you are all enjoying the exercise sessions you have chosen this year. If you find it a struggle to get through an exercise session, don't be discouraged. The more often you do something, the easier it gets. As your fitness level improves you will find you can exercise for a greater length of time and it will seem easier and more enjoyable. I know this personally because I have not always been fit myself!

Some of you may have decided that losing weight was one of your goals for 2008. Regular exercise is essential for maintaining healthy weight but many people feel the need to diet as well. The fact is that diets just don't work. People find it increasingly difficult to lose weight after repeating dieting and often regain more weight than they started with after they stop the diet.

This is because restricting food intake sends signals to the body that there is a famine and survival is threatened. The body responds by slowing down metabolic rate. This means that energy is burnt at a slower pace so that the body can survive on less. The body begins to conserve fat. Fat loss slows down and it becomes harder to lose weight. During periods of restricted food intake, weight loss is mainly water and muscle. Reduced muscle mass further slows down the metabolic rate.

The answer is to increase the metabolic rate. The higher the rate that energy is burnt, the more calories you can consume without gaining fat. There are many ways to increase metabolism:

- **Increase muscle mass.** Regular strength/weight training can increase muscle mass resulting in a faster metabolism. The more muscle you have, the faster the metabolism.
- **Eat little and often.** By halving the amount of each meal and eating 5 or 6 times a day rather than 3 you can speed up your metabolic rate.
- **Keep well hydrated.** Drinking 2 litres of water a day ensures you will not be dehydrated. Mild dehydration can result in a slower metabolism.
- **Get plenty of aerobic exercise.** You need at least half an hour of aerobic exercise most days. That means increasing your heart rate to a level where you feel warm to hot and your breathing becomes heavier. However you should still be able to carry out a conversation whilst exercising.

You should also choose foods that are high in fibre, high carbohydrate, low GI and low in fat. Start checking the food labels when you shop. Avoid foods that are greater than 10% fat. Make sure you get a minimum of **5** serves of vegetables and **2** serves of fruits every single day. One serve of vegetables = ½ cup cooked or 1 cup salad, one serve of fruit = medium sized apple.

You will have the opportunity to get plenty of exercise and healthy food at our next health retreat in October. Check the website below for details and click on "Retreats".

Yours in health,

*Jeni*

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