

Fat Loss vs. Weight Loss: Know the difference

By Fredrick Hahn

If you pick up a product in any grocery store, you will see at the bottom of the can or box something that says "Weight ___ oz., net weight ___ oz." What this means is obvious. The company is letting you know how much the product itself weighs less the container it is in. By law, the company must inform the consumer how much of the actual product he is getting. Thanks to this law, shoppers are informed and are, in a sense, protected.

Dieters are not so lucky. The government does not protect people who are interested in doing something about their bulging bellies and thighs. Consequently, there are scores of physicians and trainers who offer and recommend diets that, though they will decrease body weight, will do so by decreasing both fat and muscle. Losing muscle is the last thing a dieter wants to have happen. It's like a food company shrinking the size of the unimportant container to reduce waste, yet at the same time, shrinking the net content of the important product inside. What good is that to the consumer? Here's why you never want to lose an ounce of muscle tissue when dieting – or for any reason whatever.

The more muscle a person has on his body, the greater the amount of calories he burns. If a diet/exercise program causes loss of muscle tissue, no matter how small, it permanently decreases the metabolism. Muscle loss also leads to weaker bones and decreases joint and connective tissue stability. Muscle loss is a dieter's unseen nightmare.

Research has shown that dieting without strength-training exercises will always result in loss of muscle tissue. Even strenuous aerobic activity while dieting will not prevent muscle loss and can actually expedite it. Loss of muscle tissue is the reason why dieters often gain back the weight they lose. It is the cause of the "yo-yo diet" syndrome.

By and large, people are not over-fat because they are physically inactive and eat too much fat. They are over-fat because they are losing muscle and eating too much refined sugar (pasta, bagels, chips, etc.) as well as eating way too much food in general.

Avoiding refined sugars and starches and eating a diet that is rich in protein, healthy fats, a wide variety of vegetables and some fruit, coupled with a sound strength-training program is the safest and most effective way to slim down, shape up, and stay that way for life.