



Weight-loss and the New Spa Lifestyle – Be Strong, Eat More!

The spa lifestyle is one that is concerned with both overall health and longevity, and studies clearly reveal that one's weight, or one's body mass index (BMI), is very much linked to both. When talking about weight loss, we need to define things a bit more. Most people are interested in actually losing body fat, not just weight in general. You can lose muscle mass quite easily with almost any diet, and since muscle weighs more than fat, the typical scale may not reveal what is actually going on. Furthermore, the amount of muscle tissue you have – your lean muscle mass – tells us a lot about the health of your metabolism. Your muscles are able to burn fat very effectively, either incoming sources of dietary fat or your own body fat, and a healthy metabolism makes good, clean use of the energy in your body stored in fat.

So, without having a healthy amount of lean muscle mass, your ability to burn body fat is greatly reduced. It is important to keep these things in mind if you are going to be successful in losing fat or in keeping a trim waistline in the long-term. You can try just about any diet out there and if you stick to it, your weight will drop; however, it is important to know whether you are primarily burning body fat or if your lean muscle mass is dropping. Typical low calorie diets are notorious for causing lean muscle mass to diminish. Also, a useful question is this: is the diet so restricted in calories that you just can't manage eating so little to maintain your weight in the long term?

I believe the answer to reaching and sustaining your target body weight lies in having a healthy metabolism. When this is the case, you can eat a rather large amount of healthy food without being overly restrictive and your body can use your food to nourish itself without having to store it as body fat. The solution to this of course starts with the quality and consistency of your diet and exercise. We will be exploring these topics in great detail over the upcoming articles that will be posted.

A great place to begin would be to know how much lean muscle mass you have compared to your fat mass. We provide this assessment here as part of our wellness programs. This useful measurement allows you to monitor your progress every step along the way, making it easier to measure your progress toward your goal. So, instead of saying "I want to drop 20lbs," you could say "I want to lose 20 lbs. of fat while maintaining or even increasing my muscle mass." Remember, your muscles and organs are what primarily burn fat in the body, and having healthy muscle tissue will not only secure your immediate goals, but keep the fat off in the future – no more yo-yo dieting!



It also means you can eat more than you would on a restrictive diet, because you will need more food to feed your muscles and level of activity. You still get to eat many foods you love, but it is more about balance. This is the spa lifestyle, a lifestyle of balance, and here is one great key to your success!

-Ricardo Boye, ND, CNC
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