

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FITNESS, HEALTH & WELLNESS: **FAST FACTS ON WEIGHT LOSS**

As the holiday season approaches, starting a new diet or shedding a few extra pounds may seem like a futile exercise. However, any time is a good time to start watching caloric intake as well as making the right choices in foods that will provide a full feeling without the loss of energy. The following tips will provide you with some suggestions that are easy to implement into your busy day yet also will provide you the results you want in terms of weight loss.

1. **Be Choosy about where you eat your lunch:** For attorneys who are on the road a lot to and from court, finding a healthy lunch can be a daunting task, but there are many web sites devoted to helping you find a meal that won't add to your hips and clog your arteries. An excellent site is **Healthier Fast Food Choices** located at <http://www.healthchecksyste.ms.com/ffood.htm>. This site offers an excellent chart of various popular fast food restaurants and their lower fat/calorie menu choices.

Surprisingly, McDonald's has the lowest fat and calorie single hamburger. Additionally, they offer a delicious yogurt parfait that is low calorie and low fat. If you just cannot resist fried food, opt for a lower calorie version by ordering the wings at KFC rather than legs, breasts and thighs. Did you know that at KFC, original recipe chicken has nearly ½ as few calories as does the extra crispy? So opt for two wings-original recipe. Taco Bell has a new line of tasty lower fat and calorie foods called "Fresco Style". The secret is that the cheese in the regular menu item is replaced by a Fiesta Salsa that is quite good. Bean Burritos provide a lot of protein to the diet as well.

Another good tip is to carry along with you in your vehicle healthy snacks that can keep your hunger pains at bay so you avoid fast food altogether. Some healthy options that won't go bad in the car are carrots, bananas, whole-wheat crackers (although opt for lower sodium varieties) and almonds just to name a few.

2. **Know how many calories can consume to maintain and/or lose weight:** To lose one pound, you must burn approximately 3500 calories over and above what you already burn doing daily activities. So, there is no deep dark secret to weight loss. The most straight-forward way to lose weight is to eat less and exercise more. The hard part about that straight-forward method is finding the time to count calories and to squeeze in a work out.

Calorie Count is a website that serves as an excellent tool in assisting with calorie counting <http://caloriecount.about.com/>. It is easy to navigate through the web site and takes just a minute or two to sign up. Plus it is FREE. Once entering your weight, height and frame type in addition to the type of daily activity in which you engage, the program will identify for you your target goal weight and how many calories you can consume and need to burn in order to lose weight.

You will be shocked at how the calories add up throughout your day and having an easy computer program like this to hold you accountable will ensure results. Additionally, the site provides examples of beverages that are lighter calories like the red wine over a mixed drink. Don't hesitate to shop for the lighter versions of your favorite alcoholic beverages. Amstel, Rolling Rock, Sam Adams, Mikes Hard Lemonade all have low cal alternatives. If you like red wine, Red Zinfandels tend to be the least caloric, but all wines are about the same.

3. **Be active every day:** In a perfect world this section would advise you to exercise every day, but that is not practical for many people and often times folks are turned away by trying to meet a goal they cannot achieve, so start out small. Forms of activity really add up and you CAN burn calories without stressing yourself out trying to make it to the gym or losing sleep to squeeze in a workout.

Some suggestions for exercise that anyone can do are these:

1. Park a distance away from the building you plan to enter-instead of circling and then waiting for that closer spot, use your time wisely by parking in that spot farther away then walk briskly to the building. You will burn about 25 calories doing this alone.
2. Use your breaks from work to take a quick walk or walk up and down 100 stairs. You will burn about 120 calories.
3. Instead of hitting the snooze button, get up and take a 10 minute walk. You will not only feel better, but you will start the day 100 calories lighter.
4. Stay flexible-less flexibility does come with age; however, reduced physical activity **causes** inflexibility. Normal flexibility is an important part of fitness, so try your best to stretch at least three times a week. **The Stretching Institute** can be found at <http://www.thestretchinghandbook.com> and is a web site that will provide you with some stretching examples sure to increase flexibility.

Once you are ready, you can work yourself up to a regular exercise routine or even that gym membership, but just remember, any exercise is good for you, so don't hold back.

No matter what, just remember that your health is more important than how you look. Be good to yourself. A healthier lifestyle and slimmer shape will not happen overnight, but the long term impact on your health will change your life for the better.