

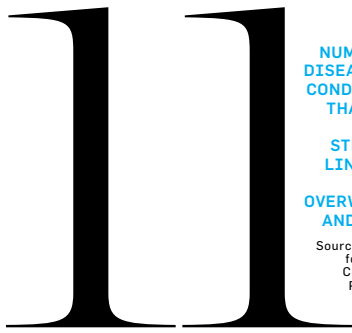
WEIGHT LOSS

Edited by Laura Roberson

BUL

YOU'RE SO VEIN

Need some inner motivation? New Mayo Clinic research shows that losing just a few pounds can expand your arteries. **When healthy people gained 9 pounds, their blood vessels showed a decreased ability to dilate, a risk factor for high blood pressure, stroke, and erectile dysfunction.** After the weight loss, the vessels reverted to their original state. Study author Virend Somers, M.D., Ph.D., says each fat cell is "a factory for deleterious substances, including adipokines, which cause inflammation." Gradual weight loss is best: It helps prevent regain later, he says.



NUMBER OF DISEASES OR CONDITIONS THAT HAVE BEEN STRONGLY LINKED TO BEING OVERWEIGHT AND OBESE

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

A LOSING PLAN

Look ahead to out-smart a raging appetite. **Planning your responses to hunger may help you shed fat faster,** Dutch researchers report. Dieters who wrote a list of "if, then" statements ("If I'm hungry at 4 p.m., then I'll

have a few almonds.") lost more weight and stuck to their diets better than those who didn't put pen to paper. A specific plan may help you avoid poor choices when hunger strikes, the scientists say. Schedule safe snacks for your weakest times, and switch them up every few weeks.

Free up your bloodflow by dropping some weight.

DROP POUNDS—WITH HER HELP

Dieting loves company: Couples who diet together are more likely to succeed. In a recent Israeli study, researchers taught couples about healthy eating but assigned only the men to various kinds of eating plans. After 6 months, the women had also shed weight. Study author Rachel Golan, R.D., M.P.H., says weight-loss support is mutual: "Sharing dishes and eating together helps the dieters stick to a diet—there won't be temptations on their plates." A great way to map out your new meal plan is to visit cookthis.MensHealth.com/recipes. You'll find lots of healthful, lower-calorie versions of restaurant favorites.

AFRAID OF THE GYM?

Joining a gym can be an emotional workout if you're overweight, says Wayne Miller, Ph.D., who studied exercise attitudes among overweight and normal-weight people.

THE EXCUSE

"I'll have to exercise in front of much younger people."

HOW TO OVERCOME IT

Feeling judged by people who are more fit or attractive? Think of ways you're superior to them—more experienced, for instance, says Miller. Or go when the fit crowd isn't there.

"I'll embarrass myself."

Take a beginners' class. It's a setting with others at your level. And don't sell yourself short: In Miller's study, heavy folks were as at ease with equipment as slim people were.

"I'd be wasting my money."

Overweight people often join gyms but let their memberships lapse. Track your attendance or use a fitness log, and reward yourself when you reach a goal, Miller suggests.



FOOD COURT

The crime

1,260

Number of calories in Red Lobster's Cajun Chicken Linguini Alfredo, full portion

The punishment

4

Number of hours you'd have to spend coaching Little League to burn off 1,260 calories

From top: YASU + JUNKO, THOMAS MACDONALD