GETTING LEAN

An appropriate body composition for your sport may mean that at times you need to reduce body fat. It’s important to be realistic with your expectations about the effort and time it takes to lose body fat. Losses of 0.5kgs per week are possible with the right training and nutrition plan. Losing weight at a faster rate than this may mean that you are losing water or muscle mass as well as body fat, which is usually not the goal for a healthy athlete. Off-season and preseason are often the best times to concentrate on losing body fat as you can generally train well and may have more time to shop, cook and prepare your food.

Tips

1. Track your intake: Do you have any idea what you eat in a day? Are you skipping meals? Are you overeating late at night? Tracking your intake with an app e.g. My Fitness Pal can help identify times when you are not following the steps below.

2. Eat a high protein breakfast: Aim for 15 – 20g of protein at breakfast. Protein is a satiating nutrient meaning it will fill you up leaving you less likely to crave sugar or overeat later in the day. Good options are eggs, Greek yogurt, nuts, seeds, tofu, approved protein powder, milk.

3. Include protein, vegetables and whole grains at every meal: When trying to reduce body fat, you should fill 50% of your plate with vegetables, 25% with protein and 25% with high fibre carbohydrates (e.g. rice, potato, quinoa, bulgur wheat, bean pasta, beans, lentils etc.)

4. Reduce portion sizes: Stick to the portion sizes listed above: Consider serving your meals on smaller plates, bowls etc. to help reduce portion sizes.

5. Snack smarter: An effective way to lose weight is to reduce the frequency of your snacks and choose lower calorie snacks. Avoid snacking on granola bars, muffins, cookies, chips, popcorn, or baked goods which contain lots of calories, sugar and trans fats. Better snacks are lean meats, edamame, jerky, eggs, hummus, yogurt, milk + berry smoothie, cottage cheese, fruits, vegetable sticks. Nuts are a great snack but keep the portion size small as they are packed with good fats and lots of calories! Avoid snacking late at night and only snack when you are truly hungry.

6. Cut out high calorie drinks and drink mainly water: Juice, sweetened or flavoured milk, sugar in tea or coffee, energy drinks, soda, bubble tea, alcohol and high sugar coffee drinks contain high levels of processed sugar that will add up to lots of extra calories. Aim to have 500mls of water with each meal.

7. Grocery Shop: Make sure you have healthy foods available at home and prepare and you’re your meals in advance. If you wait until you get home in the evening and are very hungry you are more likely to snack on convenient, high calorie foods whilst you are preparing your evening meal.

8. Sleep: Research has shown a correlation between lack of sleep and body weight regulation. Aim to get at least 8 hours per night.

9. Eat Mindfully: Chewing your food and recognizing when you are full will also help control your intake. Rushing meals and eating while distracted is associated with poor body composition. Put your knife and fork, or the food itself down in between bites and chew thoroughly.

10. Reduce your portion sizes of the following healthy, but still high calorie, fats - oils, cheese, nuts, seeds, cream, skin and marbling in meat, salad dressings and butter

**Please speak with your Sports Dietitian for further information**

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