

7 Ways to Avoid the Annual Holiday Belt Loosening

By

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With the holidays fast approaching and the presumable increase in caloric consumption that comes with it, it may be helpful to have a plan of attack for avoiding the inevitable belt lengthening that lie ahead this holiday season. Here are 7 quick tips one can use to avoid those unwanted holiday pounds and make an honorable attempt at keeping with last year's New Year resolution.

Tip I. Earn your carbs.

Carbohydrate partitioning/storage is first done according to need, then according to storage of excesses. If you deplete your muscle and liver glycogen stores, the body will need to replenish those stores prior to storing the excess in fat cells. Depleting those glycogen stores is done through physical activity, weight training, and carbohydrate depletion (more on that later). Thus, if you are lean, eating carbohydrates after you have worked out allows your body to partition the carbohydrates properly, avoiding storage in fat cells.

Tip II. Eat your protein first.

Protein comes from the Greek word "Proteios" which mean primary. By eating your proteins first, you will be slightly satiated prior to eating your carbohydrates, leading to a decrease (hopefully) in your carbohydrate consumption.

Tip III. Build more lean muscle to raise your metabolic rate.

“When weight training and supportive nutrition are performed individually, they have a metabolic effect of 10% (increasing metabolism rate by 10%). When cardiovascular exercise is performed by itself, it has a metabolic effect of 5%. **When they components (weight training, cardio, and supportive nutrition) are performed in unison, they have an enormous synergistic metabolic effect of 30-40% (1).”**

Which weighs more, muscle or fat? A pound of muscle weighs the same as a pound of fat. The question should be which weighs more according to volume/density? Muscle density is 1.06 g/ml and fat density is (about) 0.9g/ml. Thus, one liter of muscle would weigh 1.06 kg and one liter of fat would weight 0.9 kg. In other words, muscle is about 18% denser than fat (2). Without knowledge of this, people begin to panic, because the reading on the scale has not changed. After weeks of weight training the scale reading has not changed, but your pant sizes have gone down. You may think, “why do my jeans fit better, but I have not lost any weight”. Understanding that muscle weighs more per unit volume, but takes up less space should explain this phenomenon.

In the beginning stages of weight training you are increasing your neuromuscular efficiency, thereby increasing your strength. As your strength and efficiency increase, your body responds by increasing the cross sectional areas of the stimulated muscle fibers (dependent on repetition ranges, sets, rest intervals, tempo, etc.), otherwise known as hypertrophy. As you increase the size of the cross sectional area of those fibers, your body is increasing its percentage of lean muscle mass. As your percentage of lean muscle mass increases, your metabolism will become more efficient. With a more efficient metabolism, your body will burn calories with greater efficiency, particularly fats, while preserving the muscle proteins.

As your body adds lean muscle, the reading on the scale may stay the same or even go in the opposite direction from which you were hoping. With the added muscle, your body composition (%fat, % lean muscle, etc..) will change, thus decreasing dress, shirt, and pant sizes. In essence, weight training (when done properly), can have profound positive effects on body composition, without any change in the reading on the scale.

Tip IV. More frequent feedings throughout the day

Eating more healthy small meals throughout the day leads to moderate increases in blood sugar and insulin, while less frequent feedings of large meals leads to large increases in blood sugar and insulin. Your body can only metabolize and properly partition so much food at one time, and the rest then goes to the “infinite well” known as fat cells. It is this “infinite well” that allows discovery channel to do documentaries on thousand pound people now a days. Try to eat 6 small meals per day, each consisting of protein and fat or carbs.

Tip V. Biosignature Modulation

By understanding the underlying reasons as to why your body stores fat where it does can provide you with a roadmap for how to lose the fat. Biosignature modulation is based on regulating hormonal imbalances to stimulate fat loss, while increasing muscular tone and definition. For more on Biosignature Modulation at APECS, click [here](#) .

Tip VI. Cycle Your Carbohydrates

Is it dietary fat that makes us fat, or carbohydrates that make us fat? To borrow a quote from Michael Pollen’s excellent book In Defense of Food, “We did change our eating habits in the wake of the new guidelines (food pyramid), endeavoring to replace the evil fats at the top of the food pyramid with the good carbs spread out at the bottom. The whole of the industrial food supply was reformulated to reflect the new traditional wisdom, giving us low fat pork, low fat Snackwell’s, and all the low fat pasta and high fructose (yet low fat!) corn syrup we could consume. Which turned out to be a lot! Oddly, Americans got really fat on their new low fat diet—indeed, many date the current epidemic of obesity and diabetes to the late 1970’s, when Americans began binging on carbohydrates, ostensibly as a way to avoid the evils of fat.”

Try this test for yourself (do not try if you are diabetic, have allergies to any of the following foods, or are under doctors supervision for nutritional reasons). Weigh yourself/check pant size on Sunday evening. For the next week, try eating a healthy and protein for breakfast (ie: avocado and eggs/steak), protein and healthy fat for mid morning snack, protein, fat and veggies for lunch (ie: chicken, nuts, and broccoli), protein and fat for mid afternoon snack (cottage cheese and almonds), and protein, ½ cup of sustainable carbohydrate (ie: brown rice) and veggies. Weigh yourself/check pant size the next Sunday. For the next week cut back on all fats in your diet, and feel free to eat carbohydrates at each meal. The following Sunday you should check your weight/pant size and compare which week you achieved better results. This may give you some insight into which type of foods your body prefers.

Carbohydrate cycling is not a new concept. When bodybuilders want to lose body fat, they rely on the decades old method of modifying/cycling your carbohydrate intake. There are many methods of carbohydrate cycling/modification including post workout carbs only (2-3 hours post workout only), carb cycling throughout the day, weekly carb cycles, carb loading/depletion according to one's training schedule, and much more. These methods are not new, but they are effective, so much so that they make up the base for many of the most popular diet books out there today.

VII. Taking your Fish Oil

High quality twice processed fish oil has too many benefits to list in this short article. Take a peek at World Renowned strength coach Charles Poliquin's excellent article on 10 of the benefits of fish oil ([Top 10 Reasons EFA's are Essential](#)). According to coach Poliquin and Dr. Mark Houston,

- "Fish oils **turn on the lipolytic genes** (fat burning genes)"
- "Fish oils **turn off the lipogenic genes** (fat storage genes),"
- "Increase **utilization of fat stores** from the adipocytes."
- "**Preferential utilization for energy production** once stored in the Adipocytes."

(Excerpts from Charles Poliquin's article "Fishing for Supplements" found on his website www.charlespoliquin.com or click here [here](#).)

Conclusion

Enjoy the holidays and stay lean.

References

1. Alessi, D., Alessi D. The Promise. Pp 17, 59, 60. Williamsville, Ny. 2002
2. The Journals of Gerontology Series A: Biological Sciences and Medical Sciences. 56; Pp B191-B197. 2001