

21 POUNDS IN 21 DAYS



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UH HUH? REALLY? Does anyone buy these incredible stories of extreme weight change in short periods of time? YES, actually. It may fly in the face of all reason and rational thinking, but people are still willing to unnecessarily risk their health and wellness in an effort to "get thin quick". These scams do not work on your finances, and they are even worse on your health. Even if one accepts that the weight could be lost, once you get results, how long do you want to keep them? Experience would tell most that anything that can be obtained quickly will also be gone in the same manner. Some of these trends are silly, but some are downright dangerous.

CLEANSING: WOW... There are stars doing the "master's cleanse" with cayenne pepper and maple syrup...YUCK! But, do not discount the nominal and temporary health benefits of a reasonable, planned, and nutritionally sound cleanse. The data is mixed on such things. 72 hours in a sauna drinking nothing but water is never advised (think 1978). Temporarily moving to a raw, vegan, soft diet, however, has been shown to aid in the elimination of waste and relief of gastro intestinal difficulties. The caveat is supervision. Lack of expert guidance when radically altering one's diet is a recipe for everything from dehydration to anemia to rickets to scurvy to...you name it! Before you attempt a cleanse of any kind, seek the advice of a nutritionist or dietician. Also, do not expect significant weight loss.

COLONICS/ENEMAS: YUCK AGAIN! But, this is a highly touted method of eliminating toxins. Some even claim that colon disease can be cured by such means. These extreme measures typically yield only a pound or two in actual weight loss, but if they serve to manually cleanse a toxic system, perhaps they are not to be discounted. Any such measure, however, has its risks. Know that even enemas sold over the counter can be abused and/or misused to such an extent as to rarely cause significant dehydration, electrolyte imbalance, cramping, and worse!

CALORIE RESTRICTION: This one is intense. Even Oprah's famous Dr. Oz has had to admit that a specific prescription to calorie restriction as a lifestyle seems to have a positive correlation to longevity and overall wellness. BUT, he does not recommend it short term, nor to those with significant weight to lose. Extreme calorie restriction over long periods of time actually works against those in need of weight loss. If one teaches one's body to survive on fewer calories, to a certain extent, the body can adapt and cooperate. Sadly, this cooperation does not always result in the loss of body fat and/or weight. As with any significant change, consult a professional. Know that 800 calories a day for even a few weeks is not wise AND that ultimately such extreme measures are unsustainable. Results gained in this way are almost always temporary.

EXTREME FITNESS: We have all heard the stories of the uber famous shedding a pound a day by doing 8 hours in the gym. NOT! First, most people do not have 8 hours a day to commit to such a routine. Secondly, this level of activity is not possible over the long term...just ask graduates of the Biggest Loser. Third, weight lost via sweat is predominately water. Also, when the inactive suddenly throw themselves into distance running or other intense exercise, injury is a common result. Any perceived benefit to sudden and intense exercise is simply not worth the inherent risk.

WHAT CAN YOU DO IN 21 DAYS? Many experts in sports psychology, coaching, and other fitness disciplines would tell you that a bad habit can be broken and/or a new one created in this amount of time. Some "jump start" diet and fitness programs even recommend setting a 21 day goal. Theories abound that suggest going to the gym EVERY day for 21 days and holding yourself accountable to a clean diet for this period is possible and beneficial. In that amount of time small, but measurable results can be achieved and possible habits formed. Building in a "reward" or "cheat" on the 21st day can also serve as a motivator for many who just need that first success on which to build. So long as the gym sessions are kept to 60 minutes or less, there seem to be no real hazards to such a short term commitment. 21 pounds? Probably not. BUT...if the three week plan is enough to help you move more and eat better, it may be something worth considering with a trained professional within a reasonable framework.

Many of life's lessons are cleverly and beautifully illustrated in the stories told to children. There may be some health benefit to fads, trends, and/or ritual health practices, weight loss simply isn't one of them. The Tortoise and the Hare has a valuable lesson for those in need of significant weight loss: "Slow and steady wins the race." If you want to keep your results long term, consult a professional, do it the "hard/slow" way and your body will respond. Before you attempt anything, consult your physician. Evaluating your mental and physical health is necessary in order to succeed.

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