

HEALTH

Experts agree, gradual weight loss is better

Balanced diet, exercise cited as healthy way to lose weight

By Jeff Gable
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It's a struggle that many people face every year — trying to find the best way to lose a few unwanted pounds and get into shape.

Whether it's a New Year's resolution or an attempt to slim down before an upcoming wedding or reunion, people of all ages, shapes and sizes fight an annual battle of the bulge.

But local nutritionists say while there are many ways to reach your ideal weight, some methods and practices are safer than others.

Experts agree that consistency and gradual weight loss are the preferable alternatives to crash diets and so-called miracle drugs.

"The main problem many people run into is they think (weight loss) will be something that happens overnight," said Janet Childre, the Clinical Nutrition Manager at Floyd Medical Center. "Some people are always looking for a 'super diet,' but it takes time to take weight off. The best thing is to follow a balanced diet."

The balanced diet theory, one taught by mothers for many years, may sound over-

ly simple, but it's the most reliable weight control method.

"The bottom line is that the best way (to diet) is to eat less and exercise more and eat the right foods," said Janice Knight, the Clinical Nutrition Coordinator at Redmond Regional Medical Center. "In terms of diet, people can drink water before eating to help reduce appetite and they can use smaller plates and eat smaller portions."

"And any physical activity is good for you, even if it's just doing 10 minutes of exercise at a time. Little things like parking farther from the doors at a shopping center or taking the stairs instead of the elevator, it's important to get into healthy habits and make the little things a part of your day."

From the exercise perspective, experts say that patience is indeed a virtue when planning a workout program.

"One thing that unfortunately is very prevalent is the quick-fix idea," said Leigh Crews, a certified personal trainer. "People say 'I want to reach this goal weight in six weeks' or 'I need to lose a pound a day.' There are only certain things the body can accomplish in a certain amount of time."

"It's a gradual process, like anything else. A safe weight loss is about one to three pounds a week, so wanting to see a radical change in two or three weeks is difficult."

Crews said the ideal plan for a weight loss program involves diet, exercise and a consultation with a physician.

"You should always check with a doctor to make sure you have no health problems



Jeff Gable / Rome News-Tribune

Leigh Crews (right) assists Chelsea Daniels during a workout at the Rome Athletic Club.

that would affect the exercise and nutrition program you want to do," Crews said. "A trainer can show you how to do exercises properly, and a nutritionist can compliment it all and make sure you have enough calories and nutrition for health while cutting back some fat."

When starting a workout plan, Crews said many people have unfortunately adopted the old mantra of "no pain, no gain."

"I think one myth out there is that (exercise) has to hurt to be effective," she said. "People feel they have to go through a lot of pain to get any benefit from their program. But you shouldn't be completely incapacitated or have severe joint pain because of a workout."

"Just because you're exercising doesn't mean you need to be sore all the time."

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Surgeon happy to return to Northwest Georgia

• Harbin Clinic's newest neurosurgeon is a Cartersville native.

By Lillian Shaw
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When he left for college 15 years ago, he was just a young high school valedictorian and football star from Cartersville. In August, Dr. John Cowan will return to Northwest Georgia as Harbin Clinic's newest neurosurgeon.

A graduate of Davidson College and Johns Hopkins University, Cowan has spent the last seven years in residency for neurosurgery at the University of Michigan.

"I look forward to getting back to Northwest Georgia and to better weather," Cowan said.

Cowan brings with him training in minimally invasive spinal surgery, which reduces post-operative pain and allows people to heal faster and leave hospitals sooner.

Cowan uses computer-guided technologies, saving much muscle damage by reducing a six-inch incision to a one-inch cut.

An intraoperative CT scanner provides surgeons with real-time, 3-D anatomic data. "We can see exactly what's going on with a person's spine and get a sense about the operation," Cowan said.

With this information in the computer, doctors can then link surgical instruments to the computer and work anywhere on the spine with precision.



Dr. John Cowan said, "I look forward to getting back to Northwest Georgia and to better weather."

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