**Things you need to know about losing weight**

Taken from the BBC programme presented by Michael Mosley, a medical journalist.

The programme concentrates on the solid science behind effective weight loss. They conducted various experiments (brain scans, measuring metabolic rate, scanning stomachs and many more), to prove these points!

While making this programme Michael, although he did not look overweight, found that he had a high level of viseral fat, fat deposits around the internal organs. He used the findings of this programme and reached his weight loss goal.

It kicked off with the presenter assessing the calorific content of a variety of foods; there were several plates lined up in front of him and he had to put them into calorie order, the plates included:

* Chicken dinner with potatoes and vegetables
* A muffin
* A large bowl of fruit
* A sandwich
* A small bar of chocolate
* A smoothie
* One and a half pork pies

The result was - they all had the same calorific content – ummm.... thought provoking.

**Don’t Skip Meals**Skipping meals can actually cause you to eat more! Your body releases a hormone called ghrelin which sends messages to the brain telling it you are hungry and this in turn triggers us to crave high calorie foods to compensate for the missed meal. Skipping meals also causes your body to hold onto fat!

**Reduce your plate size to control portion sizes**The example given was from 12” down to 10” you eat 22% less food

**Watch Calories**Aim to go for lower calorie versions of the same foods. For example a black coffee is 10 calories whereas a cappuccino is 100. Two apples is approx 120 calories whereas a chocolate bar could be 300. Toast is 125 whereas a pastry could be up to 270. Small changes could reduce your calorie intake by up to half.

**Don’t blame your metabolic rate**   
(The rate at which your burn calories – just living breathing/walking)  
This was an interesting experiment conducted on a woman who was counting her calories. It turns out she's not eating the 1,500 calories per day she thinks, but 3,000! 1,000 more than her body actually needs. Remember if it is not used it is stored as fat! When keeping a food diary most people under report by up to 50% as they forget to include the little extras i.e. coffee, snacks, milk on cereal, sauces, salad dressing and even fruit.

**Protein rich foods keep you fuller for longer**A Protein rich breakfast can stop mid morning hunger pangs and even prevent you eating so much at lunch time. Apparently protein triggers a hormone, PYY, which flood the brain with messages saying that you are full.

**Eat Soup**  
The increased volume of soup will keep your stomach fuller for longer. Something we all know deep down, if you were out for a three course meal you would naturally avoid soup knowing that it will fill you up!

**Avoid Buffets**We love choice –the wider the choice the more you eat. You could eat up to 30% more.

**Low fat dairy helps you excrete more fat**Dairy calcium - when reaching your small intestine binds with the fat molecules from foods, to form a soap like substance, this can’t be absorbed therefore passes straight through you!

**Exercise**Exercise has been proven to increase your metabolic rate, not just during exercise but afterwards so you can burn fat even whilst asleep – fantastic! Find an exercise that you enjoy as you will then be more likely to keep it up for longer.

**Move**If you can’t exercise just move more. Take the stairs, walk to the shop, move while you are on the phone.

Exercise should play a part in any healthy lifestyle. Exercise will help will speed up weight loss but if you can’t do that – just move more!

Many of these points seem simple and common sense but the stats are high for attempts at weight loss failing in the long term, so it’s not easy. Be wary of those hidden calories drinks, sauces and try swapping high calorie favourites for low calories alternatives.

Disa Bennett  
Fitness Instructor