



5 reasons to THROW YOUR SCALE AWAY!!!!

It seems to have become an obsession. We have been so conditioned to monitor our weight (it's the first thing everyone asks about us when we're born!) and so skewed by popular shows like 'The Biggest Loser' (with weekly weigh-ins that DO NOT show realistic or healthy weight loss) that it appears as though we have now reached a point where the only thing that makes us feel better about ourselves is losing weight. Many people are in the habit of stepping on the scale daily to detect any changes but the problem is that weight is not necessarily an accurate or complete representation of one's health.

So why continue with the frequent weigh-ins? What exactly is being measured? And why let the results of those weigh-ins affect our mood, self-esteem, and behaviour? The solution is clear and simple - tune in to what really matters and throw your scale away! Here's why...

- 1) **Body composition** - Your body has both fat mass (composed of fat or adipose tissue) and fat-free mass (composed of bones, muscles, connective tissue, organs etc). Rather than stressing about weight, most people should actually be worried about changing their body composition by losing fat and gaining muscle. Unfortunately, a scale CANNOT tell the difference between fat mass and fat-free mass - it just measures total body weight.
- 2) **Effects of exercise** – Proper exercise usually results in a decrease in fat mass but also an increase in fat free mass due to added muscle mass and bone density. Muscle weighs more than fat so the scale may not read that we've lost any weight despite the fact that our body composition and therefore our overall health are so much better when we are in the habit of getting frequent exercise.
- 3) **Recommended guidelines for permanent weight loss** - If your doctor has recommended that you do lose weight, a healthy guideline is 1-2 lbs per week. There is therefore no need to weigh yourself more than once per month. How is your scale going to detect you losing a quarter to a half pound in a day? It's not.
- 4) **Daily fluctuations** – Body weight is not static - It changes when we eat, sweat, drink, etc. If you are dehydrated, you will weigh less than if your hydration levels were sufficient. If you were to weigh yourself after consuming a steak dinner, you would weigh more than before you ate the dinner. Weighing yourself often can therefore be misleading as you may have 'lost' or 'gained' weight due to these normal fluctuations that are constantly occurring.

- 5) **Mood & behaviour** – Slight changes in weight seem to affect how we feel and impact decisions that we make. For example, we tend to feel badly if we notice that the numbers on the scale are higher than the day before. Or, we might decide that it's OK to treat ourselves to ice cream if the numbers read lower than the previous day. Furthermore, people tend to get very frustrated when they start to exercise and don't see an immediate decrease in weight. Again, the scale does not measure a person's health and should therefore not have such an impact on self-esteem and choices that we make.

Rather than putting so much stock into the numbers on the scale, the best thing to do is to start noticing your body's response to exercise. Pay more attention to the other positive effects of habitual exercising: decreased stress, better quality sleep, improved posture, increased strength and endurance, clothes fitting better, tendencies to eat healthier, and a general increase in feelings of well-being. The scale cannot measure any of those things, only you can.

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