

preparing you for a famine or another natural disaster that might leave you without a food source. Your body actually thinks it's doing you a favor. Granted, most of us would be happy to take the risk and trade our "winter supply of nuts" for a smaller waistline. But science cannot be altered by will or desire. Reserved fuel translates to more of you.

### The math factor

Just as we know that 2.2 pounds equals 1 kilogram, we also know in human physiology that 3,500 calories equals 1 pound. This means that your bathroom scale will reflect a 1-pound increase if you take in an additional 3,500 calories more than you need or use. This is important to understand because it explains how we lose and gain weight. On the flip side, if you create a 3,500 calorie deficit by taking in less, and/or exercising more, your bathroom scale will reflect a 1-pound decrease. Simple as that.

### The gender factor

Something else to add to the pile of unfair truths is the fact that men inherently burn more calories, pound for pound, than women do. Men burn 17 calories for

each pound of their weight, while women burn only 13. (Note: this equation is based on sedentary men and women, respectively.) This means that a 150 pound man needs 2,700 calories ( $150 \times 17$ ) to sustain his weight, while a woman of the exact same weight ( $150 \times 13$ ) requires only 1,950 calories. Again, sad, unfair but true. The reason for the discrepancy is related to muscle. Men inherently have more muscle mass than women and, as such, have a higher metabolic rate. There is, however, good news. If women increase their muscle mass by participating in regular weight-resistance exercise, they can rev-up their metabolism, speeding up weight loss.

### The customization factor

Apply the principles and equations above to your own scenario to determine what you need to do to lose weight. Start with your current weight and multiply that number by 13, if you are a female, and 17, if you are a male. This will give you a clear understanding of how many calories you are taking in, generally speaking, on a regular basis. Next, look for ways you can eliminate 500 calories a

day, either by eating fewer calories and/or exercising more. It's not so hard to do—500 calories is equal to two and a half tablespoons of butter and a 30-minute walk. If you follow this plan, you will lose 1 pound of fat in a week, 4 pounds in a month and 24 pounds in six months! A pound a week may not sound like a lot but remember, your goal is to never see that pound again. Studies show there is a positive correlation between slow, steady weight loss and long-term success. 🏋️‍♀️

#### Suggested reading

1. Clinical guidelines on the identification, evaluation, and treatment of overweight and obesity in adults. The Evidence Report. National Institutes of Health; National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; and the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases; 1998.



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