

Gym Rat Rantings

by Bob Ring



Living Healthy - Diet

Your old gym rat friend hasn't survived this long without careful attention to diet and weight control. I've developed a breakthrough four-step program that I'm excited to share with you. The program carries an "unbelievably effective" rating from the Fit Center's registered dietician and exercise guru, Lynne O. If you follow the plan faithfully, I guarantee it will change your life.

Step 1 - Pick the Right Diet

This is the easy step; just pick the right diet for you and stick with it – forever.

It all depends on your attitude toward food content. What are you concerned about? Carbohydrates? Fat? Salt? Sugar? Chemicals? Radioactivity? Color? Chewability?

The June 2007 issue of *Consumer Reports* magazine lays it all out for you. They rate diet books and plans. Yes, everything you wanted to know about Volumetrics, Weight Watchers, Jenny Craig, Slim-Fast, Atkins, and many others. The main message is that "solid science" is finally influencing the new diets. The most startling conclusion from the *Consumer Reports* assessment is "you still have to restrict quantities to lose weight." No kidding!

It may be a challenge to pick a diet that the whole family can stomach (oops, likes). For example in my family, Pat likes things like Jalapeno peppers, liver and onions, beets, and sauerkraut, while I can't stand that stuff, preferring steak, potatoes, and did I say steak. So we have compromised on the medically-touted combination high-chocolate and high-wine diet.

Step 2 - Pay Attention to What You Eat

Those handy little labels on all the food packages we buy list ingredients, nutrients, fat and cholesterol contents, and health claims for the "standard serving" portion. This standard serving stuff is important. I've always been uncomfortable trying to relate the "two tons" of Fritos that cause cancer in rats (I don't take that personally) to the effects of my standard serving size, no more than a two-pound bag.

Anyway, there's a lot of important data out there. If you want to increase your chances of dietary success, you need to memorize every food label that you look at. You'll accept this statement when you realize that after reading most food labels, you will almost certainly lose your appetite and after memorizing the label (spelling counts), you won't have any time left to eat anyway.

As an example, guess what simple everyday food product this is (actual label): enriched wheat flour (niacin, iron, thiamine mononitrate, riboflavin, folic acid), maltodextrin, partially hydrogenated soybean and cotton seed oil, bleached wheat flour, salt, paprika, malted barley flour, spices, mustard flour, natural flavor, dextrose, caramel color, dried garlic, sugar, and dried onions. (Answer: Shake-and-Bake)

Are you with me so far? Good! Now go ahead and choose your diet and start memorizing food labels. Next time we'll cover weight control with "Exercise" and "Measuring Progress."