



ATgoal

No Quick Fitness Fix

by **Terry Simpson, MD, FACS**

Seventy-five percent of the patients who incorporate exercise into their life get to their weight loss goal and stay there. Given that, there are two simple caveats:

1. Exercise cannot overcome a lack of calorie restriction.
2. Exercise won't provide instant pleasure or instant results.

When patients come to me who have not lost weight over the last month, I ask what happened. Occasionally someone will say that they didn't exercise—but that is never a correct answer. The reason weight is gained is because of caloric intake, not lack of exercise. "But exercise burns calories!" you may protest. It does, but it is no substitute for proper calorie restriction.

The simplest illustration comes from McDonald's. The hamburgers that McDonald's restaurants sell today contain 230 calories more than the hamburgers they sold in the 1960s. For me to work off those extra 230 calories would require two and a half hours of working out on weights. That is just one meal! So, the correct combination that successful patients have found is calorie restriction with exercise.

Many pre-op patients have already discovered that exercise is not a quick fix for excess weight—except in the very young and very athletic. I recently saw a retired hall-of-fame basketball player, now sportscaster, working out in a local gym. He has a vigorous routine that he follows faithfully. But he clearly needs a band. No matter how much he exercises, even on a daily basis, calorie restriction will be a far more efficient path to weight loss than exercise. Nevertheless, the workout routine he has now will benefit him long after he has his weight loss surgery.

Exercise is a long-term lifestyle change that will allow you to keep fit, mobile, and healthy. But be careful, do not expect it to give you instant weight loss or instant "abs"—instead, think of it as part of a long-term building project to keep you healthy for years to come.

For more information about **Dr. Simpson** and fitness, see www.drsimpson.net and click on the "Fitness" tab at the top of the page.