

Healthy Living for Dancers July/August, 2011: Two New Effective Tools for Weight Loss

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If losing weight were easy, obesity wouldn't be the epidemic that it is. We can throw our hands up in surrender or we can continue to search for the right answer for each of us. I was fortunate enough to find my way, 13 years ago, and lost four dress sizes that I have kept off since then. Many of my patients have shared this success with me, but not all. So, I'm always looking for other healthy ways to overcome the barriers that patients have to staying with a program til they, too, succeed. In that search, I discovered two programs that handle the following barriers to successful weight loss.

Barrier number one: "I'm not losing weight fast enough and I can't stay motivated."

Barrier number two: "I can't give up my one or two glasses of red wine at night that I need to unwind."

A little background before I reveal the "quick weight loss secret" so that you can understand the foundation for its success. To settle the controversy disputing the generally held belief that "a calorie is a calorie," a study was performed to compare the value to weight loss of the three major macro nutrients, fats, proteins and carbohydrates. The design was simple. Three groups were each restricted to 1,000 calories per day. The first group ate 90% of their calories from fats. The second group ate 90% of their calories from protein. The third group ate 90% of their calories from carbohydrates. Here are the results. The fat group lost 0.9 lbs. per day, the protein group 0.65 lbs. per day and – surprise, surprise – the carbohydrate group *gained* 0.25 lbs per day. Even though the fat only diet was the most successful, you can imagine that most people won't be too happy just eating macadamia nuts, all day. However, a short stint with just protein is very doable and the actual foundation of the first program that I'm going to recommend.

For a quick start weight loss, "The Dukan Diet" by Dr. Pierre Dukan is the first choice. This was the diet that made its big American debut on the *Dr. Oz* show. The program has a few holes in it, because Dr. Dukan is not really a nutrition expert, but they are easy to patch up. As he admits in the introduction of his book, he basically



lucked into discovering the success of this approach via an experiment he conducted with an obese patient. A couple of major issues that I have with the program are as follows. Dr. Dukan condones the use of diet chemical sweeteners as "harmless" when, in fact, they (especially aspartame – Nutrasweet) have been shown to not only have serious health consequences, but they've been proven to actually increase appetite and deter weight loss. He states in his book that the FDA has no complaints against aspartame, when, in fact, it is the number one most complained about additive. Its major complaint is with causing headaches, but that's the least of the problem. Aspartame breaks down to formaldehyde when consumed and, if you know anything about this chemical, you may know that it is the most carcinogenic chemical around. Yes, formaldehyde is what's used to embalm corpses. Think about that, the next time that you drink a "diet soft drink" or any "sugar free" product featuring fake sweeteners.

Dr. Dukan is also erroneously fat phobic and prohibits fat completely. As you can see by the study results mentioned earlier, that is unfounded. In fact, not getting enough omega 3 *essential* fats is very deleterious to health in countless ways.

The program that allows one to two glasses of red wine per day is called "Slow Carbohydrate Diet" and can be found in a very uncommon book, "The 4-Hour Body" by Timothy Ferriss. This book is massive and covers tons of subjects, including some very controversial ones, but, as the

author states in his introduction, you don't have to read the whole book. Read the two introductory chapters so that you can understand how the book works and then just go to your subject of interest, the Slow Carbohydrate Diet. By the way, he is also a proponent of high intensity training (HIT), about which I wrote in this column, in the last issue. So, getting his book could be a two-fer for you (I picked it up from Amazon for about \$13). From a professional viewpoint, this book was a wealth of great information on many "body" issues. They may not interest you, other than the weight loss section, but, if they do, be confident that they are very accurate. The big selling point about this program is that, although it is very restrictive on the varieties of food you can eat, besides the daily wine allowance, you also get one binge day per week where nothing is limited. The purpose of this day is to shock your body's metabolism so that you can prevent the metabolic slowdown that is inevitable when weight loss is prolonged (also known as a plateau). This is when your body thinks you are in a famine and very successfully stops your weight loss. If you like the foods in this diet, mostly proteins, vegetables and legumes, it can be satisfying to look forward to eating anything you want on Saturday.

If your inability to lose weight fits into either of these categories, check out these programs. They might be the answer for which you've been looking. Both programs still fit the criteria of being "low glycemic," meaning that they are based on keeping insulin low by eating foods that do not convert to sugar (glucose) in the blood too quickly. Remember that, whatever weight loss program you select, you will always be more successful by first starting out with the "Sugar Control Program" for two weeks. This is so that your metabolism will be burning fat more effectively from the start and you will have fewer cravings, right away. For more info on the program, go to my web site, www.drveronicacollings.com, and read about it under "Wellness Topics." You can also view a brief video clip introduction in the "Weight loss and sugar handling" section of the site. Good luck, and see you on the dance floor.