



CHEK POINTS

for Fitness Professionals

How To Avoid The Chunky Aerobic Instructor Syndrome

Have you noticed some of your clients do the same exercise, week after week, yet despite their dedication their physique never changes? Let's examine why.

There are many fads and fallacies regarding fat loss. The bottom line is this; individuals will not lose fat if they cut calories dramatically, and they will only lose body fat (and keep it off) if they burn calories through regular exercise while eating a MINIMUM of 2100 calories a day (any less is considered starvation)! It really is that simple. The part that personal trainers find so challenging is figuring out this balance between calorie consumption and calorie expenditure; what should my clients eat, when do they eat it and what kind of exercise will optimize fat loss. Then the only hurdle is getting your clients to do the work!

After years of clinical experience treating back pain patients who had become overweight from inactivity due to pain, one thing I know for sure:

Diets Don't Work!

This is particularly true with females. In the book "Outsmarting the Female Fat Cell", Debra Waterhouse makes it very clear that females come equipped with significantly more lipogenic (fat storing) enzymes and significantly less lipolytic (fat releasing) enzymes than their male counterparts. She also cites studies showing a female's lipogenic enzyme count increases and lipolytic enzyme count decreases after a calorie-restricted diet, making it increasingly harder to lose weight with each and every successive diet! As a trainer, it is vital that you explain to your clients why diets don't work so you can persuade them not to diet.

A man's body doesn't appreciate dieting either. I have seen many male back pain patients undergo hospital directed diets, lose 30-60 pounds, and gain it all back in as little as a month. Coming off a diet to start eating "normally" again is like the tide coming in!

Remind your clients that instead of starving their bodies to shed fat, a more effective method is to increase the amount of energy they expend. If you are having trouble helping clients lose weight, remember muscle cells are fuel hungry machines. Consequently, any exercise that increases the size of muscle cells and/or makes them work more often will increase metabolism for optimal fat loss. Sounds to me like resistance training tops out again!

It is well known among strength training professionals and researchers that there is a significant post-exercise elevation of metabolism, lasting up to three to four hours after a weight training session ends. This is an important consideration when deciding between cardio work or resistance training for fat loss. Since cardiovascular exercise provides very little post-exercise elevation of metabolism cells stop burning extra energy after your clients are done running, biking, swimming, etc. The body quickly becomes calorie conscious, progressively accomplishing the same amount of work with less energy.

Charles Poliquin - Canadian strength and conditioning coach to Olympic medallists - and colleagues have identified this as the chunky aerobic instructor syndrome. Poliquin found aerobics instructors quickly adapted to the workload of teaching classes, often performing three hours of exercise a day. Despite this being the equivalent training level of a professional athlete, some instructors maintained disproportionately high levels of body fat. Compare this to a good, solid weight training session where the metabolism keeps nibbling away at that fat for hours.

To see this in action, look at any group of athletes whose predominant exercise consists of resistance training, or short, high intensity sprint work. Sprinters are some of the leanest athletes in the world. Olympic weight lifters would rather be castigated than go for a run, yet they are predominantly a very lean group.

When visiting New Zealand, I filmed a special on the PUMP program at Les Mills World of Fitness for my video magazine. PUMP (or Body Pump as it is called in the USA) is a highly popular free weight training class choreographed to music and taught in a group setting. I was amazed at the incredibly lean, fit looking bodies in the room. If you view an aerobics class, you just don't see the same thing. In fact, IDEA released a study a couple years ago indicating that aerobics instructors had an average body fat of >20%, which is surprisingly high for what could be considered a professional athlete. The whole physiology of someone who lifts weights is geared up to burn calories. The opposite is true of aerobicisers, whose physiology is like that of a Honda Civic; stretching a gallon of fuel for 50 miles. When people want to lose fat, they want to be like a Dodge Viper or a Hot Rod; fuel inefficient! Remember, performance cars, like "performance" bodies need lots of high performance fuel! Therefore people need to exercise in such a manner that fuel efficiency is sacrificed.

For example, elite runners regularly include interval training in their programs, producing lactic acid. This has a similar effect as intense circuit training and may produce post-workout caloric expenditure like resistance training. On the other hand, steady state resistance training provides a narrow window (3-4 weeks) with regard to elevated post exercise metabolism.

In the past three years I have had very good results using a circuit concept I learned from Charles Poliquin: 5 compound exercises back to back with < 1:30 rest. The rest periods become progressively shorter as the clients' condition and tolerance for lactic acid improves. Initial weight loss may be due to the fact that they are wolfing their cookies between circuits, but within a few sessions clients learn to come rested and with less in their stomachs! This format causes huge caloric expense during and after training because the exercises chosen are predominantly closed chain with free weights. This type of program causes your clients body to reach states of near meltdown, which activates their thermo-regulatory system, burning even more calories. The program is done 3-4 times per week with intensities of 70-80% 1RM, cycling various exercises in and out to prevent injury.

Another useful method for keeping lean is not eating dinner within three hours of going to sleep. I highly recommended your weight loss clients eat a large protein-rich breakfast (25% of daily calories), a well-balanced lunch, and dinner as the smallest meal of the day. Glycemicly balanced

snacks between meals are recommended, in fact, they may be critical for females wanting weight loss.

So there you have it, if your clients want to lose fat, give your clients the following **formula for change:**

- ① **DON'T DIET!** Make sure your clients eat a nutritious well balanced diet to discourage "survival" fat storage.
- ② Make their first two meals of the day the largest with at least 25% of daily calories eaten at breakfast. Eat snacks as needed to convince your body you're not starving, so they don't activate lipogenic enzymes.
- ③ Eat smallest meal of the day for dinner, remembering to keep any snacks glycemicly balanced (stay away from high glycemic index foods for snacks!)
- ④ Use resistance training to increase muscle mass, increase cellular metabolism and become **FUEL INEFFICIENT!**
- ⑤ Apply periodic cycles of high intensity circuit training. Format your clients circuits with 5 compound exercises, and short rest periods. Have your clients bring a towel so they don't sweat all over everyone and tell them to prepare to up-chuck if they eat too close to their training session.
- ⑥ I suggest to all clients wanting to lose fat to eat fat! Not just any fat though. I recommend Udo's Essential oil blend. It provides a well-balanced mix of essential fatty acids that actually help the body burn off the bad fats you don't want. Mix Udo's with shakes and add protein powder to make a great glycemicly balanced snack! Fish snacks such as salmon, mackerel, and sardines also help with essential fatty acid intake.

You might want to inspire your clients who prefer group exercise to take more resistant training classes such as body pump and fewer step classes. I have been applying these principles with great success, as have my interns all over the world. Using this information, I am sure you can help your clients create the body they've always wanted.

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