



## The Exercise Myth

Lose weight the right way.

BY JJ SMITH


*Is exercise good* for your health? Sure! Is it key to losing weight? Absolutely not! But so many people believe that it is. True, exercise does burn calories, and you must burn calories to lose weight, but exercise has another effect that counteracts the burning of calories; it stimulates hunger, which causes you to eat more and offset any weight lost from exercising.

Exercise doesn't necessarily make you lose weight. In fact, it could make you gain some. The one time in my life that I worked

out with a trainer for a few months, I gained fifteen pounds. When I complained to my trainer, he said the extra weight was all muscle. But my feeling was *Who cares? I can't fit into my clothes*. And I hated my new body shape—not curvy and shapely, but big and bulky.

An increasing body of research reveals that exercise is rather ineffective when it comes to losing weight unless eating habits are also changed. Although exercise is important for good health, the foods you eat are three times more important for controlling your weight than exercise.

There are many good reasons to exercise, such as improving cardiovascular health, but weight loss is not one of them. The question we should be asking ourselves is how much “physical activity” we need to be healthy and fit. Physical activity is about movement—things that get you moving throughout the day and away from the computer, TV, bed, or couch. Exercise is just one type of physical activity where you set aside a specified amount of time to get moving. You can actually burn calories by being physically active throughout the course of the day without ever going to the gym. In my new book, *Lose Weight Without Dieting or Working Out*, I provide 25 easy ways to incorporate more physical activity into your daily routine even if you never go to the gym.

I definitely don't want to give you an excuse to not exercise; rather, I want you to accurately understand what exercise can and cannot do for your weight-loss goals. Changing how and what you eat is the most effective route for losing weight, while being physically active helps you keep the weight off permanently. The goal is simple: eat healthy, get moving, and you will enhance both your weight-loss efforts and your overall health. 

*JJ Smith is a nutritionist and certified weight-management specialist who has been featured on The Montel Williams Show, The Jamie Foxx Show and on the NBC, FOX, CBS and CW networks. Her advice has also been featured in the pages of Glamour, Essence, and Ladies Home Journal. Contact JJ at [jjsmithonline.com](http://jjsmithonline.com), on Twitter ([jjsmithonline](https://twitter.com/jjsmithonline)), or through Facebook (RealTalkJJ).*