

understanding METABOLIC SLOWDOWN and how to avoid it

Let me ask you a few quick questions:

1. Are you stuck in a weight loss plateau?
2. Have you drastically cut calories and you're still not losing weight?
3. Do you frequently feel tired and suffer from a lack of energy?

If so, you're probably experiencing a Metabolic Slowdown.

■ What is Metabolic Slowdown you ask? It's actually a condition where your body reduces its overall energy usage and heat production. You've heard that dieting puts your body into "starvation mode" but what you may not know is what is actually going on. The better you understand what happens to your body; the more likely you'll be to give up on diets for good.

The thyroid gland is the regulator of your overall metabolism. It sets your body temperature and rate in which you burn calories. The main cause of Metabolic Slowdown is a decrease in active thyroid hormone.

There are three major reasons why thyroid hormone decreases. The first is due to a loss in muscle. This is often the result of hormonal changes (primarily a decrease in testosterone) as you age. That's why resistance training is essential, ladies, if you're over the age of 30. If you don't take proactive measures to maintain your lean muscle you'll start to lose it real quick.

Another reason why you'll lose muscle is due to low caloric dieting. When you don't give your body the energy it requires, it will actually go to its own lean muscle for energy. For every three pounds of fat you lose from low-caloric dieting you'll also lose about a pound of muscle. Muscle wasting will directly result in lowered T3 and T4 thyroid hormone levels.

The third major cause of thyroid attenuation is cortisol. Many women are unaware of this connection. Physical stress, lack of sleep, food allergies, emotional worry, and other forms of stress will cause your adrenal glands to ramp up production of cortisol. The increase in cortisol affects thyroid hormone conversion, which once again helps to lower your metabolism.

Let me see if I can paint you a picture now. You hit your thirties and start gaining weight although you can't say you're eating any differently. The truth is you're gaining weight because your metabolism has lowered due to the natural decrease in testosterone and resulting muscle loss. And doing weight training workouts to maintain the muscle is the last thing on your mind because you've never had to do them before.



By Shane Doll

So you figure the best thing to do is go on a diet. You starve yourself to lose the first five or ten pounds, then hit a plateau that just won't budge. You've continued to lose muscle in the process and the physiological stress placed on your body from the low caloric dieting has increased cortisol.

Maybe you decide to start doing a lot of cardio to try and break through the plateau. This only makes the situation worse because you weren't providing enough calories in your diet in the first place, so your

body starts breaking down lean muscle and once again producing more cortisol.

This vicious cycle keeps repeating itself again and again. Each time you lose more and more muscle mass (and lower your metabolism) until you get to the point that if you even walk past a bakery you'll put on two pounds.

It's all in your metabolism, ladies! Here's a secret to your success. Deviate from this simple rule and you'll be frustrated. You've got to make sure your hormone levels are in balance (preferably with testing), then eat the right type and right amount of (calories) to build and maintain lean muscle with resistance training workouts. ■



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