

Leyla Weighs In: Is your New Year's Resolution to lose weight?



I would advise the following: Don't count on commercial weight loss diets.

I've had many clients over the years who have embarked on commercial weight loss programs—many with little success. Sure, they lose weight as long as they stay on the program, but as soon as the weight goal is achieved, the diet is effectively over and previous eating patterns resume.

The biggest problem with most of these weight loss programs is the focus on low calorie dieting. It is simply unsustainable. In an article in the *Journal of Health Psychology*, a meta-analysis reviewed existing data of weight loss among healthy but overweight adults who used commercial weight loss programs. The analysis included 14 observations studies and 11 randomized control trials of those programs which included meal replacements and prepackaged meals along with calorie-counting.

They found that almost 60 percent of those who embarked on these programs lost less than five percent of their body weight. A second analysis reported that almost 40 percent of those individuals who *completed* their respective programs, again, lost less than five percent of body weight. Forty-nine percent of studies reported attrition equal to and greater than 30 percent.

In a nutshell – these weight loss programs fail to produce meaningful weight loss due to attrition. Why? The researchers conclude high attrition rates suggest participants in these programs find dietary changes unsustainable.

There is no program for weight loss maintenance except lifestyle change. Make *that* your New Year's resolution.

To your health!

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