


Leyla Weighs In: Why commercial weight loss diets don't work



I've had many clients over the years who have embarked on commercial weight loss programs—most 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 old eating patterns resume.

In an article in the *Journal of Health Psychology* (May 2017), a meta-analysis surveyed existing research data of weight loss outcomes among healthy but overweight adults who used commercial weight loss programs. The analysis included 14 observational studies and 11 randomized control trials of those programs which included prepackaged meals, meal replacements and 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 or greater than 30 percent.

The researchers concluded that the participants in these programs found dietary changes unsustainable. That's not surprising. I know this from my own clients. Sure you could lose 40 pounds in 40 days. Then what? How long are you willing to be hungry and miserable? That's the primary reason for dropping out of these weight loss programs.

Very low calorie dieting over the long term can cause micronutrient deficiencies and slow down metabolism. That's the long term effect of dieting in this manner. Eating the same amount of calories every day will eventually work against any weight loss efforts.

There is no program for weight loss *maintenance* except lifestyle change. Only that can ensure the most successful outcomes.

To your health!

As you may know, I've been doing a weekly "Q&A with Leyla" podcast feature with Dr. Hoffman. Now you can get my perspective and expertise every Friday on my own episode of the *Intelligent Medicine* Podcast. If you missed last week's, you can [listen here](#). To be sure you don't miss out on any of my important insights and information, **subscribe today!**

Leyla Muedin has clients all over the country via telephone consultations. No need to travel to New York City for a nutrition consult. Should you require her services,

please call our office to set up an appointment: (212) 779-1744.

