**Jump Starting your Metabolism**

You know what I really want to discover in this world? A simple pill that rocks our metabolism, without any additional hard work. Baseline metabolic rate (BMR) is the measurement of energy that it takes your body to function at rest. Your metabolism rate will increase from its base requirement when your movement and activities increase. A strong, healthy metabolism gives you energy and helps you maintain ideal body composition.  
  
Everybody’s metabolism is different. Many factors go into your personal metabolism, age, sex, height, body composition, and weight. The most accurate method of finding out your base metabolic rate is called calorimetry. Calorimetry is done by measuring the heat produced by your body in a resting and fasting state, in a thermally neutral environment (neither hot nor cold). This method requires expensive equipment and is only available in certain facilities.  
  
A more general method that most dietitians and health professionals use is the Harris-Benedict formula.  
  
Males: 66 + (6.3 X weight in lbs) + (12.9 X height in inches) – (6.8 X age in years)  
Females: 655 + (4.3 X weight in lbs) + (4.7 X height in inches) – (4.7 X age in years)  
Calculating this formula will give you a base metabolic rate. This is what, according to your sex, size, weight, and age, your body needs just to function.  
  
Metabolic rate varies from one person to another and is affected by many factors. It is increased with regular physical activity that strengthens lean muscle mass. It is higher in people who are tall and thin, also in children and pregnant women. It increases with fever, a hyperactive thyroid, and various diseases. It decreases with age, fasting or starvation, malnutrition and when sleeping.  
  
Jump starting your metabolism must include a combination of eating and exercising properly. Energy is a calorie. So, we are basically back to the “calorie in must equal or be lower than calorie out” for metabolism to balance out and body weight to maintain or reduce. Keep in mind there are good calories and bad calories and those affect this equation as well.  
  
Jump start your BMR with your eating. All the research supports that fasting, starvation, poor nutrition, and skipping meals contribute to slowing down metabolism. There is debate about breakfast being the most important meal of the day, however it is one of them. It is the ignition to your day. You are coming off an 8 to 12 hour “fast” while sleeping; your body needs those calories to start its engine. Eating regularly has been shown to be one of the tickets that keeps metabolism steady.  
  
Other research and nutrition programs propose eating five or six small meals instead of three large meals. Most importantly it comes down to quality and not quantity.  
  
The calories you eat need to consist of those good, hearty food items that are harder to digest. Reduce the simple calories, the simple sugars, the simple carbohydrates, the higher fat proteins, etc. We want to make the body work harder in its conversions from food to energy, which requires metabolism to make those conversions. Eating healthy, hearty food items throughout the day will sustain your metabolism best.  
  
Jump start your BMR with exercise. Again, research supports that your muscles require the largest amount of energy to function. Therefore, if you increase your muscle mass, your metabolism will increase. It’s not body building. It’s about using your muscles and developing them to your genetic potential giving you the metabolic function your body requires.  
  
Cardiovascular exercise increases the number of calories you burn on any given day. When you move more, in any capacity, your body will use more calories (energy). Therefore, you can either eat more calories or expect that energy to come from within the body somewhere, most likely from body fat storage, which is good for weight loss.  
  
Unfortunately, age, sex and some medical issues are not things we can change. Knowing that these factors contribute to lowering metabolism means that you need to use other methods to maintain metabolism.  
  
For as important as metabolism is, it can be very frustrating. Do your best to keep it healthy and strong. Eat right and exercise regularly.