



# The Magic of Metabolism and YOU!



The secrets to keeping your metabolism  
stoked and working for YOU, for LIFE! -

**Healthy Living Program**—body mind and spiritual health for life!



**Karen McCoy**  
Creator of BLISS™ Training Method  
*- building great bodies one rep at a time!*



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## **OK. It's time. Let's set the record straight on metabolism.**

With over 30 years of experience in fitness and nutrition, I've come to learn a few things about metabolism that many so-called professionals tend to overlook (or not give air time to).

I call it the Three C's - calories, choices and staying conscious about your eating. It's really not that complicated, but we do have to cast a wider net here. You need to stay curious and you need to want to improve your life, and live (and eat) with *eyes wide open*. And, it's about being truthful, really truthful with yourself! You ready?



Too many women are quick to blame their metabolism when those extra pounds refuse to come off. Not so fast. The idea that a low metabolic rate is always responsible for excess weight is just one of a number of misconceptions about metabolism, says researcher James Hill, Ph.D., director of the Center for Human Nutrition at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center in Denver. And even if you do have a slower-than-average metabolism, it doesn't mean that you're destined to be overweight. In fact, you're NOT!

### **Q: We hear about metabolism all the time, but what is it exactly?**

**A:** In simple terms, metabolism is the rate at which your body breaks down the nutrients in food to produce energy. A person with a "fast" metabolism, for example, utilizes calories more quickly, in some cases making it easier to stave off excess pounds.

### **Q: What are the factors that determine metabolism?**

**A:** Body composition is the primary factor that determines your RMR, or the number of calories your body burns at rest. According to Hill, the more total fat-free mass you have (including lean muscle, bones, organs, etc.), the higher your resting metabolic rate will be. That explains why the average man has a 10-20 percent higher metabolism than the average woman. Likewise, the RMR of a plus-sized woman (whose total body mass, including both fat and fat-free mass, is significantly greater) could be up to 50 percent higher than that of a thin woman. Heredity and hormones such as thyroid and insulin are the other important factors that dictate metabolism--though stress, calorie intake, exercise and medications also can play a role.



## **Q: So are we born with either a fast or a slow metabolism?**

**A:** Yes. And no. Mostly no. Studies of identical twins suggest that your baseline metabolism is determined at birth. But if you have a naturally slow metabolism, weight gain is by no means inevitable and though it may be harder to shed body fat, it's nearly always possible, says weight-loss expert Pamela Peeke, M.D., M.P.H., an assistant professor of medicine at the University of Maryland in Baltimore. You may never burn calories as rapidly as, say, Serena Williams, but you can raise your RMR to a certain extent by exercising and building lean muscle.

### **Here's most people's metabolism perception:**

"Good genetics = fast metabolism"

"Bad genetics = slow metabolism"

The truth is, the genetic (relative) differences in basal metabolism between any two individuals at the same body weight and body composition are very small.

What a "fast" or "high" metabolism really means is that someone burns a lot of calories every day - at rest (basal metabolic rate or BMR) and / or including ALL activity (total daily energy expenditure or TDEE). When you say you have a slow metabolism, all you are saying is that you aren't burning very many calories (or you're not burning them well). We all have different energy needs, and those needs are influenced the most by the amount of muscle you're carrying and the activity you're doing (or not doing), *not* genetics.

### **Here's the metabolism reality:**

Big person = faster metabolism

Small person = slower metabolism

Active person = faster metabolism

Sedentary person = slower metabolism



One female, who is larger and more active, might be burning 2200 calories a day, while a smaller, less active female might burn only 1600 calories per day. The important thing to know is that the person with the higher calorie expenditure burns more calories primarily because he or she is larger, has more muscle and is more active, not from being "blessed" with a fast metabolism.

For me, being 5'2" and small framed, I can only eat 1400 calories a day, not much really. Whereas a bigger woman, say, 5'9" can eat 1800-1900 calories a day. Is it fair? Nope, but it's my reality, and it's yours too.

**But what about genetics? Aren't some people just born with a slow metabolism?**

Research suggests that there are small differences in BMR from person to person. But most studies say this "inter-individual variance" in metabolic rate is only 3-8%. Really, it's life and your choices that most determine your ability to gain or lose weight.

I find that big parents often have big children not because their kids' bodies seemingly pack on the weight, but look at their eating habits and food choices...it's a learned behavior that has to be un-learned!

**Q: When I was much younger, I could eat whatever I wanted. But over the years, my metabolism seems to have slowed. What's happened?**

**A:** If you can't eat as much as you used to without gaining weight, not enough exercise is probably the culprit. After age 30, the average woman's RMR decreases at a rate of 2-3 percent per decade, mainly due to inactivity and muscle loss, and our bodies automatically start dropping the muscle after 35, because our baby-making hormones are in decline.

The solution....and the only solution...weight training, working each muscle specifically to keep the muscle on the body. Remember, walking won't keep muscle on your arms or shoulders, it's very area – and exercise – specific.

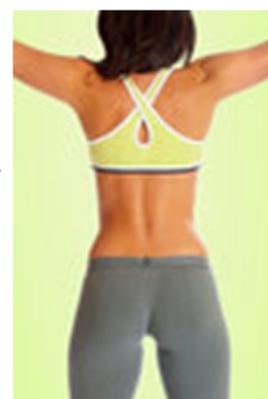
Having said this, in my experience, there are two exceptions to the rule when your metabolism may slow down: when women are on anti-depressants (for some reason, and science still doesn't know why) and when they reach menopause, as the fluctuating hormones can make weight loss tough, but once menopause is over, it's over.

**Q: Is it true that you can damage your metabolism by yo-yo dieting?**

**A:** There's no conclusive evidence that yo-yo dieting does permanent harm to your metabolism. But you will experience a temporary drop (5-10 percent) in RMR whenever you significantly reduce calories to lose weight.

The damage can be reversed in as little as 4-6 weeks with clean eating and weight training (weight training is a must, as it will build your muscle reserves and hence strengthen your metabolism. Slower activities like walking may not be enough).

I've seen it dozens of times, and I've gone through it myself. We've all done crazy stuff....don't make your past mistakes a life-long excuse for not being able to lose the weight!



**Q: What are the best workouts for raising my metabolism?**

**A:** Well, you guys already know the answer to this one, since you've been with the HLP program for awhile, but I'll repeat it again: experts agree that **weight training** is the most effective way to build and preserve lean muscle. Each pound of muscle can raise your RMR up to 15 calories per day, says researcher Gary Foster, Ph.D., associate professor at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine in Philadelphia.

In terms of **cardio**, a high-intensity workout that really raises your heart rate will blast the most calories and provide the biggest short-term metabolic boost--though unlike weight training, it won't have a permanent effect on your RMR. (Cardio workout will boost your metabolism anywhere from 20-30 percent, depending on intensity.)

After your workout, your metabolism will return to its resting level over several hours but you'll continue burning extra calories in the meantime. That's why weights rock! They burn calories even at rest!



**Q: Can't spicy foods, such as chili peppers and curry, boost metabolism?**

**A:** Yes, but unfortunately not enough to have an effect on weight loss. Anything that increases your body temperature will temporarily raise your metabolic rate to a certain degree. But with spicy food, the increase is so small and short-lived that it doesn't have an impact that will show on the scale.

**Q: What about supplements and other products that promise to elevate metabolism and melt fat?**

**A:** Don't believe them! No pill, patch or potion can magically raise your metabolism enough to help you lose weight. I often use kelp tablets first am, but if I haven't paid attention to clean eating and consistent training, I don't notice any difference.

I prefer to use *carb cycling* to lose the weight, where I manipulate my carbs to manage and lose weight. This is an advanced training technique I used on the competition circuit, but it works very well for women everywhere. I've used it on thousands of women with great results. I go into it in my Advanced 12-Week Best Shape of Your Life Challenge Program, so check it out ([www.mccoynfitness.ca](http://www.mccoynfitness.ca) and click on the icon).

## Other Factors Contributing to a Healthy Metabolism



OK. So here's where I contradict myself. Yes, calories are the most important factor in losing weight....really, weight loss is a mathematical equation and unless you're taking in less than you're burning you simply won't lose weight. But other factors abound, and this is where the difference in people's ability to have a strong metabolism or not enters.

Good news, this is also where you can make a difference in your body's long term ability to burn fat. Here we go:

- How toxic are you? The more toxic, the more weight you'll hold onto.
- How old are you? If you're over 35 and you haven't been doing regular weights, your muscle mass (metabolism) has been slipping!
- Are you well-hydrated? Drinking 2-3 litres of *water* a day is key for weight loss!
- Are you stressed? Stress releases cortisol that increases fat storage, but don't use this as an excuse...we're all stressed! Clean eating and training will compensate for this, and learning to accept *what is!*
- Are you acidic or alkaline? Get rid of the man-made products and breads and fill up on lean protein, fruits and veggies to alkaline your body and help it do its job properly.
- Are you on medication? As mentioned, if you're on anti-depressants, birth control pills or synthetic (not bio-identical) HRT, you can experience weight gain. There are lots of alternatives, so check them out.
- How's your digestion? If you're not moving stuff through, and your gut bacteria isn't well, you won't be digesting well, and the 'factory' slows down.
- How's your happiness scale? If you're blue, you get congested in more ways than you can imagine, and 'stuck' weight is one of them.
- How many times a day do you eat? Eat at least 3 times a day and your metabolism will increase.
- Do you eat breakfast, and what's in that breakfast of yours? Aim for 20 grams of protein first am
- Are you counting calories? If not, then why not? It's true....most people that are overweight guesstimate how much they're eating, and it's almost always too low! Grab a calorie counter and get acquainted with what you're putting in your body.
- Are you sleeping well? If you're not sleeping, your metabolism suffers.
- Take care of your adrenals and thyroid, your metabolism-regulating organs. How? No sugar, high quality protein and stay off the carb rollercoaster. This is the best way to keep these master glands functioning for life which keeps your blood sugars level and your bodyfat down (and you'll sail through menopause too!)

## **What else contributes to a successful metabolism? Being able to navigate through our crazy world, *with eyes wide open!***

### **Life has become too easy!**

You might smirk or laugh at that last statement, but face it. All of the conveniences of our normal lives, have made it more difficult than ever to put in some real effort to lose weight.

If you want food, do you have to wait around for it? No! There are advertisements on television every night letting you know about the newest piece of grease or fat that's just so delicious.

### **Plus, each of these fast food joints is usually just a stone's throw away from where you live. Can it get any easier?**

Well, thanks to modern technology and transportation, we don't even have to put in that much effort to get to get to the food either!

We have cars, public transportation, limos, cabs, and trains to haul us around. And when we're finally at our destination, we can save even more effort with escalators and elevators.



Wow, with so many convenient things to distract us, it can take major will-power to convince ourselves to try to lose weight.

### **But that's just the point.**

Many of us have lost sight of all the little things that cause massive weight loss results and I want to remind you that there are tons of easy ways to increase metabolism processes so that you can lose more weight faster than you've done in the past.

### **Whatever happened to keeping track of our calories?**

People just don't keep track of what they're putting into their mouths anymore. For women, try to stay between 1500 and 1800. And don't ever compare your weight loss or metabolism to men's...they are very different (yes, men lose it faster. That's the way it is, due to more muscle and greater testosterone).

Of course, it's going to be different for each individual and their body type so keep that in mind before you go on a starvation diet.

### **Eat Thermogenic foods! Always!**

Thermogenic food is really something cool because by consuming it, you can burn away more calories than are actually contained in the food itself. That's pretty awesome, right? Some of these foods include things with high fiber like fruits and vegetables. Items with lots of protein like poultry and lean meat do the same.

### **And another thing. Stop pumping so many sugary drinks into your system!**

I don't know how many times I've seen normal people throwing away a perfectly good decision to have a sugary soda instead of a pure and clean bottle of water. Water retention is actually one of the causes of bloated bellies, excess fat storage, and puffy eyes. Think about it. And keep the diet away! It adds to weight gain (don't ask how, just don't drink it! The science has been there for years!)

### **Become a Fidgeter**

Trainer and researcher, *Covert Bailey* wrote an impressive article over 20 years ago on metabolism and why some people lose faster than others....when everyone was blaming it on a faulty metabolism or genetics, he noticed a strong pattern in those who lost and those who didn't. He put into words what I had been witnessing all my life, that so-called fidgeters – those people who just can't sit still for long – had faster metabolisms.



I don't know about you, but when I'm at the beach, I can't just sit around. I have to be doing something, like throwing around a volleyball, splashing about or walking. When I sit, I get groggy. I'm like that at home too....I'm always springing up to straighten up some pillows, get another glass of water or adjust the lighting. I just can't sit for long. There are some people who love to just sit and don't want to move much...it's their relaxing time, and they're usually the ones that have a hard time keeping the weight off. Makes sense to me. There are 24 hours in a day, so it all adds up!

People who are always on the go, moving, adjusting, doing something, are the ones who burn more, but it's also about perception – when you see life as movement and you enjoy moving, you will move, and your metabolism will stay strong. Even when I'm on the computer, my dog gets walked more than usual, because I have to get up and move....I just don't feel right if I don't. So choose to be a fidgeter—move more often and you'll keep your metabolism stoked 24/7!. Remember, *our bodies were meant to move!*



## So don't forget the basics for a healthy, happy, well-functioning metabolism for life!:

- Eat 1 gram of protein per pound of lean bodyweight (your weight at your best).
- Do a spring or fall cleanse
- Eat plenty of veggies, some fruit and lean proteins – stay alkaline
- No heavy carbs after 4 pm (bread, crackers, cheese, alcohol, buns...you know!)
- Protein first am and at least three times a day.
- 2-3 litres of water
- Don't sit for too long....create and active lifestyle
- If you sit on the job, know that your weight loss abilities will be severely hampered...we're meant to move, and one hour of training a day may not be enough to counteract 8 hours a day of sitting (then we go home and sit some more)! Personally, I have never chosen a job where I sit, because I noticed how I felt and what I looked like....life is a choice, so choose wisely.
- Keep your digestion moving....have a full bowel movement at least once a day. If you need help, take some psyllium or flax. Beware medications, as they'll bung you up also. How much is enough? Your bowel movement should be the length of your arm, from elbow to wrist. Whether you do it in three movements or just once, it doesn't matter, it's the amount in a 24-hour period that's important. (You asked!)
- Sleep well – lights out before 11 pm! Sorry shift workers, it's working against you!
- Be happy, de-stress (yes you can!), even if you have stress, know it and name it, and it'll lessen its hold on you.
- Don't use food to escape anger, fear, loss of love, resentment.....go into the feelings, feel them and release them. There, that's better. Now your body can be free of the excess emotional and physical weight of it all!



### Most Importantly.....

**Think like a lean person** – “food is fuel”, “eating close to the earth rocks”, “eating light at night lets you wake up light and rejuvenated”, “feeling hunger is not the enemy”, “cooking your own meals is a gift!”

Shift how you think about food....lean people think differently about food! They use it wisely and appreciate its life-affirming attributes!

*Ka*

“It’s difficult to think of anything but pleasant thoughts when eating a home-grown tomato.”

– Lewis Grizzard



“Fast food is equivalent to pornography!”

- Steve Elbert



“Nothing tastes as good as lean feels.”

- Karen McCoy

