

# Calories and YOU!

## Part One

Many times in the process of helping people create a healthy eating plan, I am asked if it's necessary to count calories. Yes and No. It depends on who you are.



If you're the kind of person that is mystified by the lack of weight loss, truly mystified, then calorie counting is a good idea. Because in my experience, most people underestimate how much they eat, and only when they start measuring their portions and counting up calories can they truly see that they are over-consuming or using too-large portions.

However, if you're truly honest with yourself and you know where you're slipping up with your eating, then no need for counting calories. Just stop the offending behaviour.

I always like to see people return to calorie counting, even if they've done it a lot in the past, because getting re-acquainted with calories can be important. And some foods (and packaging) have changed over the years, so we need to get re-acquainted with it all.

Counting calories doesn't have to be tedious, but it does require due diligence, at least for a little while, anyway. Once you get the hang of it, you'll be able to eyeball something and know within seconds how many calories are in that meal and you won't need your book anymore.

### **For successfully counting calories, you'll need a few tools:**

- 1) **Measuring utensils** – measuring spoons, measuring cup and a scale. Sound onerous? It can be, but truly, some people don't know how much 4 ounces is, or how little  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup truly is.
- 2) **Calorie counter book** –My favourite is *The Biggest Loser - Calorie Counter*. It's fast and easy to use.
- 3) **Food journal** –Studies show that diets are 80% more successful when we write things down. It makes you accountable, you see the holes in your eating, and you think twice about cheating. Use a journal, or try an on-line program – check out [sparkpeople.com](http://sparkpeople.com), [thecaloriecounter.com](http://thecaloriecounter.com), or [fitday.com](http://fitday.com) (my personal favourite)

**Did you know?** Small boned women will drop weight slower! It's a sad fact, but true. Us smaller women just don't have the ability to lose it as fast as our bigger counterparts. Women closer to their ideal bodyweight will drop weight more slowly too. It's easier to lose weight when you're quite overweight (to start anyway), but as you get smaller, the body will slow down the process. It's just protecting you.

**Did You Know?** Those who lose the weight and keep it off use “*self-monitoring behaviors*” including:

- tracking calories
- tracking body weight
- planning meals
- measuring the amount of food on their plate

Unfortunately, these types of behaviors, especially weighing and measuring food and counting calories, are among the most avoided and even criticized weight loss techniques.

But you'll see in **Calories and YOU - Part 2** what an important and valuable tool they are... coming soon...