

8 Reasons Why You Are **NOT** Losing Weight



1. You are eating too much.

- This may seem obvious, but you'd be surprised at how many people "under-estimate" the amount of calories they eat everyday. Losing weight comes down to the simple principle of thermodynamics and the biochemistry of food. If you eat more calories than your body needs, you will gain weight. It really is that simple. So for example, let's say you have a RMR (resting metabolic rate) of 2,000 calories, you burned 500 calories via your workout, and burned an additional 200 calories from the manual labor you did that day. That's a total of 2,700 calories. Any other calories, over the 2,700 that you consume, will likely be stored as fat, so you will gain weight. It may not show up on the scale right away, but over time, this will lead to pounds of unwanted body fat.

2. You are eating too little.

- That's odd. I just said that if you eat too many calories you will gain weight, so how could you eat too few calories and still gain weight? That's a great question, but this is where the starvation response of our body kicks in. Our body's number one goal is to survive; that's it. When we are at a scarce or loss for food, our body will do everything in its power to hold onto the fat we have, so that we can "survive". The problem is, our body doesn't "know" if we are simply dieting on too few calories or are really in a situation where we don't have food for a few days. So, when we cut calories too aggressively, or eat too few calories, our body will adjust our metabolic rate and slow it down. The reason it does this is so that our body will burn much fewer calories than before, giving us more energy over a prolonged period of time; a survival mechanism. A slow metabolism is a fat burner's enemy! We want our metabolisms as fast as possible, which will make losing weight and burning fat that much easier.

3. You are not getting enough sleep.

- Our body views sleep deprivation as a major stressor. We believed that 6 hours a night was enough for proper function, but recent studies are showing that 7-9 is more like it. If you get below 7 hours of sleep per night, you will have increased cortisol levels, a higher appetite (leading to stress eating), and weight gain. When you don't get enough sleep, your ghrelin levels increase. Ghrelin is the hormone associated with hunger, telling us that we should eat. So, when we get little sleep, ghrelin increases, leaving us hungry. What do we do? We eat. What do we eat? Salty, sugary junk foods. This leads to weight gain and that dreaded muffin top. Get at least 7 hours of REM sleep every night if possible!

4. You are too stressed.

- We just touched on increased cortisol levels from not getting enough sleep. Well, cortisol is back, and with a vengeance, when we are stressed out! We live in a stressful world. We have chronic stress every single day; whether we are going to be late for work, spilled coffee on ourselves, are behind a slow driver, etc. When we are stressed, our body releases a hormone called adrenaline, and cortisol. Adrenaline is released and is to be used as immediate energy, due to our body's "fight or flight" response to a stressful situation. Cortisol is released to help replenish the nutrients that adrenaline has made available (carbs and fats mostly). The problem with us is that, we don't use the stored energy that adrenaline has made available to us. We do the complete opposite; we sit and we EAT! Back in our caveman days, a stressful situation would be confronting a mountain lion and deciding to either run, or try and kill the animal. Adrenaline would be used for those two purposes, so, certainly, our caveman friends were using it! Nowadays, we don't use any of that energy, so cortisol replenishes more nutrients, on top of the ones we have not used, while

also storing the food we are consuming due to stress eating. This leads to visceral fat deposit and unwanted weight gain right around the belly.

5. You are working out too little or not doing enough physical activity.

- If you are not burning enough calories every single day, you are making your body a fat storing machine, instead of a fat burning machine! Lets say you ate 2,500 calories today. If your body's RMR is 2,000 calories and you didn't perform any physical activity today, your body would store those 500 additional calories as either fat or glycogen (assuming they came from carbs). Over time, this will lead to dramatic weight gain (if the stored glycogen isn't used). However, if you lifted weights for an hour and did 30 minutes of HIIT cardio after, and burned 1,000 calories, your body is now in a deficit of 500 calories. What will your body do? It will take those 500 calories from your stored body fat and use it for energy. The result? Fat loss and a healthier looking physique. Lifting weights also helps you build muscle. The more muscle you have, the higher your resting metabolic rate will be, so the higher amount of calories your body will burn at rest. This is the key for making your body a fat burning machine; build some MUSCLE and lift HEAVY WEIGHTS!

6. You are doing too much cardio.

- All too often I see so many people abuse cardio, in hopes of losing fat and getting lean. The problem with doing cardio everyday, for "x" amount of time, is that your body will eventually adapt to it. Our bodies are smart, and much smarter than we think they are. Lets say you do 6 sessions of cardio for 30 minutes each day. In about a week or two, your body will adjust its metabolic rate, to do less work and expend fewer calories doing the 30 minutes. To make it

clearer, if your body burned 200 calories every 30 minutes of cardio in the first two weeks, it will now burn 150-175 calories every 30 minutes. Your body will now become more efficient at burning less calories doing the same amount of work. Which is why you see people doing hours upon hours of cardio every week, because 30, 40, or 50 minutes is now not enough. They are running themselves, and their metabolic rates, into the ground. Sooner or later, cardio will be nothing but a time-waster. Never rely on cardio as your main tool in burning body fat; simply use it as a tool when needed, or when you hit a plateau. Introducing 1-2 sessions for 20 minutes each will be more than enough to jumpstart your fat loss progress.

7. You are not drinking enough water.

- Water makes up about 70% of our body, and the liver is nearly 95% water, so we should understand just from those facts, how important water is. Water transports nutrients throughout our body and helps us get rid of toxins. How does it play a role in fat loss? Let's go back to the liver. The liver breaks down toxins and removes them from our body, stores fat-soluble vitamins, and plays a pivotal role in carbohydrate, protein, and fat metabolism. Our liver breaks down fatty acids and transports them to the blood to be utilized. However, when we do not consume enough water, our kidneys, which are also responsible for removing toxins, cannot fully function. So, as a result, our liver has to work overtime. When our liver has to double its work for removing toxins and waste, mobilizing fat will become second priority, so fat metabolism is decreased. Be sure to fill up on the H₂O.

8. You are too focused on the scale.

- Weight loss, specifically fat loss, is not always shown by decreased numbers on the scale. There could be weeks that

go by, and you might not lose any “weight”, but your body composition will drastically change with a proper exercise and nutrition program. For example, say you lose 5 pounds of fat and gain 5 pounds of muscle in 5 weeks. If you started your journey at week 1 at 130 pounds, you will weigh 130 pounds at the end of week 5 as well. However, you will have 5 pounds less of fat on your body, and 5 pounds more of metabolically active muscle tissue packed on. Your RMR will also be drastically increased with 5 extra pounds of muscle on your frame, while also being leaner with less fat. The leaner you are, the higher your metabolic rate, due to your body composition being primarily made up of lean muscle tissue. Don’t just focus on the scale. Celebrate your non-scale victories, such as a pair of jeans or a shirt fitting much better than before; being able to run up and down the stairs without huffing and puffing for air; adding 5 or 10 pounds onto one of your core lifts in the gym; these are very indicative of more progress, than just weighing less or more on a scale.

Don’t forget, there are other reasons why you could have hit a plateau in your weight loss journey, but these are my top 8 that I believe will help jump start your progress and get you moving in the right direction. Correct some of these things in your lifestyle now and watch the results appear!

Paul A. Hovan Jr., B.S., CPT, CSN, CSCF

Hov Hustle Fitness LLC 2012

HovHustleFitness.com