



DO YOU PUT YOUR SELF VALUE IN POUNDS?



Does what the scale says in the morning decide what kind of day you are going to have? Is the reading on the scale how you decide if you are FAT or THIN? Do you worry about being some predetermined weight? My answer to these questions involve the why and the how of this preoccupation with weight.



Society has come up with a notion that if you aren't extremely thin or a certain weight for your height you are fat. There are a few problems with this idea. First, there is a happy medium in the middle. For men this is a body fat percentage of 15-22% and for women this is a body fat percentage of 22-30 % according to the book *Fit or Fat*. If you are under these limits that is great as long as there is no health threat, but if you are within these limits that is also great. You are also not any less of a person than those who are at a lower level than you. Also, there are people out there that appear to be thin that are as high as 40% body fat. So things may not always be as they appear.



The next question is how do you know how much you should weigh for your height? There are factors that determine if you are a "good" weight or if you are a "bad" weight. These are called Lean Body Mass (LBM) and fat mass. LBM is the weight of your bones, water content, and muscle mass. If you are big boned, muscular from athletic activity or retaining water, this has a direct affect by increasing your weight, but none of these factors make you any fatter. Fat mass includes both the body's storage fat and essential fat. Lean Body Mass (LBM) and fat mass combined are known as BODY COMPOSITION.

Body Composition is what we should be concerned with, instead of what your weight should be for your height.

This brings us to the great mis-use of scales in our society. People have a tendency to let a scale be a mood setter for their day. If the scale says that either we have lost weight or that we are at a weight that we feel we should be (possibly based on unrealistic ideals) then it will be a good day. If we gained weight, which could be muscle gained from exercise or being weighed at a different time of the day, or we are not at the "perfect" weight, it will be a bad day. The problem with a scale is that it can only tell us our weight and not what our body composition levels of fat are at the time.



The main problem with a preconceived weight is that it runs contrary to a new scientific theory called the SET POINT THEORY. The idea behind this theory is that each person has a weight range that they are genetically determined to stay in. The weight that you seem to stay at no matter what you eat, or what you go back to after a diet is probably your set point. This is probably why over 90% of all dieters gain back their

weight lost on diets over a 2 year period of time.

The problem with a scale is that it can only tell us our weight and not what body composition levels of fat are...

Since there seems to be a predetermined range of weight for all of us, we will need to learn to work within this area instead of trying to fight it. This is where body composition comes into play for us. If we are going to weight "X" amount of pounds and we are not happy with how we are built, we will need to learn to be leaner and not worry about being lighter. If you increase your LBM through exercise and a low fat diet you could weigh the same even though you may need to buy some new clothes in a smaller size. So don't worry if the scale says the same thing every morning (if you must still use it). Also, the big advantage you get by increasing your LBM is that you then increase the number of calories that are burned every day.

So maybe we are going to have to relearn a few things:

- 1) My scale can't tell me all I need to know.
- 2) Not to let society decide how much I should weight.
- 3) Not all weight is bad weight, especially if it is muscle that burns calories.
- 4) To accept my genetics and if I need to change my body that the Leaner not Lighter concept is better (I don't necessarily have to lose weight).

By Jeff Gerber



FROM THE HIP

INSIDE

FROM ROOTS AND BERRIES TO ICE CREAM

H₂O

ANOREXIA NERVOSA

IN GOOD HEALTH

Do you feel zapped? Do you wonder whatever happened to that youthful zing of energy you once had? The Health Education library has a number of books on health topics such as exercise, nutrition, meditation and much more available for U of O students to check out. Stop by and check out a few books on the first floor of the Student Health Center.

Has dieting become a way of life for you? Have you heard about the New Science of Weight Control? We don't control it—we manage it! Talk to a Peer Health Nutrition counselor to learn about healthy food choices, lifestyle habits and more for a lifetime of healthy living. Call 346-4456 for an appointment—it FREE!

Has Cholesterol become a nuisance for your arteries??? A healthy lifestyle today can help you prevent heart disease in the future. For FREE come find out your cholesterol count, blood pressure and ask for dietary counseling at Health Education in the Student Health Center on Tuesdays from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. Yep, that's right, it's FREE for U of O students.

Spring is here and so are the allergies! If you are sniffing and sneezing the Student Health Center offers allergy injections to help alleviate the allergy symptoms. Allergy injections are given by registered nurses between 8:00 and 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. There is a charge of \$3.00. Call 346-4441 for more information.