

Fit or Fat

By JOANNE WITT

Is there a difference between being overweight and being overfat? These terms have very different meanings, yet often people don't differentiate between the two.

Being overweight means that according to an arbitrary scale (ie: height/weight chart) a person is over the recommended ideal weight. Overfat means a person has an excess amount of body fat, and is not necessarily related to total body weight.

It is very important that everyone maintain a controlled amount of body fat. The basic cause of someone becoming obese is quite simple: Energy in exceeds energy out.

In other words, if you consume 500 Kcal per day more than your body uses in daily activities that reflects 3500 Kcal per week. And did you know 3500 Kcal 1 lb. of fat! (Even 1/2 lb. per week approximately 25 lb. per year.) That is why controlled eating habits combined with a regular exercise program is necessary for maintenance of proper body composition.

I'm sure you are aware that there are a number of health risks associated with obesity; heart disease, high blood pressure, joint disease, complications during pregnancy, diabetes and gall bladder disease.

Weight control is very difficult for some people. Perhaps you have been slightly overweight all your life, but as you age it becomes harder and harder to maintain your weight. It is a known fact that overweight people seldom consume more food than individuals of normal weight. The difference between the two is that the normal weight person is far more physically active than the overweight person.

You may think you are active because you "run" after your children all day long or you walk to work, but this is not the kind of continuous activity that is necessary to reduce fat percentage. The best activity choices are of long duration and low intensity in nature. These include brisk walking, cycling, swimming, running, cross country skiing and the list goes on. You must perform the activity regularly at least three times per week.

When it comes to weight loss set realistic goals; accept yourself and accentuate your positive attributes. You must establish a positive body image in your head before anything will happen to the wasteline or hips.

The most successful weight loss stories are those where people changed eating and activity behavior. When you embark on a reduction program it has to be a permanent lifestyle change or the result will be short term. For example, when you go on an extremely restricted caloric intake (less than 800 calories) all your body functions slow down to make up for the lack of energy coming in. Most low calorie diets are lacking in adequate nutrition and therefore are not healthy.

So, choose a well balanced calorie reduced diet (approximately 1000-1200 calories), introduce a regular exercise program (that is suitable for you) and most of all, remember you are in control of your body.

We instruct the members of our "Why Weight" club at NewBody's to feel in control, so they can succeed in their new lifestyle change.

EDITORS NOTE: Joanne Witt is a trained kinesiologist and part owner of NewBody's Fitness and Lifestyle Centre, Main St., Markham.



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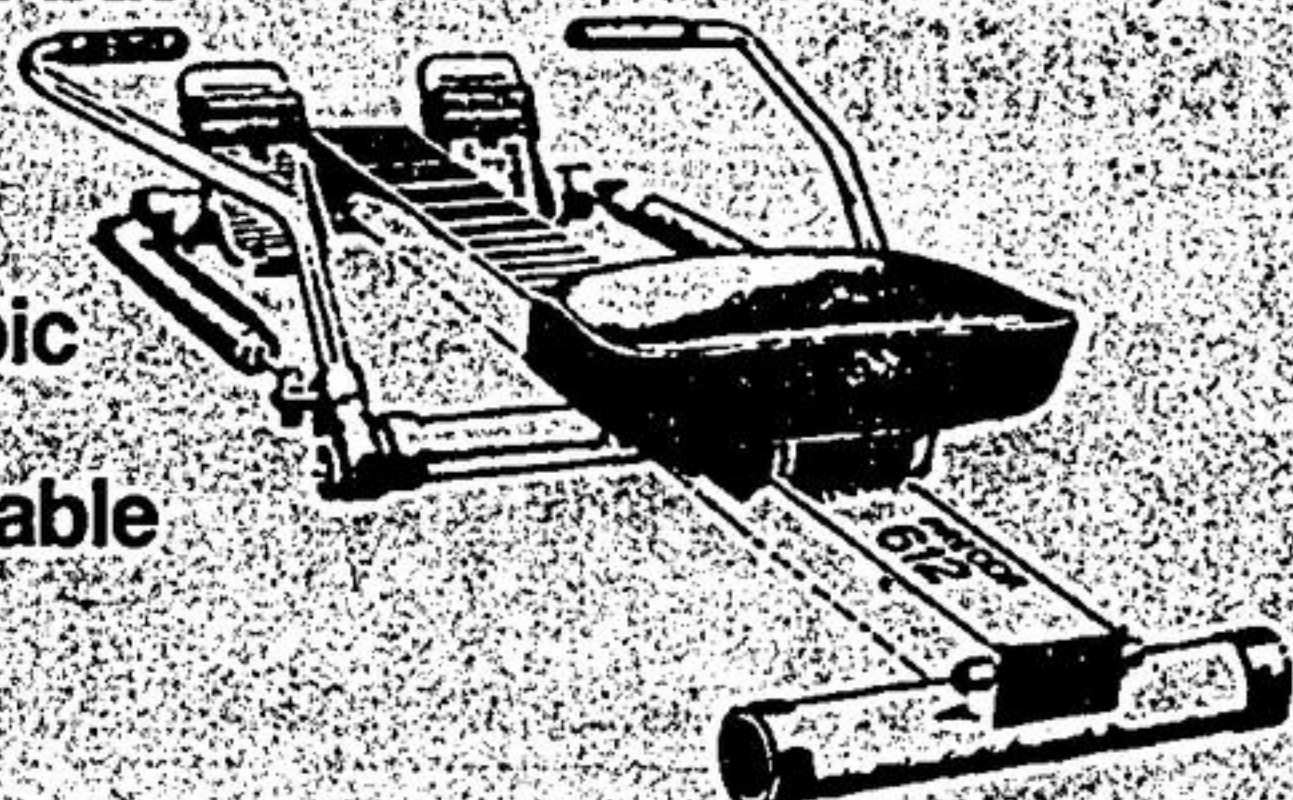
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