

# Maximizing Your Metabolism

Your metabolism, the rate at which your body uses calories, is determined mainly by genetics, past weight loss history, nutrition and exercise. Although you can't change genetics or undo your past eating habits, you **can** control what, when and how much you eat and how much exercise you do.

## Making meals disappear slows your metabolism

When you diet and cut calories too much your metabolism slows. Your weight loss eventually "plateaus" even though you are still dieting. This is because your metabolism has slowed to adjust to loss of calories. The same can happen when you routinely skip meals or go many hours without food. Skipping meals also leads to low energy, overeating at the next meal and less nutritious food choices. One way to speed up your metabolism is to eat regularly. Just like a fire needs wood to burn, your metabolism needs a constant supply of food to "burn" calories. Eating three meals a day or more mini-meals and going no longer than five hours between meals assures that your metabolism "burns" the most calories.

## Breakfast is a metabolism trick

A first step to burning more calories is to have your first meal of the day (breakfast) within one hour of waking. This "wakes up" your metabolism. Even if you aren't super hungry when you wake up, try to have a little something. Even a glass of orange juice or milk is better than nothing. Be sure to eat whenever you are physically hungry thereafter.

## Cardiovascular and weight training — metabolism's magic tools

Exercise, both cardiovascular **and** strength training, is your magic wand to perk up a sluggish metabolism. But the key is to combine both types of exercise on a regular basis. During cardiovascular activity, you "burn" a substantial amount of calories. However, once you stop the activity, your metabolism rapidly, within a few minutes, returns to normal. This doesn't mean that cardiovascular activity isn't useful. In fact, it is one of the most important things you can do for your health. However, in order to give you more sustained metabolic and enhanced health benefits; you should also include strength training as part of your exercise routine.



## The Ideal Work-Out Routine

- **Strength training only 2-3 times a week helps you build muscle tissue.** Muscle tissue is more metabolically active (i.e. burns more calories) than fat. In fact, with regular strength training, your metabolism is elevated all day long. This allows you to burn extra calories longer. Often, the addition of strength training to a cardiovascular regimen brings additional weight loss. Plus, strength training builds bone density and bone strength as well as allowing you to do physical activities easier. Because both cardiovascular and strength training are important for good health as well, the ideal work-out routine includes them both.

## In fact...

...stopping dieting and getting regular exercise are the only magic tools you need to speed up your metabolism.