

False promises

Don't waste time on fad diets, says study

FAD DIETS, WHICH lead to short-term weight loss, can often be a waste of time, according to a new study.

Whether you're following the Atkins and Dukan The Fast Diet, The Alkaline Diet to The Baby Food Diet, The Blood-Type Diet, The French Woman Diet, The Paleo Diet and the new 5:2 regime, these often turn out to be passing fancies, reveals a study conducted on 2,000 adults in London by Alpro, a manufacturer of soy-based food and drink products.

Alpro dietician Kate Arthur said: "More and more dieters are realising that the fad diet promises of shedding huge amounts of weight in just a few weeks are either hollow, or that the diets are impossible to follow.

"The reality is that the majority of these diets are so impractical, and indeed so little fun that we often give up within just a few days."

Out of half of the respondents who regularly diet, Alpro found that two out of five dieters quit within the first seven days.

One out of five people are able to

sustain it for a month, and the same number make it to the three-month mark, while the remainder stay dedicated for at least six months.

However, only one in 20 is likely to still be following their new healthy eating regime after one year.

Most people begin their diets on a Monday, indicates the survey. Over four out of 10 regular dieters see Mondays as the logical starting point for it usually following a weekend of excess either at home or by eating and drinking out with friends.

However, it's often in vain as only five days later, by Friday the same week, many people are likely to have already given up the latest new dieting craze. The research also found that an increasing number of people are realising the benefits of regular healthy eating.

"There has never been any secret to sustaining a healthy diet. It always has been, and always will be, about eating the right foods as part of a balanced diet, and exercising, while allowing yourself a treat now and again," said Arthur. IANS



Chronic stress affects immunity

RESEARCH SHOWS THAT prolonged stress affects the body's immune system and triggers health problems.

Chronic stress influences gene activity in immune cells which are primed to fight an infection or trauma that does not actually exist, leading to an overabundance of the inflammation that is linked to many health problems, reports *Science Daily*.

Repeated stress triggers the sympathetic nervous system, commonly known as the fight-or-flight response, and stimulates the production of new blood cells.

While this response is important for survival, prolonged activation over an extended period of time could have negative effects on health.

A study on animals by scientists at Ohio State University showed that this type of chronic stress changes the activation, or expression, of genes in immune cells.

Genes that lead to inflammation are expressed at higher-than-normal levels while the activation of genes that might suppress inflammation is diminished.

Associate Director of Ohio State's Institute for Behavioral Medicine Research (IBMR) John Sheridan, also a co-lead author of the study, suggested that if you are working for a bad boss over a long period of time, that experience might play out at the level of gene expression in your immune system. IANS



Campbell's diet tips

NAOMI CAMPBELL THINKS everyone should "fast at least once a week" as it can help them live longer.

The 43-year-old model insists everyone should clean out their body on a regular basis, reports *femalefirst.co.uk*.

"I think everyone should fast at least once a week. We eat so many different things; I think it's good to clear your intestines. I think it can prolong your life," she said.

Campbell followed a strict diet of fruit juice and vegetables before she hit the runway at the Paris Haute Couture Fashion Week. IANS

ALIGN YOUR LIFE

Go For A Walk

When I lived in the village of Rishikesh, I always loved to go for long walks. It helped me clear my mind and somehow I was very relaxed afterwards. The process of walking silently while watching my breath was very essential in those early days of my spiritual journey. Initially I would focus on the surroundings during my walks. The sights and the sounds during my journey would often divert my attention away from the walk. However over a period of time the world around me seemed to diminish and I was more focused on the number of steps I took and how I was breathing. Over the next few months something inside me changed and I no longer wished to look at the world pass me by. Instead I learned to focus inwards. It is during these walks that I came up with a answer to the question I was struggling with or had a clear thought about a situation that was bothering me. It all fell into place when I was walking.

In today's world, slowing down your pace to enjoy walking will help you in finding your true path.

We are pressured for time in our daily lives and are always in a hurry to get somewhere.

When you practise walking meditation, you will go for a leisurely stroll. You will have no destination in sight or a specific direction while you are walking. You will lose track of time and learn to go with the flow. The main principle of walking meditation is - going is important, not arriving. Each step is about embracing life; each step is filled with joy and inner peace. That is why we don't have to hurry. We need to slow down and take one step at a time. Walking meditation will take you forward with no specific goal. The common belief is that one must sit in a particular posture during meditation. However walking meditation enhances awareness and helps you maintain a balance. Walking meditation is also a unique form of meditation that helps you to escape the monotony of posture - based meditation. Every day you will walk on a new path experiencing sheer joy and happiness.

So next time when you go for walk, leave your mobile and iPod at home. Walk with a clear mind and take small steps. With each step when your mind begins to wander, stop walking and refocus on your steps and breathing. In no time, your mind and body will be in sync and all you will want to do is go for a walk!

Shivani Adalja is an Abu Dhabi-based well-being expert. She runs the Alignment Insitute which offers effective solutions that focus on stress management and overall wellbeing. Email align@shivaniadalja.com

