

Overweight? Enjoy Walking and Eating!

By Jo and Sandy

If you are serious about shedding a few pounds, it is worth thinking about two everyday actions – eating and walking. Each one helps the other to let go of unwanted inches.

Let's take walking first

You walk throughout your shift, along landings, upstairs, and outside for movement. Instead of regarding these walks as a chore, however much you are interrupted by gates and waiting around for inmates to get a move on, enjoy being upright and breathing. Try the yoga way of just breathing in and out through the nose. As it gets colder, the nose warms, moistens and filters the air of germs and speeds up your circulation. (Mouth breathing doesn't).

Here is a little yoga idea which is highly effective. Whenever you are alone and there is a long corridor ahead, step out and try to breathe through your nose, focussing on the inhalation. When you breathe out, exhale naturally and then exhale a bit more. Almost like a double exhalation. You'll find you establish an inner rhythm quite quickly. At lunchtime, try and get outside and practise walking and breathing. It sounds strange but somehow the intelligence of the body over-rides the mind and you'll find your body moving with ease. It is very enjoyable.

Prisons are often in awkward places so staff need cars to get to work. You might think this stops you from walking. Try parking ten minutes walk away from your establishment. Two lots of ten minute walking twice a day will have an effect.

Eating – one of life's great pleasures

From the yoga point of view why not forget all diets and really appreciate your meal-times? – as long as they are only three times a day! Alas, the body holds onto fat when you get used to eating all day long. A Twix bar here and a packet of crisps there – easily done. For the same calorie price, you could eat a slap up meal. Men need 2500 calories and women need 1900 calories a day. Check this out:

• Twix bar (306 calories) is equivalent to:

1 oz fillet steak (54 calories), 1oz mashed potatoes (29 cal), 1 oz fried mushrooms (44 cal), broccoli (7 cal), carrots (13 cal), salad (19 cal), 2oz of strawberries and melon (14 cal) 1 x 120ml glass of wine (87 cal) and a cup of coffee with half fat milk (36 cal).

Meal total = 303 calories

• Packet of crisps (132 calories) is equivalent to:

Slice of roast beef (50 cal), spoonful gravy (45 cal), Peas (32 cal) iceberg lettuce (4 cal)

Meal total = 131 calories

It's surprising easy to overdo it (a Dairy Milk Easter egg is 1155 calories! Eight pints of Stella Artois clocks up over 2000!). None of us are taught much about calories, let alone saturated fat.

Next time you are shopping, check out the saturated fat content – each day men should keep below 30 grams and women just 20 grams. (One Big Mac has 10 grams!)

So meals are important. However early your shift EAT BREAKFAST. Learn about your food from websites like www.weightlossresources.co.uk. Your body is a miracle of invention. Next time you are on your way out, grab a satsuma for your pocket (only 25 calories) and ponder that when you start the first of your many walks today...

About the PPT

The Prison Phoenix Trust encourages prison officers and prisoners in their spiritual lives through the practices of yoga and meditation. We recommend breath-focussed stretches which release long-held tension in the joints – and breathing techniques, relaxation and meditation. We offer support through classes, taster workshops for inmates and staff, correspondence, free books, CDs, and newsletters – and we can help you find a local teacher. Contact us at The Prison Phoenix Trust, PO Box 328, Oxford, OX2 7HF or by email: all@theppt.org.uk www.theppt.org.uk.

