A healthy BMI is considered to be in the 18.5 to 24.9 range however BMI, like the number on the scales, doesn't always tell the full story. Looking at our body composition including fat %, muscle % and even visceral fat (fat around the organs) provides a more accurate measure of a healthy physique. The goal of a leaner and stronger body - reducing body fat and increasing muscle - is more sustainable and healthier than shedding pounds through short term diets.

**WHAT LEADS TO HEALTHY WEIGHT LOSS?**

### KEEPING CALORIES IN CHECK
- 2500 calories for men
- 2000 calories for women
- Max to maintain weight
- Crash diets are not the answer however: we can only fight hunger with willpower for so long if our diet doesn’t meet our energy and nutrient requirements.

### INCREASING VEGETABLE AND FRUIT INTAKE
- May counter genetic tendency to put on weight
- Green leafy veg, berries, citrus

### INTERMITTENT FASTING - FOR ACCELERATED RESULTS
- Studies show long-lasting metabolic benefits
- 5:2 diet
- Time restricted feeding: eating within an 8hr window

**THE FOUNDATION: EFFICIENT METABOLISM**
- What happens in our body that determines whether the food we eat gets stored as fat or used as energy.
- Balancing blood sugars to keep insulin in check (insulin triggers fat storage)
  - Minimise added sugar and alcohol
  - Replace refined carbs with complex carbs
  - Protein with every meal

### EXERCISING
- Helps insulin sensitivity and reduces fat storage.
- Resistance training to maintain lean muscle mass and burn more fat.
- High intensity interval training (HIIT) - highly effective for reducing body fat

### FEELING STUCK? COULD THESE BLOCKS BE GETTING IN THE WAY?

1. **LOW MUSCLE mass reduces fat burning capacity**
2. **STRESS**
   - Cortisol hormones lead to fat storage - can be emotional or physical including over exercising and crash-dieting
3. **LACK OF SLEEP**
   - Increases appetite and cravings, reduces insulin sensitivity
4. **LOW THYROID hormones**
   - Slower metabolism
   - Get your levels checked by your GP
5. **GUT BACTERIAL IMBALANCE**
   - Affects our metabolism and fat storage
   - Increase fibre rich and probiotic foods
6. **ENVIRONMENTAL CHEMICALS**
   - Known as ‘obesogens’ may cause hormonal disruptions.
   - Wash fruit and veg, minimise chemical air fresheners and plastic containers
7. **FOOD SENSITIVITIES**
   - May cause bloating
   - Most common: gluten, dairy, yeast
8. **HORMONAL CHANGES**
   - Decreased oestrogen at the menopause can affect our metabolism, making healthy diet and lifestyle habits even more important

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