

## Calories Still Count

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Of all the diet strategies out there, weight loss still comes down to calories. Calories measure the energy in food. Your body constantly demands energy and uses the calories in food to keep you going. If you eat more calories than you burn, you gain weight, and vice versa.

The August issue of Mayo Clinic Women's HealthSource puts calorie counting in perspective: Since 3,500 calories equal about 1 pound of body fat, you need to burn 3,500 calories more than you take in to lose one pound.

To eliminate 3,500 calories in one week, you could eliminate 500 calories a day from your diet. That means about: - 2 cups of ice cream- 2 jelly doughnuts - 1 piece of homemade apple pie.

Or, you could burn the calories with exercise each day. That takes about: - 1 hour of swimming- 1 hour of tennis- 1 hour of riding an exercise bike

Or, combine cutting back on calories and increasing exercise. It's this combination of regular activity and healthy, calorie-focused eating that will help you achieve a healthy weight.

The August issue also includes a simple step-by-step approach to calculate individual daily calorie needs based on sex, weight, age and activity level.

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