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TIPS FOR ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

TO PREVENT YOU FROM BEING THE ODD ONE OUT AT YOUR NEXT FUNCTION, WE'VE PUT TOGETHER EIGHT USEFUL TIPS ON HOW TO ENJOY ALCOHOL AND STILL MAINTAIN YOUR FITNESS LIFESTYLE.

By Gabrielle Maston

1 AVOID DRINKING WHEN ON A WEIGHT LOSS PROGRAM.

When dieting for weight loss, you are diligently trying to induce a calorie deficit. If you binge drink on the weekend or sneak in a few drinks during the week you may be filling this gap with alcohol, causing slower weight loss or none at all!

In addition, when you reduce your food intake you unavoidably cause a reduction in your nutritional intake of vitamins and minerals. This can ultimately decrease your immunity, making you more prone to getting sick.

2 DRINK IN MODERATION DURING WEIGHT MAINTENANCE.

For lifelong weight maintenance and healthy living, only drink in moderation. This means limiting your alcohol to the weekends and social occasions only. Binge drinking and getting drunk has a massive impact on your workouts and your health. It also decreases your maximal effort when training because workouts aren't fun with a hangover.

3 AVOID SOFT DRINK BASED COCKTAILS.

Soft drink or soda has an exponential amount of sugar and preservatives. You will consume an excessive amount of calories if you combine both alcohol and soft drink. For example, raspberry vodka lemonade has 290kcal compared to a strawberry daiquiri which only has 190kcal in a standard drink. When drinking, try to choose fruit based cocktails made on ice.

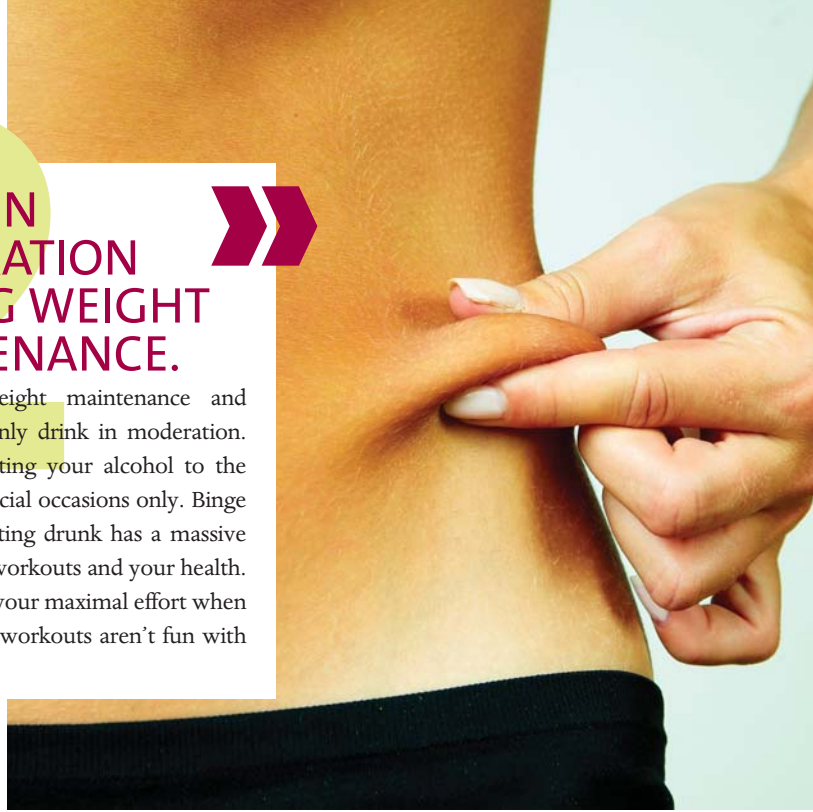
4 AVOID FULL STRENGTH ALCOHOLIC DRINKS.

Changing to light beer, low carbohydrate beer or low alcohol beer or wine definitely has its benefits. Although excess calories cannot be entirely avoided, it can certainly reduce the damage.

5 COUNT YOUR CALORIES.

Alcohol is very energy dense, it has 7kcal/g of energy compared to carbohydrate and protein which only contribute 4kcal/g. Alcohol has almost the same energy density as fat (9kcal/g). If you decide to have a few drinks, include it in your daily calorie budget.

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BEWARE OF YOUR APPETITE.

Don't let your night out turn into a nightmare of the "munchies." Eating high fat and high carbohydrate foods like kebabs and pizza are a sure fire way to destroy a week's worth of training. Alcohol stimulates the release of our appetite peptide, Ghrelin. This peptide makes you feel hungry. Be mindful of how much food you have eaten during the day. You don't want to over consume your daily energy intake due to false hunger signals.



"SOFT DRINK OR SODA HAS AN EXPONENTIAL AMOUNT OF SUGAR AND PRESERVATIVES. YOU WILL CONSUME AN EXCESSIVE AMOUNT OF CALORIES IF YOU COMBINE BOTH ALCOHOL AND SOFT DRINK."



ENJOY WITHOUT GUILT.

If you choose to drink (moderately and sensibly), then don't feel guilty about it or beat yourself up afterwards. If it happens only on occasion, your body can compensate for the extra energy - all is not lost.

Fitness fanatics can have fun too. You don't need to hide away while everyone else is having fun. Enjoy a drink or two by following these simple tips and enjoy living the fitness lifestyle. Cheers!

SLOW DOWN.

When drinking, watch the speed at which you drink. If you're drinking socially you may not even realise how many glasses you've had. Put strategies in place to prevent this from occurring. For example, for every alcoholic drink you consume, drink a glass of water. Not only will this slow down your drinking, but may also prevent a hangover. Hangovers are caused by dehydration and lack of sleep.

Gabrielle is a qualified dietician, nutritionist, exercise physiologist and personal trainer with eight years experience in the fitness industry. Gabrielle established her business, Changing Shape, to fill the gap between Diet and Exercise therapy and to meet the growing concern regarding obesity and lifestyle related diseases. You can learn about Gabrielle and her team at www.changingshape.net.au.