Exercise Alone Isn’t Enough to Lose Weight or Control Blood Sugar #sugarmd Transcript

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Why Exercise Alone Often Fails

Most people Most people believe that to believe that to lose weight, you just need to exercise more. exercise more. They go to the gym, run for hours on the, run for hours on the treadmill, count treadmill, count every every every calorie burned on their watch, calorie burned on their watch, and then get upset and then get upset when their weight barely when their weight barely changes. So, does changes. So, does exercise really exercise really help you help you lose weight? The honest lose weight? The honest answer is yes. This answer is yes. This may help, but there is may help, but there is one big "but".

one big "but". Usually much Usually much less than most less than most people think. Physical people think. Physical exercise is extremely exercise is extremely important for health, no doubt. They, no doubt. They strengthen the heart, strengthen the heart, bones, improve bones, improve mood and mood and help you help you live longer, period.

live longer, period. Most importantly, strength Most importantly, strength training helps training helps build and build and maintain maintain maintain muscle tone.

muscle tone. Muscles are needed not Muscles are needed not only for beauty. Muscle is a metabolically is a metabolically active organ and one active organ and one of the most important of the most important places where the body places where the body utilizes glucose. The utilizes glucose. The more healthy more healthy muscle you muscle you maintain, the maintain, the better your glucose control and insulin sensitivity are likely to be. But insulin sensitivity are likely to be.

Metabolism, Muscle, and Insulin

But exercise alone exercise alone is usually a weak treatment for is usually a weak treatment for obesity. I am Dr. Ahmet Ergin. Ahmet Ergin. I am an endocrinologist in Port St. Lucie, St. Lucie, Florida. Today I'll Florida. Today I'll explain why you explain why you can can can exercise regularly and exercise regularly and still have still have problems with problems with belly fat, and what you belly fat, and what you really need to really need to change if you change if you want to want to lose weight sustainably while maintaining your lose weight sustainably while maintaining your metabolism and muscle.

metabolism and muscle. Let's start with the idea of ??a Let's start with the idea of ??a balance between calories consumed and balance between calories consumed and burned.

burned. burned. Technically, this equation is Technically, this equation is correct. If your correct. If your body consistently body consistently uses more uses more energy than it takes in, energy than it takes in, you will eventually lose weight.

you will eventually lose weight. But this explanation is But this explanation is incomplete. It's like incomplete. It's like saying that a room is saying that a room is crowded because crowded because more people entered more people entered than left. This may than left. This may be true, but it doesn't be true, but it doesn't explain why they explain why they entered, why they entered, why they stayed, or what stayed, or what prevents them from leaving. The prevents them from leaving. The real question is real question is what controls what controls your hunger, metabolism, energy expenditure,, energy expenditure, muscle mass, and muscle mass, and ability to ability to ability to use use use fat stores.

fat stores. The answer involves The answer involves your brain, hormones, your brain, hormones, food environment, food environment, sleep, stress levels, sleep, stress levels, genetics, and genetics, and body

composition. Two people body composition.

Meal Timing and Fasting Basics

Two people can weigh can weigh the same but have the same but have completely different completely different metabolisms. One metabolisms. One may have more may have more muscle and less fat, muscle and less fat, while another may have less muscle and less muscle and more fat. A person with more fat. A person with more muscle more muscle mass typically has a mass typically has a larger larger larger glucose reservoir, as well as glucose reservoir, as well as better better better insulin sensitivity and insulin sensitivity and metabolic metabolic metabolic health. That's why health. That's why the number on the scale the number on the scale never tells the whole never tells the whole story. Insulin is an story. Insulin is an important part of the important part of the system. When you eat, system. When you eat, especially refined especially refined carbohydrates and carbohydrates and foods with added foods with added sugar, your sugar, your glucose levels rise and your glucose levels rise and your pancreas pancreas pancreas releases insulin.

releases insulin. Insulin helps Insulin helps transport transport transport glucose into cells, glucose into cells, especially muscle cells, especially muscle cells, but it also but it also signals the body that energy is available that energy is available and can be and can be stored. This is completely stored. This is completely normal. The problem normal. The problem occurs when occurs when insulin levels remain insulin levels remain elevated for elevated for most of the day most of the day due to constant due to constant consumption of food, consumption of food, snacks, sugary snacks, sugary drinks, or foods drinks, or foods high in high in processed processed processed carbohydrates. So, carbohydrates. So, if you eat breakfast at 7:00 AM, if you eat breakfast at 7:00 AM, have a snack at 10:00 AM, have a snack at 10:00 AM, have lunch at noon, have have lunch at noon, have another snack at another snack at 3:00 PM, have dinner at 6:00 PM, and 3:00 PM, have dinner at 6:00 PM, and then eat something before then eat something before bed, what do you do?

bed, what do you do? Your body is Your body is constantly receiving constantly receiving signals to store and signals to store and use use use incoming energy. Sure, you may. Sure, you may have a large supply of have a large supply of energy in the form of energy in the form of body fat, body fat, but accessing it but accessing it becomes harder becomes harder when insulin levels are when insulin levels are frequently elevated.

frequently elevated. Add to this Add to this low muscle mass. low muscle mass. Your muscles are one of the Your muscles are one of the biggest biggest biggest consumers of glucose in the consumers of glucose in the body. When you don't have body. When you don't have enough muscle enough muscle mass and lead a mass and lead a sedentary sedentary sedentary lifestyle, you have fewer lifestyle, you have fewer tissues capable of tissues capable of absorbing and absorbing and storing glucose. This storing glucose. This can lead to can lead to increased increased increased glucose levels, worsening glucose levels, worsening insulin resistance, insulin resistance, insulin resistance, and slowing and slowing metabolism. Now metabolism. Now imagine that your imagine that your body has two body has two main sources of main sources of fuel. The first is fuel. The first is glucose and glycogen, glucose and glycogen, which are readily available which are readily available immediately after a meal.

immediately after a meal. Much of this Much of this glycogen glycogen glycogen is stored is stored is stored directly in directly in your muscles. The second your muscles. The second source is source is body fat stores. Your body fat stores. Your body usually body usually uses uses readily available fuel first. When you stop. When you stop eating for a sufficient amount of time, insulin levels, insulin levels decrease and your decrease and your body has body has more opportunities more opportunities to use its to use its energy reserves. Here's energy reserves. Here's one reason why a one reason why a meal schedule meal schedule matters.

matters. matters. For decades, people For decades, people have been advised to eat have been advised to eat small meals small meals every 2–3 hours to every 2–3 hours to “keep “keep “keep metabolism going.” But your metabolism going.” But your metabolism is not a metabolism is not a bonfire, okay?

bonfire, okay? Which will fade if Which will fade if you skip a snack. you skip a snack. Your resting metabolism is much more much more influenced by influenced by body size, muscle mass, body size, muscle mass, hormones,

age, hormones, age, genetics, and genetics, and activity level than by your activity level than by your constant constant constant food intake. Most food intake. Most healthy adults don't healthy adults don't need to eat six need to eat six times a day, times a day, okay? Frequent okay? Frequent snacking can snacking can make it harder to control make it harder to control appetite, lower appetite, lower insulin levels between insulin levels between meals, and meals, and use use use fat stores for some people. This doesn't mean that everyone. This doesn't mean that everyone has to has to has to follow the same fasting schedule. Some people do fasting schedule. Some people do well with three well with three full full full meals without snacks, while meals without snacks, while others prefer to eat others prefer to eat within a 10-hour within a 10-hour or 8-hour window.

or 8-hour window. Some people simply Some people simply stop eating after stop eating after dinner and postpone dinner and postpone breakfast until they are breakfast until they are truly truly truly hungry. The goal hungry. The goal is not to is not to suffer. The goal is to reduce the number of to reduce the number of unnecessary unnecessary unnecessary meals and give the body meals and give the body time to be in a state time to be in a state without food. At the same time, without food.

Protein, Breakfast, and Better Food Choices

At the same time, fasting fasting fasting should never be should never be an excuse to an excuse to neglect neglect neglect protein or lose protein or lose too much muscle. If too much muscle. If your your your weight loss strategy results weight loss strategy results in the loss of a significant in the loss of a significant amount of muscle, amount of muscle, your weight may your weight may decrease, but your decrease, but your metabolism and metabolism and glucose control glucose control may not may not improve as improve as expected. The goal expected. The goal is not just to is not just to become become become lighter. The goal is to lose excess fat while to lose excess fat while maintaining or, even maintaining or, even better, building better, building healthy muscle mass.

healthy muscle mass. Now let's get back to Now let's get back to physical exercise. A physical exercise. A typical workout typical workout may burn fewer may burn fewer calories than you might calories than you might imagine. A 30-minute imagine. A 30-minute walk is great for walk is great for your health, your health, right? But right? But the calories burned can easily the calories burned can easily be compensated for with a be compensated for with a be compensated for with a sweet coffee, a sweet coffee, a snack, or snack, or a few pieces of a few pieces of dessert. Your body dessert. Your body can also can also adapt to adapt to physical activity. You may feel. You may feel hungrier hungrier hungrier later and, later and, without realizing it, without realizing it, move less throughout the move less throughout the day. Additionally, your resting metabolic rate may resting metabolic rate may change slightly.

change slightly. The number of calories The number of calories that a fitness tracker that a fitness tracker or smartwatch shows or smartwatch shows can also be can also be inaccurate, right?

inaccurate, right? This is why some people This is why some people exercise four to five times a five times a week, but their weight doesn't week, but their weight doesn't decrease significantly.

decrease significantly. This does not mean that This does not mean that exercise is useless. exercise is useless. This means that they This means that they expect from the exercises expect from the exercises something that they something that they cannot handle on cannot handle on their own. You should their own. You should exercise exercise exercise to maintain muscle, to maintain muscle, improve your cardiovascular system, cardiovascular system, maintain maintain maintain mobility, mobility, mobility, control your control your glucose levels, and, of course, glucose levels, and, of course, age well. And if age well. And if you want to protect you want to protect your metabolism, your metabolism, strength training strength training should be part of should be part of your exercise plan.

your exercise plan. Walking and cardio are Walking and cardio are great, but they great, but they also can't also can't completely replace completely replace strength training. As we strength training. As we age, we age, we naturally lose muscle unless we actively work on unless we actively work on it. This it. This age-related loss of age-related loss of muscle mass can muscle mass can reduce your strength, reduce your strength, impair impair impair

glucose absorption, increase your glucose absorption, increase your risk of falls, and risk of falls, and make you make you make you more likely to gain more likely to gain weight. Even two or weight. Even two or three well- three well- designed strength designed strength training sessions per training sessions per week can week can make a significant difference make a significant difference. You don't. You don't need to become a need to become a bodybuilder, bodybuilder, bodybuilder, not at all. You just not at all. You just need to consistently need to consistently and gradually and gradually load the load the load the main muscle groups.

main muscle groups. You also shouldn't You also shouldn't use use use exercise as an exercise as an excuse to excuse to overeat. You also overeat. You also won't be able to " overrun" a diet overrun" a diet consisting consisting consisting mostly of mostly of ultra-processed ultra-processed ultra-processed foods. The type of foods. The type of calories you calories you consume affects consume affects your feelings of your feelings of fullness. For example, 500 fullness. For example, 500 calories from eggs, calories from eggs, vegetables, beans, fish, vegetables, beans, fish, or minimally or minimally processed meats processed meats usually affect usually affect appetite differently than appetite differently than 500 calories from cookies, 500 calories from cookies, chips, or sugary chips, or sugary drinks. Calories drinks. Calories still matter, still matter, but food also affects but food also affects insulin, GLP-1, insulin, GLP-1, leptin, ghrelin, all of these leptin, ghrelin, all of these hormones, as well as hormones, as well as digestion, satiety, digestion, satiety, and the ability and the ability to maintain muscle.

to maintain muscle. After all, ultra-processed After all, ultra-processed foods are often foods are often designed to be designed to be easy to eat, easy to eat, right? And it's hard to right? And it's hard to stop eating. Well, stop eating. Well, they combine they combine refined carbohydrates, fat, salt, and, fat, salt, and flavor enhancers flavor enhancers in a way that can bypass in a way that can bypass your normal your normal satiety signals.

satiety signals. Protein and fiber Protein and fiber usually help you usually help you stay stay stay fuller longer. Protein is fuller longer. Protein is especially important especially important during weight loss during weight loss because it because it helps preserve helps preserve muscle. This is important muscle. This is important because we don't just want to because we don't just want to reduce reduce reduce the number on the scale. We the number on the scale. We want to get rid of want to get rid of excess fat excess fat while maintaining while maintaining muscle mass. If you muscle mass.

Exercise, Sleep, and Stress

If you lose 30 pounds, lose 30 pounds, but a significant portion of but a significant portion of that weight is that weight is muscle, you muscle, you will certainly look will certainly look will certainly look smaller, but you may smaller, but you may become weaker and become weaker and less metabolically less metabolically efficient.

efficient. efficient. Sufficient Sufficient Sufficient protein combined with protein combined with strength strength strength training training training signals the body that signals the body that muscle is still needed.

muscle is still needed. Healthy fats Healthy fats can also increase can also increase feelings of fullness. But feelings of fullness. But remember that fats are remember that fats are very energy-intensive.

very energy-intensive. Adding Adding Adding unlimited unlimited unlimited amounts of oil, amounts of oil, butter, or butter, or cream to your meals can cream to your meals can hinder your weight loss efforts. Now, what weight loss efforts. Now, what about breakfast? You've about breakfast? You've probably heard since childhood probably heard since childhood that breakfast is the most important meal most important meal of the day. Well, of the day. Well, maybe it's maybe it's important for some important for some people, but biologically people, but biologically it's not mandatory it's not mandatory for everyone. If you for everyone. If you wake up wake up wake up hungry, you can have hungry, you can have breakfast. And this breakfast. And this only happens when only happens when you skip you skip dinner or don't eat in dinner or don't eat in the evening. Most the evening. Most people skip breakfast because they people skip breakfast because they overeat at night and overeat at night and wake up without wake up without feeling hungry. Well, feeling hungry. Well, that needs to change.

that needs to change. If you want to If you want to wake up wake up wake up hungry, you should hungry, you should stop eating after a stop eating after a certain time. In the morning, certain time. In the morning, choose

something choose something protein-rich or protein-rich or minimally processed minimally processed instead of instead of cereal, pastries, or cereal, pastries, or sweet coffee. A sweet coffee. A protein-rich breakfast protein-rich breakfast can be especially can be especially beneficial for those beneficial for those trying trying trying to control hunger and to control hunger and preserve muscle. But preserve muscle. But if you're not hungry in the morning if you're not hungry in the morning, you don't, you don't have to have to have to force yourself to eat force yourself to eat just because it's breakfast time on the clock. You are simply breakfast time on the clock. You are simply extending the extending the fasting period that fasting period that began after began after dinner. The exception is type 2 diabetes: you type 2 diabetes: you may have the “morning may have the “morning phenomenon,” and sometimes phenomenon,” and sometimes eating a small eating a small amount of protein can amount of protein can reduce the spike reduce the spike in blood sugar that in blood sugar that actually gets actually gets worse if you don’t worse if you don’t eat. However, eat. However, fasting is not fasting is not always magic. If you always magic. If you fast for 16 hours and fast for 16 hours and then eat then eat processed foods for 8 hours, processed foods for 8 hours, drink calorie-dense beverages, overeat, don't, overeat, don't consume consume consume enough protein, enough protein, etc., you may not etc., you may not lose fat lose fat effectively and effectively and protect muscle. So what protect muscle. So what you eat, when you you eat, when you eat, and how you exercise all work together. A work together. A practical approach practical approach might look like this might look like this. First of all,. First of all, stop drinking stop drinking calories. Reduce calories. Reduce your intake of sugar, your intake of sugar, refined flour, cereals, pastries, chips,, cereals, pastries, chips, and other foods and other foods that are easy to overeat.

that are easy to overeat. Build your Build your diet around diet around adequate amounts of adequate amounts of protein, vegetables, protein, vegetables, fiber, and fiber, and minimally minimally minimally processed foods. Spread your protein. Spread your protein throughout your throughout your meal, rather than meal, rather than consuming almost all of it at consuming almost all of it at once. Eat until you once. Eat until you feel pleasantly feel pleasantly full and take your time full and take your time. Don't. Don't wait until wait until you feel the pain of you feel the pain of overeating.

overeating. overeating. Avoid Avoid Avoid regular snacks unless you are truly unless you are truly hungry, and hungry, and try to eat dinner try to eat dinner at least a few at least a few hours before bedtime, preferably hours before bedtime, preferably 5 hours. Start with a 5 hours. Start with a simple 12-hour simple 12-hour overnight fast, overnight fast, and if you tolerate it well and if you tolerate it well,,, gradually increase gradually increase this period. If you have this period. If you have diabetes, if you diabetes, if you take insulin take insulin or or or sulfonylurea drugs, sulfonylurea drugs, you should be very you should be very careful and careful and consult your consult your doctor or doctor or watch my other watch my other videos on how to videos on how to deal with this, but we deal with this, but we always advise always advise discussing everything with your discussing everything with your doctor instead of doctor instead of acting on your own, acting on your own, which is not always in your best which is not always in your best interest, especially when it comes to interest, especially when it comes to medications.

medications. medications. Walk regularly, Walk regularly, especially after meals, especially after meals, because even a because even a short walk short walk helps your muscles helps your muscles absorb glucose, and absorb glucose, and be sure to be sure to be sure to do strength do strength training at least two to three times a week three times a week to maintain muscle to maintain muscle tone, strength, tone, strength, metabolism, and metabolism, and glucose control. I would glucose control. I would say that it is say that it is definitely worth definitely worth continuing continuing continuing your cardio training, your cardio training, but don't but don't focus solely focus solely on the number of calories on the number of calories displayed on the displayed on the machine. Sleep is also critical. When you're critical. When you're chronically sleep deprived, hunger signals, hunger signals can intensify, can intensify, food cravings become food cravings become stronger, stronger, insulin sensitivity decreases, insulin sensitivity decreases, muscle recovery muscle recovery suffers, and making suffers, and making good decisions good decisions becomes significantly more difficult. And becomes significantly more difficult. And stress—that matters too stress—that matters too. Chronic. Chronic stress increases stress increases cortisol levels, cortisol levels, disrupts sleep, impairs disrupts sleep, impairs glucose levels, glucose levels, hinders hinders hinders muscle recovery, and muscle recovery, and promotes emotional promotes emotional overeating. So, overeating. So, losing weight is not losing weight is not just a math just a math problem, friends. This is a problem, friends. This is a biological and biological and behavioral problem. This is why. This is why drugs like GLP-1

receptor agonists can be GLP-1 receptor agonists can be so so so effective. They don't magically burn fat, do they magically burn fat, do they? They alter? They alter appetite, feelings of appetite, feelings of fullness, fullness, fullness, stomach emptying, and stomach emptying, and food intake, making you feel food intake, making you feel hungry, etc. I have hungry, etc. I have proven something very proven something very important. Hunger important.

Weight Loss Drugs and Muscle Preservation

Hunger is is is biologically regulated, and biologically regulated, and obesity is not obesity is not simply a lack of willpower. At the same time, medications. At the same time, medications work best work best when combined with when combined with adequate adequate adequate protein, strength protein, strength training, training, training, quality sleep, and a quality sleep, and a sustainable sustainable sustainable nutrition strategy. So when nutrition strategy. So when people take people take powerful powerful powerful weight loss drugs, eat very weight loss drugs, eat very little, and don't exercise little, and don't exercise,,, they certainly they certainly lose weight, but lose weight, but they lose they lose a lot of muscle mass, a lot of muscle mass, not fat. This is why not fat. This is why preserving muscle should preserving muscle should be part of every be part of every serious serious serious weight loss program. And weight loss program. And whether whether whether you're losing weight you're losing weight naturally, naturally, naturally, practicing practicing practicing intermittent intermittent intermittent fasting, fasting, fasting, taking taking taking GLP-1 drugs, or recovering GLP-1 drugs, or recovering from bariatric from bariatric surgery, the scale won't surgery, the scale won't tell you what tell you what you're losing—fat or you're losing—fat or muscle. If you want muscle. If you want to know to know your body composition, you know, your body composition, you know, buy a buy a buy a special special body composition analyzer. Pay attention body composition analyzer. Pay attention to your waist circumference.

to your waist circumference. Pay attention to Pay attention to your strength. Look your strength. Look at your glucose levels and at your glucose levels and how you how you are functioning physically. This often provides more. This often provides more information than information than just just just weight readings. And if you have weight readings. And if you have type 2 diabetes, type 2 diabetes, insulin resistance, insulin resistance, insulin resistance, or are taking or are taking blood sugar-lowering blood sugar-lowering blood sugar-lowering medications, do not medications, do not begin a long-term begin a long-term fast without fast without medical supervision, as medical supervision, as I said. Insulin I said. Insulin and medications such as and medications such as sulfonylureas sulfonylureas sulfonylureas can cause a can cause a critical drop critical drop in blood sugar in blood sugar if you suddenly if you suddenly reduce your reduce your food intake.

food intake. Blood pressure medications may also Blood pressure medications may also need to be need to be need to be adjusted during adjusted during weight loss, whether weight loss, whether through GLP-1 or through GLP-1 or fasting.

fasting. fasting. Pregnant women, Pregnant women, breastfeeding women, children, underweight people, and anyone with an and anyone with an active eating disorder should not resort to should not resort to aggressive aggressive aggressive fasting.

fasting. fasting. Additionally, older adults Additionally, older adults and those already and those already experiencing experiencing experiencing muscle loss should muscle loss should be especially be especially careful.

careful. careful. Aggressive Aggressive Aggressive calorie restriction without calorie restriction without adequate adequate adequate protein and strength protein and strength training will exacerbate training will exacerbate sarcopenia, which is common sarcopenia, which is common in in in older adults, as well as older adults, as well as weakness and weakness and metabolic problems.

metabolic problems. The conclusion is simple. The conclusion is simple. Exercise is Exercise is one of the best things you one of the best things you can do for your can do for your health, but health, but it rarely it rarely produces significant produces significant and sustainable weight loss on its own.

and sustainable weight loss on its own. To burn fat, To burn fat, pay attention to pay attention to food quality, protein, food quality, protein, fiber, fiber, fiber, meal frequency, sleep, meal frequency, sleep, stress, hormones, and

stress, hormones, and overall overall overall nutritional environment. But nutritional environment. But never forget the never forget the importance of importance of muscles. Your muscles muscles. Your muscles help you help you help you absorb glucose, absorb glucose, improve improve insulin sensitivity, insulin sensitivity, support your support your support your resting metabolism resting metabolism, and protect your, and protect your joints and bones, joints and bones, allowing you allowing you allowing you to stay strong to stay strong and independent as you and independent as you age. Be sure age. Be sure to use to use to use cardio exercises to cardio exercises to strengthen your heart and strengthen your heart and improve your improve your improve your endurance.

endurance. endurance. Use Use Use strength training strength training to build and to build and maintain your maintain your metabolic engine. metabolic engine. Use Use Use nutrition and nutrition and appropriate medical appropriate medical treatment to treatment to address biological address biological causes of weight gain, causes of weight gain, if necessary.

if necessary. The goal isn't The goal isn't just to just to lose weight, right? lose weight, right? The goal is to lose fat, The goal is to lose fat, preserve muscle, preserve muscle, improve improve improve glucose control, and create a glucose control, and create a stronger and stronger and metabolically healthy metabolically healthy body. Once you body. Once you understand this understand this difference, losing weight difference, losing weight becomes much less becomes much less confusing and much more confusing and much more achievable. Thank you for achievable. Thank you for watching. Don't watching. Don't forget to share, forget to share, like, like, like, subscribe if you haven't already subscribe if you haven't already, and, and see you in the see you in the