



the Weighting Game

Separating fitness facts from fads and fiction

BY WENDY SCOTT-HUSTON



Another year, another fitness resolution that ends before it begins (namely with the pork and sauerkraut on New Year's Day). But this year doesn't have to be like the ghosts of resolutions past. All you need is a little inspiration to start the New Year off right. Whether you're looking for diets to kick-start weight loss, trendy fitness regimens to pique your interest, extensive programs for healthy overall lifestyle changes, or drastic measures to fight obesity, we've got the answer. So sit back and relax long enough to read this, and then get up and get started with that resolution!

It's not hard to find advice on the latest and greatest diet plans that offer "the" weight-loss solution. The New York Times Best Sellers lists are full of weight-loss advice books that compete for your attention on bookshelves; magazines tout that the secret to losing weight lies between their glossy pages; and then there's the TV show "The Biggest Loser," which exploits overweight contestants in a race to lighten the scale. It's not hard to find the fads; it's just hard to figure out which ones hold water and which ones should be thrown overboard.

With that in mind, we've compiled a list of the most popular fad-diet books of the past couple years and those still in their prime, highlighting the core components about each. And if these don't tickle your fancy, an

extensive list of diet plans on eDiets.com and TheDietChannel.com might entice you with choices like the Soy Diet, Chocolate Diet, Peanut Butter Diet, Cabbage Soup Diet or the movie-friendly Popcorn Diet, among others.

The Fads

The plan: Atkins For Life. By Robert C. Atkins, MD.

The nuts and bolts: The Atkins Diet restricts intake of processed and refined carbohydrates and encourages consumption of nutrient-rich unprocessed foods such as meat while promoting the use of "vita-nutrient" supplements through a series of phases. During the first two weeks, or induction phase, dieters are restricted to 20 grams of carbohydrates per day. Dieters can add five more grams to their daily intake each week until they establish personal "critical carbohydrate levels" for maintenance. Followers of the Atkins Diet tend to lose weight at a greater rate than more traditional plans without serious effects on health, according to information from The Diet Channel. However, the Atkins Diet requires followers to fundamentally change the way they eat on a long-term basis, eliminating potatoes, pasta and sweets from their diets, and limiting fruit and dairy intake on a permanent basis.