

Why Do Men Lose Weight Faster Than Women?



It's a fact.

Men lose faster than women.

I hear about it every day. When a husband and wife go on Plan Z together, the wife will invariably complain at some point that her husband is ahead of her in the weight loss battle.

There's no one to blame except Mother Nature.

Here's some science to back it all up. I got this from a CNN report:

In one study out of England, men and women were each put on commercial weight-loss programs such as Atkins, Slim-Fast and Weight Watchers. Two months in, the men had lost twice as much weight as the women – and three times as much body fat. But by six months, the rate of weight loss had evened out between the genders.

If you're a guy, you can thank the testosterone you have – and the extra estrogen you don't – for your weight-loss edge. On average, women have between 6 and 11% more body fat than men, an assumed evolutionary adaptation to help during pregnancy.

From puberty to menopause, women maintain more average body fat than men – even when they take in fewer calories.

But it's important to remember that "fat" doesn't mean "unhealthy." Yes, women have larger fat stores, but it's part of their physiology, meaning it's not extra weight. So if a woman has 11% more body fat than a man, it doesn't mean she's 11% "fatter." A perfectly fit woman will still hold 6 to 11% more body fat than a perfectly fit man.

So there you have it, but in my opinion, that doesn't answer all of it. I've observed a few other things. What I'm going to say doesn't have any sanctioned science behind it. It's just anecdotal evidence I've gathered over my years of dieting and my experience running a diet company.

I postulate that women get stuck on a diet more often than men. Men have a tendency to lose weight at a fairly even pace. Women on the other hand, often get stuck at multiple points during the dieting process. My feeling is this is not only hormonal (yes, we have that monthly event during our childbearing years), but it happens because women diet more often than men. Women try all kinds of diets only to fail – and start again sometime later.

You keep up this kind of behavior and you unconsciously train your body to stop losing at about the same point over and over again. I've seen it firsthand. About 35% of women on Plan Z experience some kind of stall between days 9 and 13. This is about the time most women quit their diet. Their body wants the status quo. In other words, your body wants you to go back and gain that fat back that you lost in the last two weeks. It wants to go back where it was, and the more we repeat the process the more ingrained it gets. *Guys don't diet as often so they don't repeat the same patterns.*

Another reason women lose slower? Women handle stress differently. When you are stressed, your cortisol level goes up. Cortisol is a hormone has a very important role in helping your body respond to stress. This is your “fight or flight” response. The interesting thing is when your cortisol level goes up, your weight loss pace slows down. In most families, women are the ones carrying more of the worry burden. Don’t blame the guys. We do it naturally. We worry about everything from the carpool calendar to the price of gas. The mortgage, the budget and where we are going to go on vacation. We worry about everything more than most guys do.

I know for a fact this plays out. I have been on as many diets as anyone I know. Even when I’m not on a diet this worry factor plays in.

I’ve run companies for over 30 years. I know when a bad recession hits I can eat the same amount of food as I did when the economy was good and I’ll gain weight. I eat the same, but my body gets bigger because my cortisol is up and my body reacts. So women don’t just lose weight differently than men, we even gain weight differently.

Another reason women don’t lose as fast as men? Exercise effect. There was a study done out of Canada that said that if the average woman over 40 works out at a moderate pace 60 minutes a day, 5 days a week, she won’t lose weight; **she’ll only gain it slower** than she would have if she didn’t exercise at all. Thank your hormones, women. Guys don’t deal with menopause and aging the same way.

Can women do anything to pick up the pace and lose as fast as the guys?

Unfortunately, not that we know of. The study I quoted above claims if you stay on a diet where you lose 1 – 2 pounds a week

and stick with it for six months or more, the sexes will meet in the middle. This may be true, but I've never met a guy who dieted consistently for six months. (Losing 1-2 pounds a week is not enough to keep me motivated, either. That's why Plan Z is designed to help you lose weight more efficiently.) And I knew women who dieted ridiculously for years and never made their goal...until they changed the way they thought about diets in general. There's a lot of misinformation out there.

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The more important thing is to not compare the weight loss results of women to men. We lose weight differently – and it has nothing to do with willpower or self-restraint. So guys, the next time you feel the urge to gloat to your female counterparts – ZIP IT.

Cheers,