

# Health Mentor Programme

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## IN THIS SESSION:

- Do you have a distorted body image?
- What are your hormones doing to your fat cells?!

## Weight management part 3

MENTOR SESSION 23

# The weight management wrestle continued...

We've looked at 8 of the 23 principles on how to practice healthy, realistic weight management. In this session we'll deal with another 4 principles relating to medical and emotional aspects.

**Understanding medical and emotional principles of weight management:**

**9—Woman, estrogen and fat**

**10—Energy savers**



**11—Distorted body image**

**12—Comfort foods**

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# Medical principles:

## 9 — Women, estrogen and fat

**As women age their bodies start preparing for menopause (this already starts round about age 35).**

What happens is that your body wants to store and produce estrogen in fat tissue as the ovarian production starts reducing.

No matter how you try to avoid this, there are shape changes that are fairly inevitable and part of a healthy aging process and thus you will pick up a few 'healthy' kilograms as you age.

There are obviously limits to this increase in weight as well, so make sure that you are healthy and that you fall within healthy weight ranges for your particular age group. Don't make the same mistake that so many women do by always wanting to be the shape and weight that they were when they were 19 years old!

**That is not setting a fair goal for yourself!**



## 10 — Are you an energy saver?!



**You need to know your body type!**

It's a scientific fact that certain people store fat much easier than other people.

The same group of people also tend to be much more 'economic' on energy expenditure and burn less energy at rest.

While reading this you'll have a good idea if you're someone who is 'economic' with energy. (Not that this type of economy always excites you...)

You're also the type of person that gets really irritated when you hear people complain about how they struggle to put on weight even though they're eating a lot!

**How economic does your engine run?**

**Know what your body does with food, it's half the battle won!**

# Emotional principles:

## 11 — Distorted body image

**This is a serious problem that occurs mostly in women and also in some men.**

Yes, some people could have an issue of sorts about their funny big toe or their long nose but this can be taken too far. Severe dislike and disgust with your own body's image can lead to several other problems like anorexia, an unfulfilled marriage, unfulfilled sex life and many more.

Make sure you consult the appropriate health professional if you need to deal with any self-esteem or body-image issues.



Femme en chemise assise dans un fauteuil by Pablo Picasso (1913)  
'Woman in chair wearing a loose blouse'



### A truly healthy diet...

My suggestion is that you definitely shouldn't be dieting from any healthy, life-giving foods!

Rather diet from the mind-polluting images that the media have become experts in dishing up!

This unrealistic portrayal of the human body is seen everywhere and, to illustrate this point, I will focus on two areas where it has become a significant problem:

### I. Play dolls and action figures.

Studies were done that looked at girls and female dolls. Girls exposed to a very popular brand of doll reported lower body esteem and greater desire for a thinner body shape than girls who were not exposed to these dolls.<sup>1</sup>



Even male action figures are under the spotlight.

What is very interesting is that studies have found these figurines to have become more and more muscular over the last 30 years. They have, in fact, become so muscular that they're completely unnatural and not even the biggest, most muscular international body builders have similar muscular dimensions!

So, be aware of the types of toys your children play with and ask yourself if these toys are, in fact, 'healthy' for your kids!

**Yes, research into these types of children's toys does suggest that cultural expectations may contribute to body image disorders in both sexes.<sup>2</sup>**

# 11 – Distorted body image, continued

## 2. Magazines and television

Let's take a behind-the-scenes look at advertisements that specifically utilise the female body:

- The same 100 women are used for nearly all the ads.
- They are, on average, 16 years old.
- They don't look like the other 99,999999999% of woman on this planet!
- Several photoshop experts are used to remove any semblance of humanity from the photographs of these models (like moles, pimples and cellulite - you know, normal human stuff! By the way, 85% to 98% of woman on the planet have cellulite...)
- The advert will sell you something that promises to make you look like one of the 100 abnormal women!
- You are 40 and have 3 children...



Do these images of underweight models affect teenage girls?

**Of course they do!**

The results of a recent study that was done in the USA with 548 teenage girls aged 12-18 were clear:

Of the girls, 69% reported that magazine pictures influence their idea of the perfect body shape, and 47% reported wanting to lose weight because of magazine pictures.<sup>3</sup>

Another American study, done with 6982 teenage girls, found even more disturbing behaviour amongst a smaller percentage of the participants, like purging activities that include induced vomiting and the abuse of laxatives.

The study made an interesting concluding statement which said the following:

**'Therefore, to make eating-disorder prevention programs more effective, efforts should be made to persuade the television, movie, and magazine industries to employ more models and actresses whose weight could be described as healthy and not underweight'.<sup>4</sup>**



## Fasting time...

Why don't you do yourself a favour and avoid mind-polluting images as much as you should be avoiding toxic food!

This definitely includes helping your children in their self-realisation process by limiting their exposure, where possible, to unrealistic role models!

**Makes a lot of sense, doesn't it?**



## 12 – Emotional stress and comfort foods

Many people who struggle to keep their weight in check actually have an underlying emotional need which they subconsciously, or consciously, try to meet through food. (And this 'food' usually ends up being 'empty calorie' foods - i.e. not nutritious!)

This situation, which is not that uncommon, can obviously make it almost impossible to manage a healthy body weight. And, when unhealthy food is part of the equation, there is the resulting increased disease risk.



If this is you, then step one would be to determine if there is a deeper underlying emotional issue that is causing you to use food to soothe your emotions. In this case we advise that you enlist the help of a psychologist or well-trained counsellor to assist you in identifying these issues and dealing with them.

If you find that you're an emotional eater purely because you were conditioned that way as a baby (if you were given treats to shut you up when you cried) then take on a 21-day habit-breaker challenge!

Finally, don't forget all the principles that are outlined about food during the whole mentoring programme! Basic changes, like surrounding yourself with healthy food in the house, already make your chances of managing your weight considerably better! (See the 'food principles' in the next session and browse through the previous mentor sessions about snacks and treats).

**'Getting my lifelong weight struggle under control has come from a process of treating myself as well as I treat others in every way'.**

**Oprah Winfrey (1954 - )**

## Kathy's kitchen



### Vegetable pasta

All vegetables can be added raw or steamed to the pasta. Serve cold as a salad or heated as a hot dish. A versatile pasta for summer and winter. (Even my husband enjoyed this one!).

500g pasta of your choice (use **gluten-free and low GI if possible**)

3-4 carrots, jullienned

3-4 baby marrows, jullienned

½ punnet mushrooms, sliced

¼ head of cabbage, shredded

A big handful of broccoli florets

A big handful of cauliflower florets

2 red peppers, sliced

½ -1 cup olives

#### Dressing

1-2 Tablespoons cold-pressed olive oil

Juice of one lemon

2 cloves of garlic, crushed

Herbal salt to taste

Fresh/dried origanum to taste

Freshly milled black pepper

1. Cook pasta al dente.
  2. Slice all vegetables and steam if prefer.
  3. Mix veggies with pasta.
  4. Mix dressing well and add to pasta.
- Toss thoroughly.

Top with grated parmesan if not dairy intolerant.

Experiment with your own vegetable combinations. Green beans, chopped chives, celery, tomatoes, tinned red kidney beans and avocado are all options. Diced feta cheese and fresh basil will give a different taste as well.

Enjoy!

# References

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# About Dr Anton



Dr Anton Janse van Rensburg is a practising medical doctor who has devoted himself to the study of unique, scientifically sound solutions to modern diseases. He is also a qualified metal toxicologist and has a master's degree in Applied Human Nutrition.

He has written on a variety of wellness topics for numerous South African magazines and newspapers and in 2009 co-authored the book 'Diamonds in the Dust – crafting your future landscape'. Dr Anton is no stranger to radio and has been able to guide scores of listeners with his passion for wellness education.

Dr Anton is an established public speaker and is also a wellness coach to company executives. He specialises in motivating people to adopt healthier habits through well researched lifestyle and food approaches.

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