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FOODS FOR FAT LOSS

We are all blessed with that internal fat-burning weapon known as 'metabolism'! But did you know that some foods can actually help you burn more fat? Zoe Bingley-Pullin explains.

YOUR ULTIMATE
WEIGHT LOSS
GUIDE

WHEN YOUR GOAL IS FAT LOSS

you should focus on your metabolism. The body's basal metabolism involves the combustion of food, using oxygen and producing carbon dioxide. The rate of oxygen consumption of an individual indicates their energy expenditure (i.e., their Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR)). The Basal Metabolic Rate measures the speed of all chemical reactions, which occur when the body is lying completely at rest, for the activity of the internal organs and to maintain body temperature. It is ideally measured immediately upon waking. Under normal conditions, basal metabolism varies between individuals of the same sex by no more than five per cent. Interestingly, the BMR of females is, on average, 11 per cent lower than that of males.

Here are the foods that can help increase your BMR which, in turn, can help you achieve greater fat loss over the longer term.

1 CHILLI

Chilli increases the body's BMR due to the capsaicin content. Capsaicin facilitates weight loss in obese people, by increasing the body's Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR), stimulating the process of thermogenesis (burning of calories), and by stimulating lipolysis (converting triglycerides to be used as energy). When you consume spicy foods your BMR significantly increases by up to 25 per cent, and the effects can last up to two hours.

2 COFFEE

Coffee increases the body's BMR due to the caffeine content. Metabolic rate can be increased significantly for up to three hours after drinking caffeine. And although plasma glucose, insulin, and carbohydrate oxidation don't change significantly, there is an increase in fat oxidation. What this means is that caffeine/coffee stimulates the metabolic rate as well as causes a greater rate of fat oxidation.

3 WATER

An increased intake of water may increase the body's BMR, primarily because the body uses energy to heat cold water to body temperature. Drinking lots of water is commonly advocated in weight loss regimes and is regarded as a healthy strategy. Drinking 500ml of water has been seen to increase the metabolic rate by up to 30



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Reference: Peat, R. 'Coconut oil.' *Optimal Wellness Centre's eHealthy News You Can Use.* 205, 2001

per cent. In addition, drinking 2L of water per day can increase your energy expenditure by approximately 400kJ.

4 KELP

Kelp is a common type of seaweed, derived from brown algae. Kelp is full of iodine, which helps regulate the body's production of energy through cellular oxidation, helping stimulate the rate of metabolism and helping burn excessive fats. Iodine also increases the body's BMR by stimulating the production of thyroxine, which is produced by the thyroid gland and helps regulate your metabolism.

5 EXTRA VIRGIN COCONUT OIL

Coconut oil (the extra virgin variety only though) can increase the body's BMR. Most of the health benefits of coconut oil are attributed to its high content of medium-chain saturated fatty acids, such as capric acid, caprylic acid and lauric acid. Unlike most other dietary oils, coconut oil doesn't contain trans-fatty acids due to its very low content of unsaturated fatty acids. An interesting study showed that the basal metabolic rate of people in Yucatan, where coconut is a staple food, is 25 per cent higher than that of people in the United States. Interestingly, people who live in hotter climates often have lower basal metabolic rates.