

Simplification of the article: 10 Tips To Lose Weight With A Low Thyroid Problem by Kent Holtorf, M.D

Click here for the original article - <http://hypothyroidmom.com/10-tips-to-lose-weight-with-a-low-thyroid-problem/>

This article is written about weight gain issues with people who have underactive thyroids. It's common amongst this group of people to experience weight gain and difficulty with weight loss despite good diets and regular exercise.

They give 10 factors to consider if you struggle managing the symptoms despite being on medication. Below is a brief summary of each:

1. Reverse T3

The desired and normal process for the thyroid is that it produces T4 (thyroxine). That T4 gets converted to T3 and the cells use the T3 when they need energy.

This article explains how, in some cases instead of converting T4 to T3 it goes wrong and makes something called reverse T3 (rT3) which makes the body abruptly stop and so you are likely to get very tired and gain weight very quickly. Stress, depression, a history of dieting, insulin resistance, being overweight, diabetes, chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, autoimmune diseases, chronic inflammation, chronic infections, PMS and iron deficiency can all increase the changes of your body converting the T4 into rT3.

In a simple formula they explain that if you are one of the people making too much rT3 and the GP gives you Levothyroxine (T4) then you will make more rT3 and you will feel worse despite all the blood tests being fine.

In the UK the GP's do not standardly test for rT3 as it isn't a recognised issue. You can get tests privately for it (through me or any registered nutritional therapist) to see if it is an issue for you.

If it is there are things that can be done.

- You can take T3 (there are products available with it in it),
- Reduce the things that increase that conversion – stress, depression, inflammation etc

2. Manage Your Metabolic Set Point

Our brain is constantly telling our body what "normal" is. It happens with resting heart rate, temperature, blood pressure, blood sugar levels and also our weight. The issue is that our brain can sometimes get it wrong (especially with the weight).

Things that cause your "normal weight" to increase include some medications, calorie restricting diets (including extreme detoxes!), always being on lots of diets, chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia (unexplained but constant pain).

Things that can help to reset the weight to a lower norm include

- Consistency with diet and exercise (no quick fixes here – just a hard slog)
- Getting the thyroid hormones understood and started – eg rT3, T3 etc
- Sorting any conditions that aren't helping such as chronic fatigue, diabetes etc
- Taking a medication like Naltrexone (but that has to be done with a GP)

3. Decrease Leptin Resistance

Leptin is a wonder hormone – it tells us we've eaten enough, controls our appetite and helps us burn our fat stores. In theory an overweight person will produce more leptin to tell that person's brain that they have enough fat stores and should really stop eating so much.

Unfortunately, when we are gaining weight (as you do with an underactive thyroid) the brain is constantly getting the messages from leptin and it gets so used to them that it basically ignores them. Eating lots of sugars, over eating, being stressed, not sleeping well and exercising to extreme cause issues Leptin too. That ultimately means we have no appetite regulation, nothing to tell the body to stop storing fat and we feel hungry all the time.....so you gain more weight and still feel hungry.

Best thing you can do is:

- Avoid fructose and simple carbs
- Control your portions to avoid overeating,
- Get a good night's sleep
- Reduce your stress levels
- Balance your blood sugar levels
- Partake in moderate exercise – nothing extreme but some daily is great.

4. Resolve Insulin Resistance

Our body needs fuel and the fuel of choice is sugar – sugars enter the body as carbohydrates and are broken down into simple sugars ready for use. The cells need them to produce energy, we need them to make hormones, the brain needs a constant supply to function properly, we need them to sleep, our immune system relies on them, they are used in the stress response and they do actually help us to manage weight.

When the thyroid slows down everything slows down and so your ability to break down and manage sugars is impacted. It can mean we don't process them correctly and the cells don't absorb them properly. When the cells can't take them in they float around in the blood and damage our arteries. The body tries to get rid of them by converting them to fat stores and the problems worsen.

It's not just the thyroid that can cause this issue – constant stress, and a poor diet can cause it to

To help with this you can:

- De stress

- Eat a diet rich in complex carbohydrates (wholegrains, vegetables etc) and low in simple carbohydrates (cakes, biscuits, white breads and pasta, pastry, sweets, juices etc)
- Exercise – helps us process sugars better
- Take a supplement (under supervision only though!!) with chromium, magnesium etc

Again – this is an area where I can really help with

5. Change your brain chemistry

Your brain regulates hunger. If you need energy your brain gets messages and it responds by telling your body that you are hungry. Great in theory but if your brain is saying you are hungry when you are not then it can lead to weight gain. Things that cause issues are:

- Your metabolism is too slow for the appetite level set by your brain (which happens with hypothyroidism)
- Stress interferes by stopping the feel good hormone serotonin and increases appetite

Natural alternatives to boosting serotonin include aerobic exercise and the herbal treatment called St. John's Wort (but you should only take that when advised by a medical practitioner as it interacts with lots of medications)

6. Rule Out Hypothalamic Obesity Disorder

This is a diagnosable (but rare) condition which stops you converting T4 to T3 and taking up T3. Exercising and eating well but still rapidly gaining weight and feeling terrible may indicate this. If you suspect that, go talk to your GP about getting the hypothalamus tested.

7. Stay Hydrated

When cells are thirsty they slow down – drinking lots of water can stop this happening. Tea, coffee and alcohol will dehydrate you so avoid them.

Having too much salt in your diet will dehydrate you too

8. Clean up your diet

Extreme diets (including calorie restriction and juice cleanses etc) can decrease your T3 levels by half and it can slow the thyroid down. Often, once the diet stops the thyroid doesn't go back to previous levels so it makes it very easy for the weight to go back on plus a little more.

To get round this you have to be eat in a clever way. Avoid inflammatory foods (sugars, trans fats, artificial sweeteners, dairy, gluten and processed foods etc) and maximise the number of different nutrients you get. Having good quality organic proteins at all meals and snacks, lots of vegetables, limited fruit and small amounts of good fats may really help

Clearly I can really help with that bit!

9. Exercise, but don't overdo it

Some exercise is great but too much can put a strain on your body and actually increase your changes of converting T4 to rT3 (see point 1). It is also tiring and make you feel worse.

45 minutes of walking daily is great – things that get you breathless daily are all fantastic – no marathon sprint sessions for now though!

10. Get enough sleep

Lack of sleep stimulates our appetite hormones and we don't need those to be making our hunger pangs worse. Sleep also helps us to properly convert T4 to T3. Getting around 8 hours sleep is perfect for most people so work on getting that sorted with early nights, no TV late in the evening or in the bedroom and no nocturnal mobile phone activity!!