

Secrets of Slender people

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Have you ever wondered why your best friend or husband or that woman at work, can eat anything they please and they never, EVER seem to gain any weight. When in fact you could breathe in the fumes of a chocolate éclair in the window of the bakery down the road, and gain a few kilograms. Well, at least it seems so. Have you ever wondered HOW these people actually achieve the near impossible: maintaining their weight despite changes in the weather, economic climate, time of the month, or status of their personal life?

There IS a secret and there is a formula which these people follow – but many of them don't actually know it themselves. You see, the formula comes naturally to them. They follow this recipe for weight success every day and with ease. Actually, teenagers use this strategy and so do many children. But beware, this amazing secret strategy defies all rules and strict eating structures you might be currently using. In fact, eating by rules and time frames needs to be ditched for this to truly work. So read on with an open mind.

Have you ever seen a teenager walk to the fridge and open the door? They stand there for minutes, often saying nothing and finally announce "there's nothing to eat". Any mother throws up her hands in despair because like me, you know the fridge is full of various food options. It seems you can never please everyone. Finally the teenager walks away, with nothing, probably returning within a short timeframe to repeat the process. In fact, how many times have you put your head in the cupboard and looked around, thinking the very same thing: there's nothing to eat. Women can do this in their wardrobes too (nothing to wear!).

What is happening in those seconds, minutes where the brain is processing the options in front of them and then announces there is nothing to eat? Indeed, there is something happening and here's what it is: as the brain looks at a food option in the fridge or cupboard or even at an array of outlets in a food hall the stomach is also processing how a particular food choice would feel after you eat it. You can be hungry and still announce there is nothing you eat.

What is actually happening is that you are announcing there is noting you feel like eating at a *stomach level*. Your brain might process anywhere up to half a dozen options before deciding you don't want any of them. This is a key phenomenon of naturally slender people. Typically teenagers or slender people walk away from the food options and return some time later and again repeat the process. They rarely eat out of boredom or eat when they are not really hungry because they are paying attention to their stomach and what *it* feels like consuming.

Slender people do overeat (I can hear you sighing with relief). They have times when they ignore their stomachs because it just tastes to good and have that extra slice of mud cake or indulge at the seafood buffet. However there is something they do the next day which distinguishes them from the person who passionately diets to maintain their weight. The naturally slender person listens to their stomach and only eats when they are hungry. They never follow the clock (dietitians may cringe here). They don't necessarily eat every three hours to maintain their metabolism – they eat what they feel like and when they feel like. If they work a typical job with typical lunch hours, they still only eat during that time, if they are hungry. If they miss out on lunch and feel ravenous when they get home, they eat then and forget about ruining their dinner.

So the rules are: there are no rules. It is all about listening to your stomach and using this as your guide. It side steps the issue about emotional eating because usually these people ignore the fridge when they are bored, unhappy, happy, distressed, angry or ecstatic because they are not hungry in these times. I can hear the whoops of joy: finally, I can eat whatever I like, whenever I like and my weight will stay the same! Almost.

Dr Peta Stapleton and Terri Sheldon are two well known Australian psychologists with 35 years of combined clinical experience. They have developed the SlimMinds Program that teaches the latest effective psychological techniques to break out of that YoYo failure cycle that so often occurs with traditional weight loss programs. See www.slimminds.com