BROOKLYN_BORN

Change Banner Image

154,981
SparkPoints

LEVEL 21

👤 Info   📁 Photos   👥 Feed   💬 **Blogs**   🏆 Awards   More ⌄

Minutes, Miles, Calories, Pounds – what to track and why

Sunday, April 21, 2013

I have no doubt that tracking calories-in made all the difference in reaching my weight goal. I never realized how much I was actually eating until I measured and tracked it. An added benefit was being aware of nutrients. Monitoring calories-in definitely resulted in pounds lost.

Tracking calories-out should have had the same effect only in my case it really didn't. I always logged my workouts – for decades. I was a fit person who was also getting fat anyway. The trend was constantly upward. So just tracking calories burned wasn't enough.

To paraphrase an old song "You can't have one without the other" (at least I can't).

This brings me to 2 local fitness challenges. I like to support local healthy living initiatives. I live in a rural area equidistant between 2 small cities. Each Parks & Rec dept has been holding fitness programs to encourage people to "get moving."

One tracks miles (run, walked, biked, paddled, swum) and even allowed 20 min of aerobics to count as 1 mile.
The other is tracking minutes of exercise. It doesn't matter what you did, just record the minutes.

Both are self reported.
The "Miles" program reports the aggregate total of how much we've accomplished.
The "Minutes" program posts a "leader board"

Both methods have value, but neither considers intensity. That's not the purpose of this. There are numerous competitive events for those seeking intensity of effort.

Still, I was thinking about this last week when I rose suddenly up the "Minutes" leader board, but my "Miles" were holding steady. Easily explained - I was walking with DH, a lovely and relaxing activity for both of us. It just took awhile.

10 miles of walking takes 3 ½ hrs at DH's approximate 20 min/mile pace.
Running that distance (10 min/mi) & I'm done in 1 ¾ hrs.

Now looking at calories (using the SP tracker).
I'll burn 1000 calories by running or 700 by walking with DH.

That's about a 3 chocolate chip cookie differential or a cup of yogurt, a banana and an orange.

This leads me back to what I always knew. I can burn calories any way that I choose with any activity that I enjoy, but I better keep track of my food intake. I DO NOT want to become complacent and regain that weight.

💬   **Add a Blog Entry**

See Today's Featured Member Blog Posts

More Blogs by BROOKLYN_BORN

Now I can add one more event to my "Anniversary Dates" to forget - 6/7/2021

Avoiding Our Wedding Anniversary - 6/4/2021

Multitasking for Safety – Plus Remembrance and Reflection - 6/1/2021

Taps Across America – The National Moment of Remembrance - Monday 5/31/21 3PM - 5/30/2021

View All ›

Share This Post With Others

Report Inappropriate Blog

Member Comments About This Blog Post

CAALAN23 v

Reading your later blog about the knees and then this one about the calorie intake and the differential between actually walking and running, makes me feel so much better about biding my time and not feeling guilty about doing enough to lose. I realize that it will take more time and while I'm not exactly a patient lady by nature, I do understand the benefits of long term planning. :)

Thanks for helping me in my journey.
Tina
2974 days ago

DESERTJULZ v

So true! So if you're on a time budget, up the intensity! Yesterday, I had a lovely slow walk of two miles at the botanical garden. It didn't burn many calories, yet I so enjoyed it. Today, time is tighter, so did one of Coach Nicole's cardio routines. Higher intensity!
2975 days ago

SADWHITEWOLF v

I noticed that last week I had more fitness minutes than usual because I had been going on consistent lunch walks (brisk ones) with some co-works. But I also noticed that my total calories burned were way lower than usual. Intensity lever does count especially if I am still eating at the same level.
I have to remind myself that more frequent exercise does not equal Better exercise.
Balance, it's all about the balance
2975 days ago

SOPHIEDO13 v

I'm good at tracking calories and fitness minutes, but now I need to measure food more closely since I'm not losing like I should I also need to up my exercise minutes. I'm a work in progress.

THANK YOU!

2976 days ago

Comment edited on: 4/21/2013 12:36:08 PM

RUNNING_SNAIL v

thanks for the insight!
2976 days ago

WATERMELLEN v

Oh yeah. It's shocking how little food results in huge increases in calories!! (As I tracked to my horror after a rare and relatively minor indulgence Friday evening!!)

Doesn't really matter how much I exercise with respect to weight maintenance . . . although of course exercise is vital for the toning/strength/cardio/mood.
2976 days ago

HOPEFILL v

You're so right- we love to be able to measure things, but our metrics require context to be meaningful.

Keep up the great work!
2976 days ago

BOOKAPHILE v

I have to track both or I get complacent and the weight returns. I've both over and under estimated my calories, but I don't think I've ever estimated correctly, lol.

It's great that you have 2 programs near you that you (and DH) use...you're inspiring others to move!
2976 days ago

DR1939 v

Good reminders.
2976 days ago

CD13545024

good post.

2976 days ago

DOVESEYES

GREAT!

2976 days ago

CD13777271

Excellent post. Tracking both is so important. I had tracked my food but not my exercise. Thought I was burning enough calories and couldn't figure out why I was gaining weight. Then I joined SP and had the exercise tracker. Wow what an eye opener. I wasn't burning any where near enough calories.

2976 days ago

COCK-ROBIN

Excellent!

2976 days ago

CELIAMINER

Well said!

2976 days ago

MISCHAKEO

I like the quote..You cannot outrun your fork. No matter how much you exercise, you still need to watch what you eat.
I think tracking food and exercise keeps me accountable!

Good for you getting various types of exercise and joining challenges!

2976 days ago

MOOSLADY

It is interesting how this works differently for different people. I think my metabolism must be unusually flexible. While I enjoy being active, too much vigorous activity actually slowed or stopped my weight loss. Once I wasn't overeating by leaps and bounds, it made no difference whether I ate 1800-2000 calories or 1000-1200 calories. What changed my weight, and eventually even lost those last ten pounds was changing the composition of what I ate. I had to give up 90% of processed foods and eventually keep my carbs around 100-150, combined by keeping my fat high. So I quit tracking for Lent and haven't gone back since the times I wasn't tracking, I was finding my weight either dropping or being more stable. Tracking made my feelings about how much I was eating cause me to consistently starve myself out of guilt(because everything wrong in one's life is because I ate too much? Lees eating means you are a better more valuable person? Foggy thinking, but there it is) instead of using my scale and physical feelings of energy and wellness guide me. MY POINT IS know yourself, try different(using common sense) methods until something works for you. One size does not fit all.

2976 days ago

FITMOMINNJ

Tracking food can be the hardest but most necessary ingredient in the fitness equation. I know

I can't THANK YOU! out exercise a bad diet:)

2976 days ago

Add Your Comment to the Blog Post

Leave encouragement, a question, or anything else relevant to this post. All blog comments must abide by SparkPeople's Community Guidelines.

☐ Subscribe to this blog

ADD AN EMOTICON   SPELL CHECK

Post Comment