

2Good Student

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The Evolution of Dieting: Common Myths and Modern Trends

In an American culture laden with vanity and the pervasiveness of social media images, evolving dieting fads have permeated modern discourse into assuming which foods or trends are healthy and therefore essential in achieving the ideal body image. The popularity of professional athletes contributes to growing misconceptions regarding dieting approaches as athletes set an ideal standard for the average American to attain. In an effort to attain the same athletic physique, individuals seek answers in supplements and by reducing caloric intake. This creates a trend of dieting myths that potentially compromise an individual's livelihood. Although modern athletes symbolize the epitome of the ideal body, many popular athletes contradict common beliefs regarding the dieting process by insisting that a combination of approaches such as clean eating in conjunction with regular exercise most beneficially create a balanced lifestyle imperative to both looking and feeling fit.

Myths regarding dieting have shaped modern outlooks on how to achieve the ideal body by insisting on rules and deprivation. According to researcher David Zinczenko in "6-Minute Meals for 6-Pack Abs," "fad diet[s]" are contingent on restriction (98). Therefore, it has been commonly perceived that the only way to achieve a healthy body is through rigorous reduction and selection of food groups. However, Zinczenko seeks to resolve this issue by recommending "an intelligent, well-balanced...eating plan" predicated on frequency and consistency (98).

Although he suggests an eating schedule, he is quick to clarify “I want you full” (98). Therefore, unlike his claim that “fad diets” limit consumption, he contradicts this myth by encouraging frequent “intelligent” or well-balanced eating. Zinczenko further debunks dieting myths by suggesting that “by eating every few hours, you’ll keep your metabolism revved...” (99). Unlike the popular belief that eating less is consistent with achieving an ideal body, Zinczenko contends that indulging in “specific” foods is essentially better because it will increase the rate of converting food into energy (99). Therefore, modern assumptions that claim restriction is synonymous to achieving a healthy body are misleading.

In addition to myths pertaining to healthy eating proportions, many diet fads also falsely lead people to believe that healthy eating should be restricted and extremely disciplined. In more extreme workout cultures, such as the world of body building, there are often taboos around eating foods such as carbs and in certain cases even fruits and other natural sugars. While it is important to be diligent with one’s nutrition, neglecting foods such as carbohydrates and fruits can actually deprive the necessary nutrients needed to perform at peak levels. According to researcher David Zinczenko, “there’s a basic human need for sweets...and to completely eliminate them goes against human nature and guarantees only one thing—dietary failure” (99-100). The reason humans still crave sweets, Zinczenko claims, is because of an instinct that we developed to ensure that we scavenged for the right fruits and foods to get proper minerals and vitamins. It is essential to utilize carbohydrates as a primary source of energy for workouts to avoid making the body revert to proteins which could be counterproductive in the process of achieving muscle gains. The body needs to be properly fueled in order to achieve optimal levels of athleticism.

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