

Fish Oil for Weight Loss - A university research project suggests omega 3 fish oil and exercise may be the key to weight loss.

Omega 3 Fish Oil for Weight Loss

By Dietitian, Juliette Kellow BSc RD

The current popularity and understanding of the benefits of omega 3 fish oil could just be a drop in the ocean. Now a recent study has shown that taking fish oil supplements, with regular exercise, can assist weight loss.

The study by the University of South Australia took 75 overweight and obese people (with other cardiovascular disease risk factors such as hypertension and high cholesterol levels) and split them into four groups. At the first split, half were given doses of tuna fish oil while the others were given the same amount of sunflower oil which contains no omega 3. Both these groups were then split. Half taking no extra exercise while the others completed three 45-minute runs, at 75% of their maximum heart rate, each week. The participants were encouraged not to otherwise change their diet.

After 3 weeks, three of the groups showed little change. However, the group that were given the fish oil and had done the exercise showed a decrease in body fat percentage plus an average 2kg/4.5lb weight loss.

The results seem more impressive given that no other changes to eating habits were made. Also, the exercise 'regime' was not much more than the recommended levels for everyone; not just those trying to lose weight. When combined with a calorie-counted diet and increased exercise, the effects of fish oil on weight loss could prove substantial.

It is believed that omega 3 oil improves the flow of blood to the muscles during exercise and helps to stimulate enzymes which transport fat to where it can be used up for energy.

Omega 3 oil is widely available as a supplement and as an additive in certain foods and drinks. Its popularity has been boosted by previous studies linking omega 3 to: improved brain and memory function, good eye-development and maintenance plus the ability to reduce the risks of Alzheimer's and strokes.

Extended studies are planned to further understand the effects of omega 3 over a longer period and combined with greater exercise. Although taking omega 3 in its natural form (from fish for example) may give the greatest benefits, omega 3 fish oil supplements could be an effective natural weight loss supplement to combine with an exercise programme.