

What they said about dieting was all wrong

Dieting is harder than you think. If you cut out a chocolate bar each day you will lose only one-third of the weight that experts had thought. For decades, doctors have based their advice to those who want to lose weight on the assumption that cutting 500 calories a day will see the weight fall off at the rate of 1lb a week.

"This is wrong," Kevin Hill, of the National Institutes of Health in the United States, said. "It does not happen." The error has arisen because the calculation did not take

account of changes in metabolism as weight falls. The body adjusts to reductions in energy intake (calories eaten) by slowing its energy output (calories expended). The result is that forgoing that daily chocolate bar containing 250 calories will lead to about 25lb of weight loss if it is sustained for three years, much less than the 78lb predicted by the old dieting assumption.

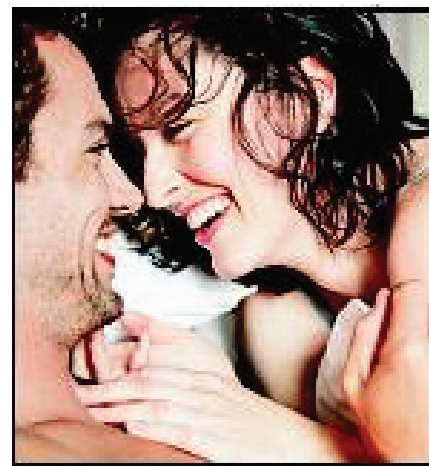
A more sophisticated measure of weight loss, which takes account of metabolic changes and of differences between fat and thin people, has been developed by Dr Hill and colleagues of the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney

Diseases. It shows that heavier people tend to lose weight faster than lighter people on the same diet, though they will take longer to reach the target weight than those who weigh less to begin with. Most people on a diet achieve their maximum weight loss after six to eight months and it has been assumed this is a natural "plateauing" effect, resulting from slowed metabolism. But evidence shows that people find it hard to stick to a diet for longer than six months and that is why they stop losing weight. Body-weight plateauing occurs much later, after two to three years. There is nothing to choose

between different diets that alter the fat, protein and carbohydrate balance, such as the Atkins diet that reduces carbohydrates, the researchers say. The body adapts rapidly to changes in these constituents with the result that all diets result in the same loss of body fat, at least in the short term. They said: "Little is known about the long-term effects." It has been difficult to assess how closely people follow diets as research relies on self-reporting. The authors said: "Widespread past use of erroneous rules for estimation of human body-weight change have led to unrealistic expectations."

Key to be happy & healthy in twilight years: Active sex life

London: Veteran Hollywood actress Jane Fonda had recently attributed her youthful appearance to her healthy libido. Now, she is backed by scientists who have found that active sex life can help elderly women cope with aging.



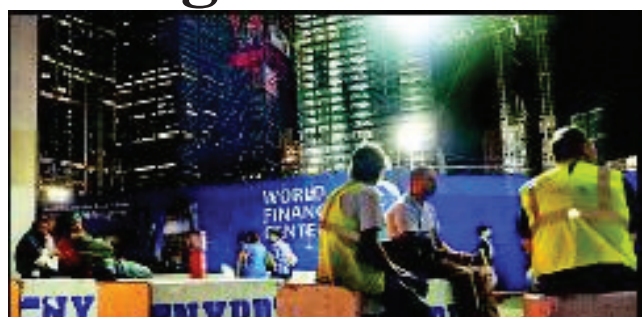
Researchers at the University of California San Diego found that elderly women who enjoyed an active sex life had a better quality of life, and were healthier and happier.

researchers who looked women aged between 60 and 89, the Daily Telegraph reported. This had an effect on their perceived quality of life, said study author professor Wesley Thompson. He said: "Contrary to our earlier hypothesis, sexual satisfaction was not significantly associated with age. Feeling satisfied with your sex life is closely related to your perceived quality of life."

He added: "While we cannot assess cause and effect from this study, these results suggest that maintaining a high level of sexual satisfaction may positively reinforce other psychological aspects of successful aging."

Ten years on, 9/11 remains are still being identified

In a laboratory in the centre of Manhattan scientists continue to struggle to put names to the remains of victims from the September 11, 2001 attacks, some 40 percent of which are still unidentified. "It's not a legal obligation because everybody has a death certificate. It's an ethical-moral decision," said Mechthild Prinz in the department of forensic biology at the city's Chief Medical Examiner office.



The names of the people who died in the explosions, fires and collapse in the Twin Towers on 9/11 are known, but the violence was so extreme that even a decade later it takes painstaking forensic work to match those identities to the human

fragments found at the site. The latest match made was just this week: Ernest James, who was 40 years old. He was the 1,629th victim identified out of 2,753 people killed at the World Trade Centre, or 59 percent of the total. Initially, traditional methods such as dental records, photographs and finger prints were used to identify the bodies and remains pulled from the rubble. But as the easier

batches of remains were dealt with the gruesome task turned into something more akin to serious detective work. Amid strict security and sanitation conditions, a team of five scientists continues to deal with 6,314 fragments of bones found in the World Trade Centre area. However in most cases the DNA found in the fragments turns out to be just another piece of a person already identified.

How to fight warming? Just lock CO2 in rocks

Basalt Rock To Combine With CO2 To Form Limestone

Hellisheidi, Iceland: Sometime next month, on the steaming fringes of an Icelandic volcano, an international team of scientists will begin pumping "seltzer water" into a deep hole, producing a brew that will lock away carbon dioxide forever. Chemically disposing of CO2, the chief greenhouse gas blamed for global warming, is a kind of 21st-century alchemy that researchers and governments have hoped for to slow or halt climate change.

The American and Icelandic designers of the "CarbFix" experiment will be capitalizing on a feature of the basalt rock underpinning 90% of Iceland: It is a highly reactive material that will combine its calcium with a CO2 solution to form limestone — permanent, harmless limestone. Researchers caution that their upcoming 6-to-12-month test could fall short of expectations, and warn against looking for a climate "fix" from

CarbFix any year soon.

In fact, one of the objectives of the project, whose main sponsors are Reykjavik's city-owned utility and US and Icelandic universities, is to train young scientists for years of work to come. A scientific overseer of CarbFix — the man, as it happens, who also is credited with coining the term "global warming" four decades ago — says the world's failure to heed those early warnings, to rein in greenhouse-gas emissions from coal, gasoline and other fossil fuels, is driving scientists to drastic approaches.

"Whether we do it in the next 50 years, or the 50 years after that, we're going to have to store CO2," Columbia University's Wallace S Broecker said in an interview in New York. The world is already storing some CO2. As a byproduct of Norway's natural gas production, for example, it is being pumped into a sandstone reservoir beneath the North Sea. But people worry such stowed-away gas could someday escape, while CO2 transformed into stone would not. The experiment will take place below the landscape of this place 29 kilometers southeast of Reykjavik.



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