

FIT AUSSIE GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Are you sick and tired of hearing every expert under the sun telling you how to lose weight? Have you tried all those weight loss diets and are still too fat? Do you want some one, once and for all, to identify the problems with weight loss and come up with an effective way of overcoming the obesity epidemic that is reproducing on mass around the world?

If so, this book is for you. It is a statement that had to be made, and at last someone has made it. It is an ‘in your face’ approach to the scandal that is weight loss marketing. It launches an all out attack on those methods, and destructive approach we, as a society, have on promoting obesity and the decline in health around the world. It will also provide a guide, or series of steps, that can lead to a dramatic reduction in international obesity.

With so many experts in the industry it is hard to know who to believe. The author of this book is no dietician; he is an ex-police officer, who can see nothing but a con in the way weight loss programs are marketed to the world. John Reidy is a world-class ultra triathlete, a qualified personal trainer, and the Managing Director of Hyperplasia Pty Ltd, a company that is committed to countering weaknesses in health and fitness.

Understanding the solution begins with understanding the problem. Our current lifestyles and social habits have evolved to the point where they create, encourage and promote obesity. Being overweight is the result of enlarged body fat cells, and the excessive cellular reproduction (hyperplasia) of those fat cells. In the same way that body fat is reproducing in the individual, it is also reproducing itself in an ever-growing mass of individuals around the world. Obesity is now at epidemic levels and if not controlled, its impact upon our lives and of future generations will be destructive. The problem is growing and compounding its strength with every generation.

To understand the solution we have to stop thinking like we do at the moment. We currently have companies within our social structure that claim to provide weight loss for their clients. The reality however is that these companies use ineffective methods that promote yo-you dieting in the masses and, as a result, actually promote weight gain with each failed diet attempt. The weight loss industry is a multimillion-dollar industry, with a multi million strong clientele. The failure rate of current programs has been estimated at around 95%. The scary reality is that our current commercial solution is one of the most powerful growth traits the epidemic has. Simply put, for an epidemic that has the ability to be destructive to the world’s health, we have no solution.

The 'Fit Aussie Guide' is my attempt at doing something about it. It was originally going to be another commercial product that I devised to overcome this epidemic – and make me a lot of money in the process. The more I looked into it, the more I realised that if I was to follow my 'original' path, I would only add fuel to the flame.

Although I have been involved in the sport and fitness industry for some 20 years, and believe I have the knack for promoting health and fitness, I am the first to put my hands up to say this is out of my control. The solution to this epidemic won't come from me, it won't come from the other weight loss companies and it won't come from any expert sitting on your television telling you how to lose weight.

So how do we overcome this problem? My theory, like the karate student, is to use the opponent's strength against itself. Simply put, hyperplasia is the process that the body has used to reproduce excessive amounts of body fat cells. We need to use this very effective process as a blueprint towards the business of fighting it. The answer lies in creating an effective base to work off. Reproducing that strength, then continue reproducing on mass until we have the desired result.

The answer will require us to have an effective base to work off. This is the job of those who have a duty of care to the nations people – our government. A national policy will have to be implemented to control all variables associated with the epidemic. We will have to identify and control a multitude of problems, from a multitude of angles. The reproduction of this vision will be in the hands of individuals, parents, the weight loss industry, doctors, psychologists, teachers, the workplace, tuckshops, the food industry, and of course, our political leaders. We have to be structured in a way so as we all work towards the same goal, and this teamwork is going to have to be government controlled, monitored and policed. We create strength, and then we reproduce it in mass.

I am writing this book in the hope that the government realises the 'Duty of Care' they are so badly failing in. To avoid being another who simply yells out at things gone wrong, the 'Fit Aussie Guide' will offer suggestions that could be used as part of a national obesity management plan.

It is written in commercial format in the hope of being publicly palatable. The book attempts to give an insight into the commercial manipulation that is being used by current providers. It will provide a simple understanding of the body and how it works; it will clarify what acceptable dietary behaviour is; it will explain effective methods of sustained physical activity and it will look into the psychological variables that need to be addressed in overcoming addictions. It will also give simple, sample diet and training programs.

The 'Fit Aussie Guide' will be offered free on the internet for all to use at www.fitaussie.com I hope this will be the catalyst so needed to spark our society, the diet industry and our government into productive action. No doubt there will be varying views on an appropriate policy for a national standard. I accept that there are more qualified people than me to create this standard. This guide is my view on the topic but

the hope is that the nation's government, and its leading professionals, can put together an effective policy and not throw money into methods that only promote obesity. Our ever-growing obese population needs productive help.

CHAPTER ONE

UNDERSTANDING THE CON

A man comes to the door dressed nicely and presents you with a great new opportunity. He quickly shows you a designer kitchen from a catalogue with a price tag of \$15,000, then another folder with photographs of an identical looking kitchen package with a price tag of \$8,000 (you're hooked). He is part of a fast growing manufacturing company that purchases kitchens in bulk from Asia. They don't have shops all around the state, nor do they have hundreds of employees to pay. All they have is low cost product, minimal storage, a few door-to-door salesmen, and a caring owner builder as the installer (so long as you wait a few weeks for installation). He explains how there are only 5 kitchen packages left in this shipment and all that is needed is a 25% or \$2000 deposit. It sounds too good to be true, and it is. After your funds are cleared, your doubt turns to shock when you realise the salesman was a conman and has run with your, and plenty of other peoples, money.

How would you feel if this happened to you? What would you do if you caught up with this guy? Naturally you would report the matter and happily go through the legal processes to get him a well-deserved community service order. You would do this because you know that beating his head repeatedly against your door, although it would release a little anger, would only make matters worse.

How would you feel however, if you were sold a weight loss program that didn't help you lose any weight? Would you get angry or simply accept it? But here's the punch line, like bashing your own head against the door, would you then go in search of another one of these sales pitches, again and again? Many people do exactly that, and have thrown away far more than \$2000 to these product providers. In their eyes, they are the reason it didn't work, not the diet.

In this case, if you did continually pay for programs that did absolutely nothing, then all you have lost is the money. Imagine however, if you went on to this great weight loss program and yes, to your surprise, it works. You lose all this weight, 15 kilos in 10 weeks in fact, and you are over the moon. But after a few months, you are unable to

maintain this and soon find that the 10 kilos swarms back around your hips, plus an extra two kilos for the trouble. Would you be angry, or would it be your fault again?

Imagine if you did this again and again and again. Then before you know it you receive a fitness assessment upon starting another diet and are classified as obese. You are told if you don't do something about your weight you will soon have serious health problems. You then go about continuing this cycle.

What if I said that these providers not only took your money but also were a contributing factor in making you obese with serious health concerns, would this make you angry?

Have no doubts, the excessive reproduction of body fat is serious. It can debilitate you physically; it can make you an outcast socially; it can affect your job, your relationships and your love life. Obesity can make your life a living hell and then it can kill you.

There are some simple biological processes occurring here and the fact that this isn't disclosed, in my eyes, is criminal. Throughout the course of this book I will attempt to explain some simple logic on how the body works, what is effective dieting and what isn't? If you then fall for a fad diet, or some magic solution, you will have no one to blame but yourself. Pass those mistakes on to the next generation and they will have some one to blame – you!

WEIGHT LOSS MARKETING

I will begin with some things to look out for. We live in a commercial environment where companies have to out-market one another for your dollar. Advertising is one of the main tools used to attract your business. Marketing trends would indicate that some means of advertising are more effective than others, and as a result competing companies have adopted a variety of advertising trends. The point here is that this means of advertising is used as it is an effective way of obtaining your dollar, it doesn't mean that it reflects upon the effectiveness of the programs being offered. The more effective advertising methods are proving to be those that offer miraculous results, not the ones that offer sound and sensible advice.

Unfortunately, the weight loss industry is a relatively uncontrolled entity. When a pharmaceutical company wants to release a drug they have to go through years of extensive testing before gaining market eligibility – their effectiveness is very well documented and supported by extensive studies. Non-pharmaceutical products such as diet pills or supplements however, can be sold without going through those extensive testing procedures. As a result, there is limited knowledge or scientific information regarding their effectiveness, or even if they work at all.

Welcome to the world of weight-loss marketing – and this is where I get angry!

FRAUDULENT ADVERTISING

Search the net for ‘diet fraud’ and you will find many examples of providers that will outright lie in an attempt to get you to buy their product. Although there are examples of conman selling, but not providing, products over the net, the most prevalent example here is in fraudulent advertising. A report from the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) in the U.S.A did a review of 300 weight-loss advertisements (refer to www.ftc.gov/dietfit). Amongst the ads run in 2001, the researchers found that 55% made at least one false or unsubstantiated claim.

If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Don’t be swayed by suggested evidence if the proof can’t be provided or verified. 40% of the above mentioned ads claimed their product or service was ‘clinically tested’ or ‘scientifically proven’. Many claimed their product was tested at ‘respected’, ‘major’ or ‘leading’ medical centres or universities. However there was no way for consumers to assess the claims validity. In addition, almost one-fourth of the ads stated that the product was ‘recommended’, ‘approved’ or ‘discovered’ by medical professionals however there was no way of assessing whether the professional was sufficiently qualified, paid for the testing, used sufficient standards or in fact if they even existed.

Other common sales pitches included claims of pills that could create the weight loss without training or healthy eating, and half of the ads offered a money-back guarantee. Other claims like ‘rapid weight loss’, ‘eat what ever you want’ and ‘take it off and keep it off’ are all ‘hot’ buttons advertisers use to promote their sales.

The report notes that despite an unprecedented level of FTC enforcement, the deception in weight loss advertising has worsened.

DECEPTIVE ADVERTISING

A lot of companies are aware of the power of using these ‘hot buttons’ and slyly put them into their sales pitch – it’s much better for sales. So if a company wants to increase its sales, it goes about presenting the product in a way to imply that it’s good for you.

Some examples of this are more than obvious in food marketing. For example 90% fat free means 10% fat – and that’s certainly no diet food; the use of ‘cholesterol free’ in the advertising of products like vegetables which don’t have cholesterol; ‘reduced fat’ in products may mean its lower than the standard for that product, but could still be very high in fat; the use of ‘all natural’ to promote sales of products that may not be good for you – fats and oils are natural products; and the ‘diet’ or ‘low joule’ options which use other artificial sweeteners instead of sugar.

There are more examples of these in ‘understanding your diet’, but the important point here is that knowledge is a valuable tool. If more people identify it as a con, it will

have a negative impact on the company and force them into more respectable methods of advertising.

ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE

In the absence of scientific evidence the major selling tool for weight loss products or programs is based on anecdotal evidence. This is marketing at its best. Instead of providing a study of a huge client base, over many years, with the stated benefits and risks, these marketers can tell you a story about that one client that has gone from zero to hero. This is quite easy to dissect. Ask yourself how big the provider is and how many clients they have had take their product or go through their programs. The anecdotal evidence they are presenting is more often than not, one of their better examples of product effectiveness.

It may be one example, or a handful of examples, but in reality it is only a very small and almost insignificant example of the overall effectiveness of the product. When you understand weight loss, you will know it is relatively easy to come up with examples of dramatic weight loss in a very short period of time. Most can, and most do. The reality however is that most losses in weight will return after your money (like the kitchen conman) goes into their bank account.

I have never seen a company go out and state that we have had two thousand clients use our program and the results, after three months, and after two years, is this...

I would love to see it. Could you imagine? ‘We had 50% leave the program in the first few months, we had an additional 25% leave the program within twelve weeks. Out of the 20% that got significant weight loss, only 5% managed to keep it off for over 12 months. I don’t think it would be very beneficial for sales!

Although those figures are just fictional numbers I have pulled out of the air, I have heard that the effectiveness of weight loss programs could be as low as 5%. Whether or not this figure is realistic, I believe that it is blatantly obvious that the product being advertised isn’t being provided. What’s worse, those that do provide good service can’t compete against the marketing of those instant weight loss providers – and are forced to play along.

BEFORE AND AFTER PHOTOGRAPHS

This is a very popular tool used in weight loss advertising. How could you not be inspired to give them money - the results are incredible and it’s there in living colour.

Notice however that the before shot has the subject with saggy gut, in daggy clothing, with messy hair etc. The after photo however has them shining like a star. Many of these

photographs are often of studio quality, in nicer clothing, a great setting, stomach sucked in and a big smile encompassed by a makeover and hair styling.

But what about that weight loss? I can assure you that with the aid of these tools and a good photographer I could come up with very impressive photographs, just hours apart. The magic that can be done via this process is incredible. If you don't believe me, try it yourself. Take your own photo, then go to a professional that uses these effects and say, 'make me look thinner'. The results will blow your mind. Put a little bit of computer enhancement in and there is no limit to what you can look like.

THE DROP IN WEIGHT

Firstly you should be very sceptical when they refer to a reduction via a means that isn't standard. For example, they may refer to a drop in 'dress size' where the client has gone from a size 16 to a size 10. Although this is a relatively standard there is a lot of room for creativity. Even if they are telling the truth, it is possible for an individual to be one size in a particular dress, then a much smaller size in another make. Or alternatively, they may now be in a 'size 10 top' in a particular make, but still a 'size 14 bottom'.

Weight however is the big seller. A client drops 20 kilos in 10 weeks. You have to stand up and listen to this, especially when it is packaged with the great photo and interview showing her doing all these great new activities and eating sundaes.

Don't be fooled, achievements like this are very possible however it is not smart dieting and in fact can be very detrimental to your ability to achieve and maintain effective losses for the rest of your life. In reality, it is more than likely that such an individual will put all that weight back on, plus an extra two kilos for the trouble. I will explain the nature of dramatic weight loss later in the book.

THE MODEL AND THE ATHLETE

As I write this I have just heard about a company's intention to use a Hollywood actress as their role model. She is being paid to put on weight for a movie, and they will pay her to lose the weight via their weight loss program. This is just one fine example of marketing at its best. I can guarantee that this lady will return to her previous weight simply by returning to her normal diet and activity levels. Yet, this company will use her weight loss as anecdotal evidence regarding the effectiveness of their program - her status also provides credibility for the company.

I speak through first hand experience. I once competed in the Ultraman World Triathlon Championships. I befriended a sales rep for a supplement company who gave me ample amounts of his product to use in preparation for the big race (a three day ultra triathlon). Come race day I had an excellent performance and placed 6th. After the race I recall a video interview I did with him – this was his anecdotal evidence to pitch the recovery qualities of the supplement.

It sounded great, “I have never felt so good” I said. “I was backing up 250km rides with 50km runs, and all I was taking was a multi-vitamin and this product. Now I am a world class athlete, 6th in the world in fact, and I am over the moon.” Well the words were to that effect.

The reality however was that I was given this product for free, I was given accommodation and he was the support crew for my race. I was very appreciative of what he had done for me and was only too happy to help him and the product out.

The reality however is that I had opted out of work for a few months and trained full time over in Hawaii. I trained the hardest I had trained and was the fittest I had ever been. Although I did take the product, I can't attest to what effect it had as it was only a very small, and almost insignificant, part of my diet. Until that company does sufficient scientific testing we will never know how effective it is. I still race these distances but no longer use that, or any other, supplement.

I did this in response to the support that was given me. The above Hollywood Star however will be paid hundred of thousands of dollars for every pound lost as part of the program. The elite athlete is paid more money than most will earn in their lifetime, to promote some product. But the reality is that this is a business relationship, and product they advertise may have little or no impact on their success or achievements. We idolise these people, we want to be like them, and in response many of us purchase the product they support.

This example goes further and is in many product advertisements. The models and muscle bound blokes that you see pumping away on those stomach trimming products, the rollers, the belly-busters (the list goes on). Well you can rest assured that they didn't get that way by using that product. Trust me, I have trained extensively in gyms and know what it takes to achieve those body beautiful results. We laugh and shake our heads about all of those products. I have no doubt that the blond haired beauty looked great before she ever heard of the product, and the muscle bound bloke will probably joke about it with all of his friends at the gym.

Take it to the extreme and you have another example of advertising that is so blatantly obvious it should be ridiculed. They will use a photo of an oversized muscle to sell their product. The use of performance enhancing substances is rife. The use of these products creates results not achievable by the natural athlete. The fact that unnatural physiques are used to sell a product should set off alarm bells in your head.

Unfortunately I don't think many people are attuned to this, and as a result, like Homer Simpson, see the product and the result. The belly buster, the hot body, the stomach trimmer, the hot body.... and it's only \$129.99, it's got to be worth the risk right (I'm joking, this beyond the joke it should be illegal).

DECEPTIVE WEIGHT LOSS CLAIMS

In the same way that our Hollywood Star will lose weight as the role model for a particular company, advertisers can take advantage of other examples where results are much more achievable.

An individual's body will have established a particular, or normal, weight range. This may be based on their biology, the diet and training from their youth to date. If that individual undergoes a life change and puts on weight for example, it is very likely that when that influence has been taken away, and their normal diet and activity levels return, so will their previous levels of weight.

The obvious example of this is that of post pregnancy weight loss. This is a staple in the industry. If an individual was previously slim, their post pregnancy weight loss will be a lot easier than it will be for someone who is naturally heavier. They are simply returning to their normal levels, yet these companies will use it as an example of the effectiveness of their program. What's worst, they will actually target those ladies when they are obviously feeling a little concerned about their weight just after they have had a child.

Post pregnancy dieters are one example, but this list is very long and varied. Basically, there are those who have the ability to lose weight a little easier than most. In these clients you will find some form of pre-existing strength to work with.

An ex-athlete who has put on big gains in recent years is easy. They already have a very high physical ability and have been naturally lighter for most of their lives. Someone who has had a recent life change that has caused recent weight gain because of a new job etc. They have prior lifestyle strengths, overcome the variable that caused the gain and the body will remember. If there is some form of psychological variable that has caused recent gains, again overcome the problem and the weight loss is a little easier.

The point here is that if the client has a history of weighing less, the ability to get back to that weight is much easier. I see this time and time again. The long-term overweight individual is being conned by the achievements of the ex-athlete or post pregnant individual. The scary point here, is that out of those that do achieve effective weight loss, and maintain it, I wonder what percentage had a history of being lighter? This makes the reality of effective weight loss look a little dimmer. As they say, however, the truth will set you free.

SUPPLEMENTED WEIGHT LOSS

Unfortunately, the current trend in assessing weight loss is based on this before and after test. Current Affair programs and the like have jumped on the bandwagon with their new assessment – what weight loss program works and what doesn't?

Motivation to train and eat correctly can be one of the harder aspects of effective weight management. There is however, one process that I have seen to be fairly effective. If you put a lady in front of a television camera and show the world what she eats, and how hard she trains, there is the slight possibility that she is less likely to ‘pig-out’ in front of the television all day.

For this lady however, the results she achieves by being watched every second, in most cases, isn’t an indication of normal life style. There is every chance that when this newly found motivation is taken away, and the whole world isn’t watching any more, she may return to her old habits. The results achieved here have been supplemented by the fact that the rest of the world is watching her. This affect can be seen in programs that use personal trainers, for example, to promote the gains made by the product. Again, take the personal trainer away, and there is the possibility that life will go back to normal.

PSYCHOLOGY AND SALES

Most of us live our lives content in the knowledge that we are free to make our own choices – how wrong you are! There are many techniques that businesses apply to manipulate your dollar out of you. I say manipulate because, although not fraudulent, if these techniques weren’t applied, there would be many cases where consumers would think twice before buying.

There is an excellent book by Robert B Cialdini called ‘Influence – the Psychology of Persuasion’. The book identifies the Psychology behind many marketing variables used in business and why they work. In the same way that our body has evolved to become the way it is, so have our minds. The book identifies why we, as consumers often walk into a shop with no intent to buy, and walk out with a debt and something you didn’t really want until a few minutes earlier.

As with all the previous examples, businesses have to apply many Psychological techniques to compete in the current market. Again, the message here is buyer beware, the technique used is simply a good way to get your dollar. It reflects the sales ability of the staff and not the product.

There are many forms of Psychological Persuasion. Some examples include:

Reciprocation: Have you sat down to be shown a product and were offered a free drink, free voucher or sample product. The need to reciprocate is embedded in our Psychology. Be careful, the need to return the favour of the coffee could have you returning the favour in the form of program that goes for 12 months and is 1000 times more expensive than the coffee.

Social proof: Notice the way night clubs have a huge line outside their doors, but if you look inside there is heaps of space. The average passer-by sees the line and thinks, if they’re all lined up to go in there, it must be good. Notice how diet plans have a lot of people just like you, only thinner, jumping around excited about their weight loss. Or

they will have a long list of satisfied clients attesting their support. The reality is that the night club line could be enforced by management, and the weight loss promotion planned to create the belief that everyone is using their product and happy with it. In the absence of scientific proof, many of us seek examples of social proof to guide us. You should be wary of forms of social proof like this, and not let it sway you into a purchase without analysing the product.

Scarcity: Deep inside our minds we have evolved the belief that if something is rare, or becoming rare, it is more valuable. You will see the ‘limited number’, or ‘limited time’, line used in many advertisements - the scarcity sales pitch is everywhere. Be even more curious when you get a special offer dramatically less than the advertised price – but you have to buy now. Chances are, the special offer is probably repeated time and time again, and the ‘buy now’ line used on anyone asking, but looks like they will walk without buying. Easy, tell them it sounds like a great offer, but you will have to run it by your partner and can come back in a couple of days. If they don’t respect your right to think about it, then don’t respect their heavy handed approach and take your business elsewhere on principle.

These are just a few examples, but as stated, the types of Psychological manipulation are long and varied. Reading Cialdini’s book will empower you. It will help you identify the sales pitch as a Psychological tool and better equip you to handle these techniques. This book gets my highest recommendation and I believe everyone should read it.

GOOD VALUE OR CONN

Time and time again you will have heard the term ‘Buyer Beware’. This entire chapter has been dedicated towards enforcing that, by identifying the ways in which product providers persuade you into purchasing their product. As stated, more often than not, the technique used is a sales technique that doesn’t reflect the scientific effectiveness of the product.

Cialdini’s book also mentions a technique called ‘low balling’. A product is sold in a way to attract your attention (eg: a car sold ignorantly under value which looks appealing, only to find after you have ‘committed’ yourself that there was an error and that the real price is much higher. Or perhaps the bike you purchased with a \$200 discount, only to find the accessories you brought with it were extremely expensive and the \$200 recouped). It would appear that I have used a variable of that here.

The chapter I titled, ‘Understanding the con’ was deliberately used to introduce you to this book. The power to disclose a trick or deception holds far more interest than lets say, ‘appropriate advertising’ and is far more effective at attracting your attention.

The reality however, is that all businesses use many of the techniques mentioned above – including the good providers – and there are some excellent ones. They are forced to use these techniques as not doing this would see product sales diminish, and make their product less competitive.

Look throughout my programs and you will see more examples. I have provided you with a free product in the hope that you will reciprocate the favour by using the ‘Fit Aussie’ site as your number one source for health and fitness information. I also have used the limited time offer in professional network program – but hey, I also offer free advertising and will extend the offer if you need time to think about it. I will also use forms of commitment in various activity based programs in an attempt to pressure you into following through on training routines.

The reality is that everyone does it. Some are con’s, others are simply good providers trying to best market their product. This puts consumers in the awkward position of determining whether or not ‘appropriate advertising’ was used.

The following chapters I hope will give you a basic understanding of what sensible diet and training is. From there you will be able to analyse the product, empowering you to make sensible decisions – and not let your Psychological weakness drive you to give you’re your money to sales staff simply because they pressed the right buttons.

RESULTS MAY VARY

Have you noticed the ‘results may vary’ comment listed in small writing at the bottom of ‘anecdotal evidence advertisements’ used to sell a program? Although this is evidence that the government is stepping in, in my mind it doesn’t quite do the job, not when you can lose 20 kilos in 10 weeks.

Unfortunately, in my opinion, when it comes to weight loss advertising and programs you have to see the industry for what it is. It is an uncontrolled entity in which many providers are gaining financial advantage out of selling you a product or program. If you were to do an assessment of the combined effectiveness of our current methods of overcoming obesity you would identify nothing but an embarrassing example of commercialism gone wrong.

This book is an attempt at setting the record straight and explaining, once and for all, the realities of weight loss. In the end, hopefully it will have at least a slight impact on creating a change for the better. A change where companies are forced to clarify their sales pitch, forced not to mislead, forced to provide accurate information (not anecdotal evidence), and penalised for obtaining financial advantage out of the deception that is occurring right across the industry.

The first step begins with you. Understand the basics and identify what is appropriate and what isn’t. Then when you find deception, and inappropriate product pitches, take your business elsewhere and let your friends know the reason why. Even better send the company a letter and let them know why!