



# MASTERING METABOLISM

By: Carol Goodwin

**WE ALL KNOW THEM.** Those enviably thin people who can eat anything they want all day long and never gain weight. Then there are those of us who even briefly entertain thoughts of a donut and we can't zip our jeans. While weight gain is more likely due to an energy imbalance—consuming more calories than your body burns—some of the reasons for what makes us so different when it comes to weight loss and weight gain have to do with our metabolism.

**WHAT IS METABOLISM?** Simply put, metabolism is the sum of all our physiological functions that convert food into energy. The number of calories your body burns each day is called your total energy expenditure, which is comprised of the following three components:

### 1. BASIC NEEDS —

The energy needed for all basic functions. This includes time spent awake and at rest and is known as basal metabolic rate (BMR). BMR is the largest portion of energy expenditure—approximately 75-80 percent of the total calories burned.

### 2. FOOD PROCESSING —

The energy needed for digestion, absorption, transportation and storage of

the nutrients we take in—about 10 percent of our total caloric expenditure.

### 3. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY —

The energy required for all movement burns calories. These calories make up the remainder of our total energy expenditure and vary from individual.

## THERE ARE MANY INFLUENCES ON OUR METABOLIC RATE.

1. **BODY SIZE** — The larger the surface area, the greater the energy expenditure.

2. **BODY COMPOSITION** — The higher the degree of muscularity, the higher the energy requirements.

3. **AGE** — Metabolism decreases with age.

4. **GENDER** — Men have a higher metabolic rate than women.

Your ability to change your metabolic rate is limited. However, you can increase daily activity to build muscle mass and increase calories burned. Even though consistent aerobic exercise and strength building exercise is best for increasing metabolism,

any extra movement will help burn calories. If you can envision your metabolism as a fire that you want to keep burning, the best way to do that is to eat smaller, more frequent meals throughout the day. Be sure to get that fire started first thing in the morning, and be careful not to put a wet log on that fire at the end of the day.

“...WHAT MAKES US SO DIFFERENT WHEN IT COMES TO WEIGHT LOSS AND WEIGHT GAIN HAVE TO DO WITH OUR METABOLISM.”

Based on the factors that determine our metabolic rate, we all need a different amount of calories from food. When trying to determine the proper amount of calories from food to take in, there is a simple 10-minute metabolic test you can take to determine your exact BMR. Though your metabolism influences your energy needs, it is ultimately your food intake and your physical activity that determines your weight. 🍏



*Carol Goodwin is a health educator for Total Nutrition Technology in the Cornelius area. TNT offers the metabolic test at all of its locations in the Charlotte area. You can call or email TNT for an appointment at 704 549-9550 or [www.tntgetfit.com](http://www.tntgetfit.com), and receive 10% off your metabolic test.*