

Is your relationship making you fat?

By Kimberly Gillan | First published: June 5th, 2011



Feel like the scales are soaring as high as your heart? Stop your partner's bad habits rubbing off on you.

There's no doubt a relationship will change the way you spend your time, but if you're cancelling gym classes for decadent dates, you might feel your health start to slide. Accredited practising dietician from Nutrition Australia, Megan Alsford, says it's not surprising a lot of women complain they've put on weight since hooking up with their partner. "Sometimes people use food as a way to show love and affection – if you serve up a big plate, in a way, you're showing your love," she says. Here's how to keep the love alive, without going up a size.

1

Control your portions. Read: avoid "man meals"

Most men have a faster metabolism than women, so they need bigger serves. "Your metabolic rate depends on how much muscle you have and how tall you are," Alsford explains. "Because men are usually taller and have more muscle mass, they generally have a higher metabolic rate than women."

While your partner might love dishing up a massive T-bone steak, she suggests you limit your meat portions to 65-100 grams. "There is evidence that if you eat too much meat, you fill up and don't have room for vegetables," she says. "Also, use a smaller plate – it's an easy way to cut portions and help him see that you need less."

2

Build a kilojoule bank

If you're anticipating a big dinner, you can kick your metabolism into gear with some interval training a few hours beforehand.

Richie Garard, owner of Sydney's [She Fitness](#), suggests warm up for five minutes, then spend 10 minutes moving between doing 50m sprints, 10 push-ups, 10 squats and 10

sit-ups. Take a rest for a few minutes, then do another 10 minutes, trying to do more rounds than your first set.

"Your body will work really hard and your metabolism will be spiked super high," he says. "Depending on the intensity, your body could still be burning calories up to 48 hours after your workout."

3

Change the way you date

While lavish three course dinners and movie dates with choc tops are great fun, try mixing up your hangouts to include some active dates.

"You don't have to do a big sweaty workout – just being active is great for the relationship," Garard says. "Go hiking, cycling or indoor rockclimbing together, or learn a new sport, such as tennis. There are plenty of activities you can do together that are more fun than fitness-focused."

4

Trick him to be healthier

Nothing beats snuggling up on the couch for a DVD marathon, but if your man can't fathom the idea of a movie without Maltesers and a large peperoni pizza, then you need to show him the alternatives.

Alsford suggests you making pizzas using lean meat and low fat cheese, or sneakily grate lots of vegies into beef patties to make burgers. "Some men are a bit vegie-phobe, so don't mention the words 'diet' or 'low fat' before he tries it," she suggests. Wash the meal down with a glass of sugar-free soft drink and a bowl of air-popped popcorn. "It's really high in fibre, just don't add too much salt," she warns.

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