

The Beer DIET

Have a Good Beer and BMI Too

words: Don Osborn

Today we are drowning in hundreds of choices of beer. Have you found yourself frustrated, arms in the air, asking, "Why, God, why are there so many beers to try, yet so little time?" This overabundant availability is tempered by the fact that the more we pour down our throats, the more we grow our waistlines. Like the rise of the craft beer industry, national motivation toward good health is also a relatively new development. Americans grow both fatter and consequentially more fitness-oriented all the time.

Beer can be a part of a healthy, balanced lifestyle. Love of beer would have many more people fat and round if not for willpower and moderation. We can drink beer and still remain healthy and balanced. It just takes conscientious living.

Samples at Bend Brewing Company.

Don isn't a doctor but he does watch TV.

BEER IS GOOD FOR YOU

You might already know that beer and other alcoholic drinks can provide health benefits when consumed in moderation. A few quick facts:

- Beer consumption helps to lower risk of heart disease, possibly by boosting HDL (good) cholesterol, lowering LDL (bad) cholesterol, and decreasing levels of clotting proteins.
- Beer has B vitamins and antioxidants such as ferulic acid, which may help protect against heart disease, stroke, Alzheimer's disease and various cancers. A perhaps less important benefit of B vitamins is its lessening of hangovers.
- Beer contains healthful levels of fiber. (Beer for breakfast, anyone?)
- Moderate drinkers live longer than those who abstain or drink heavily.
- Moderate drinkers may have less acute hospitalization, more favorable health scores, less disability and be less likely to be absent from work than abstainers or heavy drinkers.
- Moderate drinkers have a lower risk of stroke.



ALL THINGS IN MODERATION

Moderation suggests averageness. Many of us are not interested in "good enough," especially when it comes to beer. But the concept is important when discussing healthy beer drinking.

It means different things to different people, but in general medical researchers describe "moderation" as one to two drinks per day for men. For women it is typically just one (sorry ladies). Some studies defined moderate drinking as high as three, four, even five drinks. Four or five drinks might be moderate for larger folks, but probably not for most of us. If you are aiming towards the healthy side of things, one to two is a better goal. A "drink" means 12 ounces of average-strength beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1.5 ounces of liquor.

While I am neither a trained medical professional nor an actor playing one on TV, there is a common sense approach that seems to work for me. Moderate drinking, decent exercise, and fairly healthy eating add up to good physical fitness and a balanced lifestyle.

For example, in bicycling season (about nine months of the year) I ride 18 miles each day when commuting to work. This daily built-in exercise is invaluable in burning off extra calories, caring for my cardiovascular system

and building up a thirst. I will typically have one or two drinks each day, and a few more on weekends. I feel like I've earned those nightly beers after biking home, especially if it is hot or windy. I also do short 30-minute weight-lifting workouts a couple times a week and a few situps. Lifting weights works the top half of my body as the biking mostly works my legs (and muscle burns more calories than

fat, so having a little extra is a good thing). This routine, combined with sensible but not always supremely healthy eating, keeps my body mass index at the upper level of "normal" and not quite into "overweight" territory. My visage will not grace the cover of a fitness magazine anytime soon, but my blood pressure, body shape, body fat and general health are all decent.



Any information can be skewed to fit your point. We chose making beer healthier!

A TIME TO LOSE

A balanced lifestyle with moderate drinking might be great for those already in fair shape, but what if a fella' needs to lose some weight? The good news is it can be done. The bad news is it will take some work. I cannot offer professional diet advice but I can give some tips from my own experience as well as talk about my friend Mike who recently lost 25 percent of his body weight, going from 210 pounds down to 155 in about eight months. Your mileage may of course vary.

Nancy Reagan, God bless her, is often remembered for her admonition to "just say no." Maybe she can be an honorary patron saint of dieting, because saying "no" has to be a part of weight loss. If you want to lose the beer gut, you have to cut down on more than just beer. The snacks and accompanying sedentary lifestyle that go with drinking also have to go.

Eat less, move more—it is not just a curt but accurate Mad TV skit on YouTube (check it out) that cuts close to the bone for our nation of obese citizens, it is also an adequate approach to losing weight. My friend Mike uses words like motivation, determination, and change of mentality to describe how he ate food and drank beer during his loss. Simply put, you have to be burning more calories than you are taking in. This is best accomplished by burning more calories than you have been and by taking in less food and drink. A change of lifestyle is required to lose weight.

When you are trying to lose, the beer



intake will have to be scaled back. Those most excellent beers we know and love are unfortunately packed with calories (see included chart). You might refrain from beer during the week, and moderately enjoy some on Friday and Saturday. When you have not had beer in a few days it tastes even better.

You will have to cut other food calories as well. During weight-loss mode my friend Mike cut back on fast food, large portions, and snacking. He decided he would start eating breakfast (better for you) and drink more water throughout the day. Realizing you can have the self-control to say no to your body is a great power to have, he says. Consult other sources for more

information on how you might modify your diet to begin losing weight.

Moving more is also important. When Mike was losing weight he decided to wear a pedometer. This helped him make sure he got up to 10,000 steps a day (about 5 miles). Walking is easy and making sure you are walking a certain amount can help jump-start metabolism and burn calories. Years ago he was an avid mountain biker, but video games, beer drinking and a sedentary lifestyle took him to a fat, unhealthy place. Once he became more active he stepped away from the keyboard and started mountain biking again. His story is just an example of the kinds of things you can do to begin to lose weight.

Calories in 12 oz servings of selected beers and amount of activity needed to burn them:

BEER	CALORIES	ACTIVITY
Michelob Ultra	96	15 minutes (1 mile) brisk walk
Bud Light	110	20 minutes raking
Guinness Draught	125	15 minutes moderate biking.
Budweiser	145	30 minutes vacuuming
Anchor Steam	153	16 minutes tennis
Sam Adams Lager	160	15 minutes moderate cross country skiing
Blue Moon White	171	42 minutes light weight lifting
Sierra Nevada Pale Ale	175	30 minutes shooting baskets
Duvel	198	25 minutes general swimming
Sierra Nevada Stout	210	15 minutes running (6 mph)
Deschutes Obsidian Stout	220	30 minutes mowing lawn
Dogfish Head 90 Min Imperial IPA	295	45 minutes (3 miles) brisk walk
Sierra Nevada Bigfoot Barleywine	330	40 minutes moderate biking

Activity amounts based on 170 lb person; source, www.fitwatch.com



KEEPING YOUR BALANCE

Let's say you are at a healthy weight, enjoy drinking good beer, are somewhat active and are ready to maintain a balanced lifestyle. Excellent. Congratulations. Maintaining weight is easier than losing. With a proper balance of food and exercise you can enjoy good beer pretty much every day. Here are a few other things to keep in mind as you continue to burn more calories than you consume in your quest for the healthy, beer-filled life:



• **Consider passing on the snacks.** Someone brought in donuts? Passing on them allows you some calories for a beer later on.

• **Walk more.** Park your car further from the doors. Take the stairs. If your company allows smoke breaks, take one, but walk instead of smoke.

• **Bike to work.** Many of us do it. I ride 9 miles each way and I would do it if it was even a few miles more. You can too. Look online for all kinds of tips and guides to getting started.

• **Be conscientious about food intake.** Try to not scoop handful after handful of Peanut M&M's into your pie hole, as enjoyable as that is. Be mindful of the calories going in and make a smart choice. Eat the M&M's but maybe do some exercise later, or limit your intake.

• **Keep an eye on your weight.** If you have attained a weight you are happy with, set a goal of not going over a certain amount of pounds. If you find it creeping up, you might have to go into weight loss mode for a week.

• **Make your last beer of the night water.** If you're like me and

you decide to have a couple beers on a week night, it will sometimes steam roll, especially if a friend comes over to join in. We all know how hard it is to slow the liquor train down once it has left the station. I have found that cutting myself off and making that last beer a water instead of another beer is not only better for your health, it minimizes hangovers. And watch the drunken snacking. Put some chips into a bowl, eat them, and be done with it.

• **Value your beer.** Acknowledge the unique and supreme awesomeness of beer. Don't mindlessly swill down a 12 pack. Savor the aromas, flavors, color and clarity of your favorite beverage and give it the respect it deserves.

• **Value your health.** Try as I might, I can't seem to stop getting closer to 40, and with each passing year good health becomes less something to take for granted and more something to work to maintain.

• **Moderation, balance, happiness, contentment, good health, good beer:** It's not just a Buddhist mantra. It can be yours, grasshopper, if you choose to accept it.



One of my favorite times of year is an annual snowboarding trip to the mountains. Being a snowboarder from the Midwest, simply being in the mountains is a thrill, and when we have fresh powder to ride in, forget about it. One day at Mt. Bachelor near Bend, Oregon, we got a pretty good dumping. The mountain is big enough that, even when crowded, you can easily find runs without many people. We rode all day, silently gliding across fluffy snow, carving through trees, doing runs over and over. It was exhausting but exhilarating and by the end of the day we were spent. Just how wonderful, then, did the beers at Deschutes Brewpub taste that night after a day of fresh air, seas of snow, and a full-body workout? It was like we were still above the clouds. For me, this is the balanced lifestyle; this is where it's at.

Is the key to looking skinner a beard and darker lights.

Maybe thanks to the seasons McDonald's doesn't sell beer.