



Eat Fries Lose Pounds Plan

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At the start of a new year everyone makes resolutions, 99 percent of which involve losing weight. Who makes these resolutions? Skinny people, like Miami's models. Curse them! Because who needs these resolutions? Miami's restaurant reviewers.

Not that I'm complaining. Getting paid for eating out at least once a week is what I'd conservatively describe as about the best job in the world. But it's also what I'd have described, when I looked in the mirror last fall, as the reason why I hadn't been able to fasten the top button of my jeans for the previous two years, at least not without forcing my stomach to bulge in a way that looked.... Well, I'm gonna be honest: The final straw came one day in the supermarket when a nice guy wheeling a stroller congratulated me on my upcoming "event," and asked me where the Pampers aisle was.

So I was thrilled when a younger, but also out-of-shape, acquaintance revealed the reason she'd been looking so much more fit recently: a video exercise program called T-Tapp, developed by a 45-year-old Floridian former model wrangler (with a grad school background in exercise physiology) named Teresa Tapp. The program's relatively little known because its creator hasn't gone the infomercial route, relying on word-of-mouth to sell her stuff via Website only. But if the site's hundreds of testimonials from T-Tappers are to be believed -- and preliminary medical studies from the Cooper Aerobic Institute in Dallas indicate that they are -- results from performing this program of precise but totally untraumatic compound muscle movements, for less than an hour several times weekly, are near miraculous. Within a month, average program users report loss of an inch or two (i.e. a clothing size or two) around waist, hips, etc. There's no leaping about, no weight-lifting, and, best, no dieting! It sounded like a program virtually begging for a tough test by a food pro looking to simultaneously lose inches of fat while finding fab new fat-packed food faves.

Recently, for instance, I interviewed several honchos from the famous international organization Slow Food. Naturally, though I asked many responsible, dignified questions, what I really wanted to know was, did these partisans of artisan foods ever just wanna run out for a Big Mac? "No! Never!" one woman who works with the organization's founder in Italy proclaimed into the phone. Then her voice lowered. "Kentucky Fried Chicken."

My immediate reaction: I had to Fed Ex this poor Slow Fooder some Church's chicken -- quick! The crust is crunchier and more skillfully spiced; white meat is *almost* not overcooked (at least not at my favorite branch at 11105 NW Seventh Ave.); and except for Colonel Sanders's swell slaw, sides are far superior at Church's, especially the crispy-never-slimy fried okra.

Fast foods can, and should, seduce even Slow Foodies, so when exercise exhaustion set in Church's was my first choice for a fast-food fix. But not my last.



A week into T-Tapping, I no longer had to leave the top button of my jeans undone. And when I left the button unfastened from habit one day at the start of week two (by which time I'd become strong enough to add to the basic workout some moves called "Hoe Downs," which incinerate excess carbohydrates instantly while making exercisers look like they are auditioning for a revival of *Oklahoma!*), my pants slipped down around my knees as I stretched up to reach a twelve-pack of Cheese Krystals on the top freezer shelf.

Fast-food burgers are a controversial subject; in fact, this paper's food columnist, Jen Karetnick, and I are on opposite sides of the Big Mac vs. Whopper battle. My feeling is that Whoppers try too hard, with their customizable "have it your way" shtick, to be real, when the whole point of a fast-food burger is that elusive "can't do it at home" taste that comes from ... who knows? Stuff I don't want to know about. But it's a taste particularly strong in square mini-model burgers, specifically in Krystals. The nearest Krystal franchise is in Fort Lauderdale (901 Sunrise Blvd.). But Publix carries frozen Krystals that heat up at home much better than frozen White Castles, because Krystal onions are cooked into the patties, flavoring the tiny two-biters more effectively than frost-depleted topping onions. Furthermore, whereas franchise-fried Cheese Krystals are 180 calories each, frozen ones are a mere 120 -- lucky, since I went through a carton of frozen Krystals per week on my exercise program. I was starving! As Tapp warns, by week two or so the supercharged exercisers, their metabolic functions kicked up many notches, get ravenous.

After a month on my fast-food exercise program, I had IDed several other strength-giving snacks that many foodies might mistakenly dismiss as junk food. Particularly notable were the gorgeously greasy eight-for-a-buck churros at King's Ice Cream (1831 SW Eighth St.), and "Italian" subs from Quizno's (11725 S. Dixie Hwy, Pinecrest); oven-heating the cold-cut hoagies prior to adding vegetable garnishes makes the difference.

A winner for noncarnivores: Arthur Treacher's fish and chips at Miami Subs and Grill. The fried fish is better because of better batter; the fries because they're Nathan's, made from real potatoes instead of reconstituted crap; and because the fast-food menu used to offer Dom Perignon. No more, sadly, since alcohol abstinence is not necessary for T-Tapp results; Tapp's personal seminars, in fact, often feature a glass of wine after workouts.

At any rate, after the month of Tapping (four full routines weekly, plus Hoe Downs after fast-food frenzies), I was easily a pants size smaller. Two sizes, if getting the smaller size on but not being able to *completely* zip them counts. Which I think it does, since my exercising happened over Christmas when my glass of wine did kinda turn into a case or three.

There are dangers to the program -- mainly fanaticism. T-Tappers tend to behave with the indoctrinated enthusiasm of religious cultists. Even I, despite a lifelong immunity to fads, found that the workout's remarkable results made doing an alarming amount of compulsive T-Tapping irresistible. Temporarily. My personal Armageddon came at a South Beach restaurant that oddly (considering its current hotness among hunks) specializes in serious fried food, when another patron walked into the ladies room and surprised me in the middle of a set of emergency



Hoe Downs.

"Oh, are they having country line-dancing here later?" she asked.

"Yes!" I lied, fleeing.

That was about three weeks ago. I haven't T-Tapped since. My stomach is again starting to look like I swallowed a beach ball. Fortunately Tapp herself is coming to town on January 30 to give a free seminar -- which I recommend especially because its convenient time (7:00 to 9:00 p.m.) and location at the Wyndham Miami Airport (3900 NW 21st St.) makes possible a fast restorative run beforehand to Wall's Old Fashioned Ice Cream (8075 SW 67th Ave.), which features six varieties of cones and two dozen homemade ice cream flavors daily. Both the classic rich vanilla and dense yet tangy, refreshing mango are endorsed, by me, equally as enthusiastically as T-Tapping.

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