

Lifetime and Maintenance Guide

*Please note that this information is not official or from Weight Watchers.
It has been compiled from WW members and other sources.*

“Something in human nature causes us to start slacking off at our moment of greatest accomplishment. As you become successful, you will need a great deal of self-discipline not to lose your sense of balance, humility and commitment.” –H Ross Perot

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FAQ regarding WW & Lifetime/Maintenance

*(Some of the material in this section is from the WW website.
Please check the Weight Watchers site for updates as information changes on a regular basis.)*

What is a Lifetime member?

Lifetime Membership is a valuable privilege you receive after completing your weight loss journey as a Weight Watchers Meetings member. (Note – WW Online Only members are not eligible for official Lifetime status)

You receive a Lifetime Membership recognition award when you achieve a weight goal that is within the Weight Watchers Weight Ranges (or a healthy weight determined by your physician) and are at least 5 pounds less than your initial weight

In addition you must be on the Weight Watchers maintenance phase for 6 consecutive weeks as a current, paid Meetings member and be no more than 2 pounds above your weight goal at the end of that period.

As a Lifetime Member, we encourage you to attend Weight Watchers Meetings -- at no charge and - as long as you are no more than 2 pounds above your weight goal -- in your local area and anywhere in the world.

Don't forget to show your Lifetime membership book.

What is Maintenance and how do I set a Goal Weight?

The weight goal that you ultimately select is usually within the “healthy range” established by WW. However, your doctor may set a different weight for you. This becomes your target weight to achieve Lifetime status.

Once you reach this weight and maintain it for six weeks without exceeding it by more than 2 pounds, you will then be a Lifetime member.

If your weight goal is outside of the WW “healthy range,” you will need a doctor’s note to confirm for purposes of achieving Lifetime status.

What happens to my daily points (Flex) or weekly points (Core) on Maintenance?

As a meetings member, you will receive a Maintenance booklet that outlines the additional points you are given during maintenance/lifetime. Also, the booklet will suggest ways to use both plans to your advantage.

WW members who are on the Flex plan will initially get 4 more points more per day. If you are following the Core plan, your weekly flex points will increase to 63.

http://www.weightwatchers.com/util/art/index_art.aspx?tabnum=2&art_id=31281&sc=3014)

What happens if I keep losing once on Maintenance?

The Maintenance period of 6 weeks is designed to help you learn how to maintain your healthy weight for a lifetime. During that time, you may still continue losing. There is no penalty for going under your goal weight.

If you are on the Flex plan, it is suggested that you add an additional point to your daily total for every pound you lose while on Maintenance. Conversely, you would deduct a point for every pound you gain. Please refer to the articles in this document for more information about adding to your daily caloric intake during maintenance.

What are the fees for Lifetime members?

Once you achieve status as a Lifetime Member, you never have to re-enroll at Weight Watchers again.

As a Lifetime Member, you are only charged a meetings fee if you go 2 pounds over your goal. In addition, you are not expected to pay for missed meetings unless you have not weighed in within a 1-month period.

Once you achieve status as a Lifetime Member, you are considered a permanent part of the Weight Watchers family. This means that you are always eligible for Lifetime benefits, as stated on the back cover of your Membership Book.

If you plan on using the eTools feature of the WW website, you will still need to continue to pay for this.

Can I/Should I attend meetings as a Lifetime member?

As a Lifetime member, you are required to weigh in once a month at any WW center. Bring your lifetime booklet with you. However, you are welcome and encouraged to attend as many meetings as you wish.

Many people who have successfully maintained their weight loss report that regular attendance at meetings and contact with support groups has sustained them. Several of these sources are in this document. The meetings will help to reinforce the WW tools that helped you lose the weight and are just as applicable to maintenance.

As a Lifetime Member, when will I have to pay meetings fees?

As one of Weight Watchers special Lifetime Members, you are always eligible for Lifetime benefits, as stated on the back cover of your meetings Membership Book. This means you don't

need to pay for missed meetings unless you haven't weighed in within a 1 month period or have gone over 2 pounds of your goal

Can I become Lifetime as an online-only member?

There is no Lifetime membership discount for Weight Watchers Online only members.

As a Lifetime Member, do I have to pay for Weight Watchers Online?

If you wish to use the subscriber-only sections of the WW website (online tracker, recipe builder, etc.), you will need to pay for these features in one of two ways. If you attend Weight Watchers Meetings, you can subscribe to Weight Watchers eTools; if you are not going to Meetings, you may want to consider Weight Watchers Online. Fees for both plans can be found on the WW website.

What are the guidelines for remaining a Lifetime member?

Once a Lifetime Member always a Lifetime Member. Lifetime Members must weigh in at their first meeting of every month. If you weigh more than 2 pounds more than your weight goal at the first weigh-in of the month, you will be charged the weekly fee, but you will not have to pay another registration fee.

If I gain weight back do I lose my Lifetime member status?

Once you reach Lifetime Member status you are always a Lifetime Member. If you return to meetings as a Lifetime Member simply show proof of Lifetime membership by bringing your Lifetime membership book or Lifetime membership number.

If you have misplaced your Lifetime membership number and became a Lifetime Member in the area in which you still reside, you can call 1-800-651-6000 or the 800 number listed in your telephone directory to locate your Lifetime Member number.

What employment opportunities are available with Weight Watchers?

We are always on the look out for extraordinary individuals with talent, passion, commitment and drive. To find out about employment opportunities in your area, contact your local Weight Watchers or view our job opportunities. <http://www.weightwatchers.com/about/ldr/index.aspx>

Note: Most staffing positions within the meetings room require you be a current Weight Watchers meetings member, and at Lifetime Weight Watchers Weight Ranges for their height.

The LEADER is our primary role model for meetings member success. Leaders conduct group meetings, weigh members, show them how to follow the Weight Watchers weight loss plan, and motivate them to achieve their weight loss goals.

The RECEPTIONIST is a critical part of our meetings Room Team. Receptionists personally welcome and assist all meetings members and provide support and encouragement. Receptionists collect and tally all fees and product sales, weigh members, and distribute member materials.

Do I have to Journal forever?

Studies have found that people who consistently journal their daily food intake maintain their weight loss. Several of these sources are in this document.

Advice From WW Member Denise (Going Skiing)

Here is my advice for anybody who asks for tips on maintenance.

1. Follow the Health Guidelines. If you don't right now, START! If you aren't sure what they are:

http://www.weightwatchers.com/util/art/index_art.aspx?tabnum=1&art_id=21901

I am convinced that people who are well nourished have an easier time and struggle less. People that eat a diet of 2 point bars and snacks made with sf/ff Jell-O and Cool Whip and other DIET food struggle more. The guidelines help insure that we are not hungry or dehydrated. It is easier to stay on track when we are not hungry or thirsty and are eating well.

2. Set a Weight Range of 3-10lbs, depending on how much fluid you retain. NOBODY stays one number. Most people are fine with a range of 3-4 lbs although a few people do retain more and fluctuate as much as 10lbs. This isn't license to yo-yo 10 lbs of FAT! Just so that you don't freak out every time you retain fluid.

And here is a cool weight graph for maintaining for six weeks. Personally I find the visual reminder of a graph very helpful.

http://media.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/health/pdf/LPC_WeightChart2005.pdf

When I hit 123.5, it is crossing an invisible RED line... and I take action. It is WAY easier to lose 1 or 2 lbs than to lose 5 or 10.

Also set a LOW Red Line. When I hit 120, I take action and eat a few more calories for a day or two.

I think that it can be very seductive to see a new low number on the scale and to want to make that your new personal goal weight. Don't go there.

It is really easy to buy into media images or the saying, "You can never be too rich or too thin". Well, you CAN be too thin. A few people (but not many), do end up going too low. Also, if you revise your personal goal with every little dip in the scale, you may fixate on a number which may not be maintainable in the long run.

Separate any body or self esteem issues that you have from your goal weight scale number. If you hate your butt or stomach, losing 5-15 lbs will probably NOT resolve this

issue. Don't look for a scale number to make you happy about your body (or any other area of your life).

3. Continue to monitor yourself. Self Monitoring refers to behaviors such as: continuing to weigh weekly (or daily, even); continuing to journal food and exercise; watching how tight your pants are getting; monitoring portion creep; etc. etc. The question, "Do you still have to count points after you are at goal weight?" is asked several times a week on the Weight Watchers' LT board. Every person who answers, "Yep, you have to watch what you are eating using some method" is usually at or below their goal weight. Type SELF MONITORING into the Weight Watchers' search engine and a bunch of GREAT maintenance articles come up.
4. Ditch all or nothing thinking. Plan for the day when you will fall off the wagon. For a great article on Falling off the Wagon:

http://www.weightwatchers.com/util/art/index_art.aspx?tabnum=1&art_id=19111

If you fall off the wagon and have a bad meal or a bad day... don't let it continue and let it turn it into a bad weekend, week or month. I fell off the wagon in 1998 and didn't get back on for 2 & ½ years and gained 55 lbs. If I can't be a good example, let me serve as a horrible warning!

EVERYBODY falls of the wagon from time to time. You can either jump on the very next wagon to come along... or you can lie in the wagon ruts and let the rest of the wagon train go bumpity-bumpity-bump over your chocolate smeared and cookie crumb covered body.

If you eat one brownie, don't eat the whole pan.

If you drop 1 egg on the floor, do you smash the other 11 onto the linoleum, too?

Have a plan for cleaning up that one spilt egg and move on. Don't beat yourself up. Don't go on some kind of crazy deprivation diet to make up for going off your plan. Don't exercise 4 hours a day. Go back on a "normal", sensible plan.

5. If you are an emotional eater or stress eater or have a tendency to binge - continue to work on these issues. Studies show that dieting is the biggest predictor of stress induced overeating or bingeing. While Weight Watchers may be a "life style" and not a "diet", many of us have a LOT of residual dieting mentality and that can be tough to shake off.

Many LT'ers gain weight back when they hit a rocky patch in life and cope with food. If you are prone to depression (and statistics show that MANY overweight people are), seek proper treatment. Learn EFFECTIVE coping skills that don't involve chocolate and or the -tos family (Cheetos, Doritos, Fritos, etc.) Practice self care. Don't self medicate with food.

6. Resolve that this really is for a lifetime. This is not the end of a DIET. If you slip back into old habits, you will slip back into your old weight. Continue to learn moderation and how to eat & exercise for a Life Time. The concept of Flexible Restraint is about the same as moderation and is crucial for maintaining.

For a really good article which explains Flexible Restraint

www.weightwatchers.com/util/art/index_art.aspx?tabnum=1&art_id=21021

The Weight Watcher book, “Weight Loss That Lasts” by James M. Rippe, M.D. has an excellent chapter on Flexible Restraint.

7. You must tame the “Toddler Within”. Do you have a “Toddler Within”? Most of us do. Do you have a younger, brattier version of yourself throwing major tantrums in the grocery store and screaming, “I want candy!!!! Buy me candy now!!!! Yummy candy!! Going to eat all the candy in the car so I don’t have to share!!!!”

Do you have somebody living inside of you who says, “Yay!!!! Weekend!!! Take me to Chuck E. Cheese for LOTS of pizza! Oooooo!!! I LOVE Slushy drinks with cute Barbie doll paper umbrellas!! Me want sweet, pretty Margaritas and Daiquiris!!” (And only a No-Fun-Party-Pooper Grownup would journal or count points or watch portions on the weekend, right?)

I have a “toddler within”. What a brat! She wants what she wants when she wants it. And giving in to toddler tantrums too often has gotten me into weight trouble.

This is a fun website: www.thebratfactor.com

This food log, with “Brat Flack” notes is laugh out loud funny. I personally thought her plan of no bread, wine, potatoes, butter, chocolate, etc, etc, was awfully restrictive... but the log is really interesting. I actually found it really helpful.

www.thebratfactor.com/images/progressreport_sample.pdf

Think Super Nanny. Do you really want to live in a house where the toddler rules? I don’t think so!!! At the risk of sounding like some “child within” head case from the 1980’s, sometimes we need to parent ourselves the way we parent our real life toddlers. And sometimes when you’ve got a voice inside your head screaming, “Chips!!! Dip!!! GIMMEE!!!!” Sometimes, you just have to say, “No honey. Not today. Here is an apple.”

And you and your toddler DO need to indulge in fun food!!! Plan for it. That is what WPA’s and AP’s are for. Maintaining is all about balancing on the teeter totter of life. (This is the preschool version of Flexible Restraint. :~)

8. STAY CONNECTED TO WEIGHT WATCHERS!!! Either thru meetings or the boards!! MANY, MANY posts begin, "I stopped going to meetings and gained..." or "I thought I could do it on my own and now I'm up...."

It you ARE up at some point, DON'T say to yourself, "I'll skip WI this just this one time and lose it and go back next month."

When you feel yourself going there, get back to weekly meetings! Very important!

Link to a very good weight maintenance article: <http://tinyurl.com/7z4cq>

Many people encouraged me to add "Exercise" to this list. I am a little conflicted about this.

I believe that exercise and/or activity are very important and really helps with maintaining. This is also confirmed in many studies by the National Weight Control Registry. And believe me, I LOVE eating those extra 700-1000 calories a week that I burn with planned activity and exercise. It makes Lifetime much more enjoyable.

On the other hand, I see way too many posts from people who got injured and couldn't exercise and used it as an excuse to gain weight. Usually, they do admit that they didn't cut back their points/calories and kept on eating like they were training for a marathon even though they were lying in front of the TV.

I also know many, many Lifetimers who have gotten injured or had surgery and couldn't exercise and who adjusted and did NOT gain weight (Myself included.... I dislocated my knee cap 3/05 and basically couldn't exercise for 4 months. And I lost a pound. I also know one person who is maintaining his weight and is in a wheel chair.)

So for now... I'll leave "Exercise" in self monitoring... because life happens... and you have to ALWAYS have monitored your food/activity/emotions/etc and adjust.

I also believe that choosing a maintainable goal weight... one that is maintainable over the holidays, weekends, vacations, family emergencies, job layoffs, injuries, Super Bowl Sunday, Summer Bar-b-q season, etc, etc, etc... is very important.

Advice from WW Member Katherine (KATMMAD)

Date Achieved Lifetime: 7/1/06

Total Weight Lost to Achieve Lifetime status: 35 pounds

Have you regained weight since achieving lifetime status? No more than 5 pounds

Things that have helped me maintain my weight loss goal: Pants don't fit when I gain 5 pounds... I hate the way I feel when I overeat continually... my stomach can't handle grease like it used to... and in general I find it pretty easy to maintain (after I got used to some adjustment after hitting maintenance). I think the fact that I'm good about journaling (and will continue to do so even after I'm in the red) helps, as does the fact that I eat the same healthy breakfast every weekday: ff yogurt with fiber one mixed in, and an apple for a mid-morning snack -- it helps me "reset" mentally if I had a bad night out the night before.

What has your biggest challenge been in maintain your weight loss?

My biggest challenge is when I'm stuck late at the office for day on end (I'm a lawyer -- not unusual to work until midnight 6 days a week) because I will eat ANYTHING in sight. I finally learned that when my points are up, they're up -- time to throw away the things that will tempt me.

What challenges are you still trying to overcome?

Body image -- I recognize that my frame has gotten much, much smaller but it still feels like I'm the same overweight girl I was at 170.

What has been the most helpful tool/strategy/factor(s) in maintaining your weight long-term?

The points tracker -- I was good at journaling what I ate before WW but was too lazy to count it up! I also like that when I go on vacation I try to focus on health instead of calories -- if I haven't had vegetables in a meal or two I'll get the salad or something healthy like that in order to balance.

What advice would you give to other people as they achieve maintenance/lifetime status?

Experiment. When I hit maintenance, I added 4 points to my daily target and wound up eating TONS more sweets, which just triggered more eating. There were several weeks where I finished like 50 points in the red. So I cut back to loss mode for a while and decided that I really didn't need four more points DAILY -- especially since it made it that much harder to "get to" my AP points. So I decided to keep my daily target at 20, use my APs, and allow myself to go 28 points in the red each week, whether it's spread throughout the week or whether it's one or two big meals. For some reason that works much better for me -- it's really hard to figure out something healthy to add to your daily eating that wasn't already in there -- but it's easy to go out

with friends and think, "ah, now I can have a second martini since I can take it from my maintenance points."

For me, it was very hard to add 4 points per day, as suggested on maintenance. I had cut my daily diet pretty much to the quick and to add in 4 points on a daily basis seemed superfluous -- do you add chips to your sandwich? Unhealthy. Cream-based salad dressing? Unhealthy. More milk or cheese was all that I could think that would be healthy, but even a cup of milk was only 2 points per day. after I stopped thinking about it, and just eating the points that were there, I ate primarily unhealthy things like chips, crackers, more bread or cookies, etc. it all just made me hungrier and I wound up cutting back to weight loss mode.

After I'd lost the few extra pounds I'd gained, I decided to switch my "maintenance" points to 28 weekly instead of 4 daily -- that works MUCH better for me. 28 extra points is 5 extra martinis, in case I go out 2 or 3 nights with friends. 28 points could be one dinner of burger and fries. 28 points could still be more chips and crackers and cookies. But it's my choice, now.

Advice from WW Member Jeanne

I'm starting my 6th month of lifetime. It definitely was easier losing the weight than trying to maintain. I'm yo-yoing, but still meeting the goal each month. Last month, though, I had to fast two days to get to my goal so not to lose my lifetime status. After I weigh-in, then I eat all the treats I denied myself, then have to panic the rest of the month to get back to the goal weight.

So my tips for your document on lifetime/maintenance would be:

1. Weigh yourself everyday (I'm doing with clothes on, since I do that at WW).
2. If over goal weight, get back under control immediately that day and eat less, start tracking points.
3. Don't stop attending the meetings. Since I'm yo-yoing, I can't weigh-in in at the beginning of the month and attend all the meetings. I spend the month panicked and trying to lose, and really missing the meetings.
4. Somehow figure out how to get over the deny aspect, and incorporate treats into the plan, not just binging on them after weigh-in. Maybe that way, after weigh-in, I won't crave those treats.
5. Find substitutes for eating - gardening, home improvement, square dancing, and something for comfort to sub for the comfort/treat found in food.
6. I'm still working out all these things. It's really a mind game! I always feel better after I attend WW meetings, though.

Advice from WW Member Martha

My first weigh-in was in 2005 on 2/08, and, interestingly, I weighed 208 pounds.

I set my goal weight at 155. I have a fairly large frame and carry my weight pretty well, and so I thought it would be impossible to get to that point. In fact, I talked to my leader about how to get a doctor's note to set my goal at a higher number than the guidelines.

Well, I made my goal on July 13, 2005, 22 weeks after I joined. Still not happy with what I saw in the mirror, I continued to lose more slowly until that October, when I reached 143. I lost 65 pounds overall, although today I tend to maintain between 145-148. I have never gone above 150 – if I reach 148, I go back into “lose mode.”

For me, the most difficult part of my “journey” was the first few months after I reached my goal. I struggled internally with a lot of issues: “Am I really done losing weight? I weigh 143, but Weight Watchers says that I can go down to 130, and my BMI is at the high end of normal, so am I still fat? 143 is still a pretty high number – maybe 135 seems daintier, more desirable, more model-like. Besides that, people tell me I'm too thin, but I'm not! I still see rolls and ridges, and I haven't gone below what's considered healthy! And somebody told me I look anorexic – don't they get that it hurts my feelings almost as much as being told I was fat did?”

There was no magic way that I solved these issues. Over time, several things happened. First, I took an honest appraisal of how I looked. I was thin, yes. And I could be thinner, yes. However, I reminded myself that I started weight to look good, not merely to be thin, and I sternly gave myself an anti-anorexia talking-to, telling myself that being thin does not always yield a good look. I promised myself that I was not going to lose anymore for awhile and see how that worked out. A few months later, I had separated from that “lose mania” and I realized that I was at an excellent weight.

I also realized that, when some people told me I was too thin, they had a personal agenda. I learned that some people simply liked me to be fat: I was their eating buddy, or the fact that I was heavy made it ok that they were heavy, or they resented the success that I had achieved that had eluded them. I learned that there was nothing I could do about that. However, others told me I was too thin and had no reason to sabotage me – they were truly worried. I came to a couple of realizations about this situation. One was that sometimes they were simply not used to me being thin. More importantly, though, I realized that I truly wasn't looking very good. I was gaunt, my hair was dry and unhealthy, I had some loose skin, and – horrors! – I had lost weight from some of the wrong places! Fortunately, time and exercise fixed all of that. By about a year after my weight loss, everything had tightened and toned up and my clothes were filled out in the right places again.

Finally – and I am still working on this one – I have come to realize that charts and scales and sizes and other magic numbers are indicators. I found a place that I look good and feel good, and figured out what my numbers were – now I keep an eye on those numbers to make sure they

don't go up. That's it. I can't compare my magic numbers with anyone else's, because (it's cliché, but true) everybody is different.

My method of maintaining is different from the Weight Watchers method. Sometimes I fall off the wagon entirely for as much as a week at a time – I have found that I need to allow myself that luxury. Living a life of journaling limited points every day is not something that I can do forever, but a lifestyle of a few days off the plan balanced by a week or two on the plan is something I know I can do. Also, consciously maintaining in this way negates the feelings of failure that I used to have during or after lapses. Something that continually delights me is that, after a few days of eating off the plan I look forward to eating healthily again – I consider it a great non-scale victory that eating well has become something I enjoy rather than an exercise in deprivation. I do know, however, that as I age and my metabolism changes (I'm only 30), this easy-come-easy-go approach might not work.

Today, my biggest challenge is accepting who I WAS. I find myself disliking compliments because they remind me of how badly I looked when I was heavy. I am embarrassed by how I looked, and I only want to be known as a thin person, not as a formerly fat person. Yeah, it's great that I lost weight and it's great that I maintained a loss, but I sure would have liked it better if I had never been fat to begin with! I remind myself that all I can do is look forward, and continued maintenance is the key to getting further and further from my "before."

The best advice I can give to new lifetime or maintaining members is to learn and experiment. Read Weight Watchers and other literature about maintaining a loss. Talk to other people who have done it. Do some real self-analysis, maybe with a mirror, and learn about YOUR feelings and what is right for YOU. Consider gaining or losing a couple of pounds to find the right place to maintain. Most importantly, learn that a slip-up – whether one meal or a week or a month or a year – is not irreversible. You've been on the plan before and you can do it again if you need to

Feedback from WW Maintenance Board

Maintenance is the same as losing, but with more food. It's not rocket science, so I don't think you need a book for it.

Here's what you do:

1. Continue to track food, one way or another, and be accountable to yourself by weighing AT LEAST once a week. Playing ostrich doesn't keep the weight off.
2. Set a "red line" weight. If you go above this weight for more than a day or so, take action.
3. Have an "action plan" for WHEN (not "if") you go above red line. This plan should be something like, "I will cut back to 'x' number of points and add 15 minutes additional activity (like walking) to my day. It should be specific, and it should be begun IMMEDIATELY, and should be followed until you are under red line again.
4. Realize that your body will change over time. The number of points you maintain on today, may not be right tomorrow. If you don't exercise or lift weights, as you age, your metabolic rate will decline. Or, if you decide to train for an Iron Man, you will need more food. Let your body weight and measurements be your guide to how much to eat.

It's really that simple. The rest of the tips that you get from WW are plenty useful, like how to eat at buffets, how to handle holidays, how to handle "hungry" days. It's really not any different, as this program doesn't end until YOU do.

I lost about 85 pounds over 3 1/2 years, and have maintained for seven months. Here's what's working for me:

1. I have a goal range rather than a goal weight. When I hit the top of my range, I cut back by eliminating WPAs. (Usually, I eat 24 target points, plus 4-8 APs, plus up to 5 WPAs a day. When I am cutting back, I just eat target points plus APs)
2. I've had to do this 3 times in seven months, after vacations or holidays. Each time, it took one week or less to get back in goal range. I have never had to cut all the back to losing mode.
3. I weigh myself daily, that way I get used to fluctuations and am never surprised on my 'official' weekly WI day.
4. I post my current, accurate WI result every Friday. It keeps me honest.
5. Since making goal, I have had to deal with recovering from major surgery, doing a long-distance cycling event (500 miles in one week), and a 2 week vacation with every meal

eaten out. No matter what was going on, I never gave myself permission to go mindless about eating. I never said to myself, "It doesn't matter, I'll think of it tomorrow at Tara."

6. I NEVER put off dealing a red line weight. This year, that meant cutting back WPAs during the holiday season. I didn't care, and I didn't feel deprived, because I knew it was temporary and would be less than one week. I didn't want to have to deal with 5 pounds or 7 pounds or more at a more convenient time. I respond IMMEDIATELY.

Weight Maintenance Calculator:

<http://www.caloriecontrol.org/calcalcs.html>

Maintaining Weight Loss

<http://www.uchospitals.edu/online-library/content=P07872>

While losing weight is difficult for many people, it is even more challenging to keep weight off. Eighty percent to 85 percent of those who lose a large amount of weight regain it. One theory about regaining lost weight is that people who decrease their caloric intake to lose weight experience a drop in their metabolic rate, making it increasingly difficult to lose weight over a period of months. A lower metabolic rate may also make it easier to regain weight after a more normal diet is resumed. For these reasons, extremely low calorie diets and rapid weight loss are discouraged.

Losing no more than one to two pounds per week is recommended. Incorporating long-term lifestyle changes will increase the chance of successful long-term weight loss.

Weight loss to a healthy weight for a person's height can promote health benefits such as lower cholesterol and blood sugar levels, lower blood pressure, less stress on bones and joints, and less work for the heart. Thus, it is vital to maintain weight loss to obtain health benefits over a lifetime.

Keeping extra weight off requires effort and commitment, just as losing weight does. Weight loss goals are reached by changes in diet, eating habits, exercise, and, in extreme circumstances, surgery.

Weight loss maintenance strategies:

The strategies that encourage weight loss also play an important role in maintenance:

- Support systems used effectively during weight loss can contribute to weight maintenance. **A study conducted by the National Weight Control Registry found people who lost weight and continued bi-monthly support group meetings for one year maintained their full weight loss. Study participants who did not attend support group meetings regained almost half of the weight.**
- Physical activity plays a vital role in maintaining weight loss. **Studies show that even exercise that is not rigorous, such as walking and using stairs, has a positive effect. Activity that uses 1,500 to 2,000 calories per week is recommended for maintaining weight loss.**
- Diet and exercise are vital strategies for losing and maintaining weight. A study by the National Weight Control Registry found that nearly all of 784 study participants who had lost at least 30 pounds, and had maintained that loss for one year or longer, used diet and exercise to not only lose the weight, but also to maintain the weight loss.
- Once the desired weight has been reached, the gradual addition of about 200 calories of healthy, low-fat food to daily intake may be attempted for one week to see if weight loss continues. If weight loss does continue, additional calories of healthy foods may be added

to the daily diet until the right balance of calories to maintain the desired weight has been determined. It may take some time and record keeping to determine how adjusting food intake and exercise levels affect weight.

- Continuing to use behavioral strategies can help maintain weight. Be aware of eating as a response to stress and use exercise, activity, or meditation to cope instead of eating.

A return to old habits does not mean failure. Paying renewed attention to dietary choices and exercise can help sustain behaviors that maintain weight loss. Identifying situations such as negative moods and interpersonal difficulties and incorporating alternative methods of coping with such situations rather than eating can prevent relapses to old habits.

Weight cycling:

Weight cycling is losing and regaining weight multiple times. Some studies suggest that weight cycling, also called “yo-yo dieting,” may result in some health risks such as high blood pressure, gallbladder disease, and high cholesterol. However, these studies are not conclusive. The best strategy is to avoid weight cycling and to maintain healthy weight through activity and healthy eating.

One myth about weight cycling is that a person who loses and regains weight will have more difficulty losing weight again and maintaining it compared to a person who has not gone through a weight-loss cycle. Most studies show that weight cycling does not affect the rate at which the body burns fuel and a previous weight cycle does not influence the ability to lose weight again. In addition, weight cycling does not increase the amount of fat tissue or increase fat distribution around the stomach.

Always consult your physician for more information.

American Heart Association: Hold It!

http://www.deliciousdecisions.org/ff/wyo_hold_main.html

Your heart will be healthier if you reach and maintain your best weight, and don't go up and down the scale like a yo-yo. If you've been able to lose weight, good for you! You've taken the extra strain off your heart and lowered your risk for heart problems. You should be proud of your success.

Keeping extra weight off can be as challenging as losing it. Many things will tempt you to go back to your old habits. You'll find that support from others is very helpful in this phase.

It takes commitment to stick to your new, healthy lifestyle. When you do, you may

- Have more self-control with food.
- Feel stronger.
- Have better eating habits.
- Have fewer mood swings.
- Be in better overall shape.

Whether you're planning ahead or you've successfully lost weight, the following Hold It! features will provide you with the easy, practical why's and how's of maintaining a healthy weight.

You've Reached Your Best Weight. What Happens Now?

Congratulations! You've changed your diet and your eating habits, and you've successfully attained your weight-loss goal! So, what happens now?

These tips will help ensure that the pounds stay off and that you continue eating the most nutritious diet possible.

- After you reach your best weight, add about 200 calories of healthful, low-fat food to your average daily intake.
- After a week, if you're still losing weight, add a few hundred more calories.
- If you change the amount of exercise you do, adjust your eating.
- Keep a record of what you eat and how much exercise you do, so you'll know how to make adjustments.

Retaining Your Best Weight

As you lost weight, you probably adopted new changes in your diet and eating patterns.

Now that you have lost the weight you needed to lose, many of these same tips and eating habit changes will enable you to retain a healthy weight. Here's a collection of the most helpful:

- Remember that eating smart doesn't mean "dieting"; it just means eating some foods in smaller amounts and eating high-fat foods less often.
- Always keep fresh, low-fat foods around. Use a shopping list, and don't shop when you're hungry.
- Plan all your meals. When you're going to a party or out to eat, decide ahead of time what you can do to make it easier to eat healthfully.
- At a buffet table, choose wisely. At a friend's house, control your portions.
- When you're hungry between meals, drink a glass of water or eat a small fruit, and stay out of the kitchen.
- When you really crave a high-calorie food, eat a small amount and forget about it, instead of resisting until you give in and gorge on it. If you don't trust yourself with just a little, don't eat any at all.
- Stay active! Don't give up on your physical activity plan. Find an exercise partner or a class to help you stay interested.

Welcome to the Motivation Station!

Sometimes finding the motivation to stick with a weight-reducing diet and healthy lifestyle is difficult. You may lapse back into old habits. This can happen when you have a bad day and overeat or skip exercise. A relapse is when you go back to old habits for several days or weeks.

If you go back to your old habits, try these motivational pick-me-ups to renew your weight-loss efforts and return to your new and improved, healthy lifestyle:

- Remember that having a lapse is not failing. If you go off your diet, don't quit and don't get mad at yourself. Just get back on track.
- Think about your eating habits. Do you eat out of habit instead of hunger? If you find yourself automatically snacking in front of the television every night, it may be helpful to pick a certain spot in the house and not let yourself eat anywhere else.
- Decide how to handle temptation. When you're offered high-fat foods, turn them down nicely, but firmly. Try to dine out at places where there are low-fat, low-calorie foods to choose from.

- Plan ahead. If a bad mood makes you want to binge, decide in advance what action to take. You could go for a walk, call a friend or read a book. It could help to make a list of things to do when you get food cravings.
- Think about whether you feel hunger (gnawing in your stomach) or urges (mental cravings for food).
- When you feel an urge, set a timer for 15 minutes and wait, or do something else before eating. This will help you delay your desire for food.
- Respond in other ways to life's stresses. For example, take a brisk walk, start a new hobby, or meditate.
- Seek support from others, including social groups.
- Physical activity is good for your heart, and it helps you lose weight. Ask your doctor or health professional for an activity plan that's right for you.

Maintaining Weight Loss: Keeping an Eye on the Pounds

Daily Weigh-Ins, Face-to-Face Meetings Are Key to Keeping the Weight Off

By JAMES HSIAO, M.D., ABC News Medical Unit

<http://abcnews.go.com/Health/story?id=2554032&page=1>

Oct. 11, 2006 — - People who lose weight can't just sit back and bask in the glory.

They need to check their weight on a daily basis to keep off the pounds, a new study in the New England Journal of Medicine shows.

The study found that a "self-regulatory" maintenance program in which patients weighed themselves daily and made appropriate adjustments to their diet and exercise helped keep off the extra pounds.

Patients who weighed themselves daily and attended face-to-face meetings with therapists and other program members regained an average of 5.5 pounds after 18 months, compared with 10.8 pounds regained by patients who weren't enrolled in a similar maintenance program.

The face-to-face meetings were found to be better than Internet messages and chat rooms in keeping off the weight.

Patients in maintenance programs who were followed through Internet contact regained an average of 10.3 pounds, not far from the 10.8 pounds regained by patients not in any maintenance program.

Checking daily weights may be the way to go in keeping off the extra pounds.

"It obligates the patient's continuing attention to the task. It enables patients to make multiple small adjustments rather than face large changes, which may be noted if they assess their status at less frequent intervals," said Dr. Arthur Frank, medical director of the George Washington University Weight Management Program.

"If you do this every day as part of your usual routine, you will notice any weight gain and be able to take early action, rather than getting a wake-up call after you've gained 5 [pounds] or 10 pounds," said Dr. George L. Blackburn, S. Daniel Abraham associate professor of nutrition and associate director of nutrition at Harvard Medical School.

Dropping the Weight Is Easier Than Keeping It Off

For dieters, losing weight is only half the battle.

Once the weight is lost, they have to keep the pounds from reaccumulating.

Most dieters regain a third of the weight lost during the next year and are typically back to baseline in three years to five years.

"People always recognize that losing weight is a transient phenomenon," Frank said. "An effective maintenance program has to be sustained indefinitely."

"Weight loss is relatively easy, while maintenance is harder, and at most centers isn't even done," said Dr. Ken Fujioka, director of nutrition and metabolic research at the Scripps Clinic.

In the study, 314 patients who had lost an average of 43 pounds were assigned to receive a quarterly newsletter (control group), participate in a maintenance program with face-to-face meetings, or participate in a program with discussions via the Internet.

Patients in the face-to-face group met weekly for four weeks, then once a month for a total of 18 months.

Patients in the Internet group received messages at the same frequency.

After 18 months, patients in the face-to-face group had regained few pounds (5.5 pounds) than patients on the Internet (10.3 pounds) or in the control group (10.8 pounds).

The value of the daily weighing, however, isn't favored by all.

"It promotes continued preoccupation with caloric intake and food restriction, and promotes a continuous state of anxiety and fear about becoming 'out of control,'" said Joanne Ikeda, a cooperative extension nutrition education specialist and lecturer.

Some experts stand in the middle.

"I used to suggest weekly weigh ins so people wouldn't get too uptight about day-to-day fluctuations," said Keith-Thomas Ayoob, associate professor in the Department of Pediatrics at Albert Einstein College of Medicine.

"But our society is different today. We seem to need more immediate feedback. As such, I recommend more frequent weigh-ins," Ayoob said.

"Over time, once the correct trajectory is established, less frequent monitoring is warranted," said Dr. David Katz, associate professor of public health and director of the Prevention Research Center at Yale University School of Medicine.

The self-regulation program has other advantages as well.

"There's the feeling that the subject is taking responsibility. They have all the tools they need at their disposal, so they gain a level of control," Ayoob said.

Why did patients who attended face-to-face meetings do better than patients monitored over the Internet?

"Face-to-face intervention has [a] higher level of accountability," said Rena Wing, professor of psychiatry and human behavior at Brown University School of Medicine, and lead author of the study.

"Patients are weighed each time they come in, and they are accountable to therapists and other members of the group," Wing said.

"When you are looking someone in the eyes, there is a sort of social contract you feel you are signing. That affects people much more than an e-mail message," Katz said. "The challenge is to make sure that accountability does not result in judgmental behavior by the person doing the monitoring."

Patients who shed pounds can't stop with the calorie counting and aerobic exercises.

They need to watch their weight on a daily basis to keep it from climbing up again.

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Six Patterns for Weight Loss Management

Researchers say certain habits can maintain weight loss efforts
<http://onhealth.webmd.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=55722>

By Kelli Miller
WebMD Medical News

Reviewed By Brunilda Nazario, MD

Aug. 4, 2004 -- Has dieting got you down? Concentrating more on your behavioral patterns and less on your middle may help keep off the pounds for good.

A study published in the July 2004 Nursing Science Quarterly reports that 18 women who lost 10% of their body weight and kept it off for at least a year did so by embracing six behavioral patterns.

Study author Diane Berry, a postdoctoral fellow at Yale School of Nursing, evaluated the weight loss experiences of 20 women, aged 33 to 82, who were enrolled in Weight Watchers or Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS). Berry questioned the women about their childhood, their relationships with others, stable periods of time in life, and major life-changing events.

Ninety percent of the women successfully maintained a weight loss of 15 pounds to 144 pounds for a period of one to 27 years. Those who were successful exhibited six common trends. The patterns involved an initial period of chaos, followed by a time of conscious decision-making, and the development of new behaviors.

- In pattern one, women exhibited self-consciousness, low self-esteem, and a high sense of vulnerability before losing weight. They were also naïve regarding events that contributed to their weight gain.
- Pattern two involved problem recognition and a readiness to change. Making a decision to lose weight gave the women more overall energy, according to the study.
- Pattern three revealed the women taking control and engaging in behavior change. During this phase, women felt empowered and experienced a new sense of control over their lives in general.
- Pattern four showed women regularly incorporating the new behaviors into their life, such as routine exercise and food portion control. All women reported an increased awareness of food.

- Pattern five showed that social support was immensely valuable in reinforcing behavior change. Attending weekly weight loss meetings offered comfort and helped foster new friendships. Some women required more support than others.
- Pattern six brought increased self-confidence, self-esteem, and weight loss maintenance. Positive energy abounded across the group. Once women reached this step, weight loss was maintained.

While many diets can help shed pounds, most provide only short-term success.

Researchers say close study of the six patterns may shed new understanding on why some women can maintain weight loss while others cannot.

Why Is Maintaining Weight Loss Such a Challenge?

by Jane Collingwood
September 12, 2006

<http://psychcentral.com/lib/2006/09/why-is-maintaining-weight-loss-such-a-challenge/>

Losing weight is a difficult enough task, but keeping it off can be an even greater challenge. Many people will lose weight through a quick fix such as starving themselves or going on a fad diet, but as soon as they return to their old habits, the weight comes straight back.

Even dieters who take the slow-and-steady approach to weight loss sometimes can go back to square one. Permanent weight loss requires a lifelong commitment, and anyone who wants to lose weight but can't make that commitment is in for a struggle.

The cycle of losing and regaining weight multiple times, which many people fall into, is called "yo-yo dieting." It can be extremely frustrating, and has been linked to health risks such as lower levels of "good" cholesterol and gallbladder disease.

One theory is that a reduction in calorie intake causes a drop in the metabolic rate so that the body adapts and needs fewer calories to function. This makes it increasingly difficult to lose weight after each episode of losing and regaining. Whether this happens is still unclear, but in any case, physicians do not recommend extremely low-calorie diets and rapid weight loss. However, it is not true that yo-yo dieting increases the amount of fat tissue or fat distribution around the stomach.

Experts suggest losing no more than two pounds a week, as well as making long-term lifestyle changes. This approach increases the chances of successful long-term weight loss.

Maintaining weight loss is essential to get the full benefits of a healthy weight over a lifetime. Benefits include lower cholesterol and blood sugar levels, lower blood pressure, less stress on bones and joints, and less chance of stroke or heart disease.

But keeping excess weight off takes effort, and the strategies that are needed for weight loss also are central to weight maintenance. Changes in diet, eating habits, and exercise must continue once the goal is reached.

With this in mind, support from others can help to maintain the weight loss. Belonging to a formal or informal support group leads to better weight maintenance than trying to go it alone. It is even more helpful if group members exercise together. Classes or team sports certainly will contribute to weight maintenance, and the commitment to a group can provide that elusive motivation.

Even gentle exercise such as walking has a beneficial effect. The most recent guidelines for Americans, released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 2005, recommend that everyone gets a minimum of 30 minutes each day of moderate exercise, such as brisk walking or bicycling.

Losing weight requires 60 to 90 minutes of more vigorous daily exercise, the guidelines state, and maintenance of weight loss and preventing weight gain needs 60 minutes of exercise a day.

Moderate physical activity includes gardening or yard work, dancing, golf, yoga or Pilates. Vigorous physical activity can be running or jogging, swimming, aerobics, fast walking, or most team sports. The important thing is that the activity causes an increase in heart rate.

In terms of diet, a sensible course of action is to gradually add about 200 calories of healthy, low-fat food to the daily intake, once the goal weight has been reached. Take it slowly to ensure weight is maintained rather than continuing to drop or inching up. Adjust calorie intake and exercise levels up or down as necessary.

It's also important to keep aware of eating triggers and to retain alternative strategies such as calling a friend or taking a bath instead of eating due to boredom or stress. These strategies need to become a habit in order to deal with the inevitable ups and downs of life. Remember that regaining the weight would only contribute to a difficult situation.

So if you're overweight, don't let the fear of yo-yo dieting prevent you from trying to lose the weight. Use extra resolve to keep weight off once you lose it, and bear in mind that maintaining your weight can become harder as you age because of hormonal changes and natural changes in body composition.

Any metabolic adjustments that may occur through repeated weight loss or aging do not mean that successful weight maintenance is impossible. All the evidence supports regular physical exercise and high motivation as the key factors to success.

Psychology Today: Fit for Life - Keeping the Weight Off

You've lost the weight--here's how to keep it off.

By:Carin Gorrell

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/articles/pto-20020101-000029.html>

What's harder than trying to lose weight? Keeping the pounds off. And unfortunately, research on the probability of maintaining weight loss is not always encouraging.

"The most difficult part of maintaining weight loss is sticking to what got you there," says Kerri Plum (name has been changed), a 27-year-old human resources representative who has made three unsuccessful attempts at reaching and maintaining her goal weight since attending college. "When the weight is gone, it's hard not to think, 'Hey, I deserve dessert tonight or a bag of chips with lunch today.'"

More than 56 percent of adults in the U.S. are overweight or obese, according to a recent study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association. Despite Americans' sincere efforts--more than 54 million are currently dieting--the nation's obesity rate continues to rise. Of those who do successfully lose weight, 90 to 95 percent are unable to keep it off long-term. This is a particularly disconcerting statistic considering the numerous physical and mental-health problems that accompany being overweight, including an increased risk of developing diabetes, heart disease and depression.

That said, take heart: A number of people do beat the odds, and experts are attempting to learn their secrets. Until recently, few studies have examined methods for long-term success, a void that inspired doctors at the Universities of Colorado and Pittsburgh to devise the National Weight Control Registry (NWCR). Founded in 1993, the NWCR was designed not to help people lose weight but to study adults who have already dropped 30 pounds or more and kept it off for one year.

"People lose weight all the time, but keeping it off seems to be the difficult part," explains Holly Wyatt, M.D., an endocrinology professor at the University of Colorado (CU) who conducts research with NWCR co-founder Jim Hill, Ph.D. "We're really more interested in weight maintenance than in initial weight loss," adds Wyatt.

Thus far, Wyatt and other NWCR researchers have discovered four distinct behavioral trends among the registry's nearly 3,000 participants. First, regardless of the diet they followed to lose weight, most participants now eat a low-fat, high-carbohydrate diet. They also make sure to eat breakfast--almost 80 percent do so seven days a week.

In addition to monitoring diet, registrants regularly engage in high levels of activity to remain slender. They report burning an average of 2,800 calories per week each, which is roughly

equivalent to walking four miles a day. Of course, people tend to overestimate their activity levels, so Wyatt asked participants to wear pedometers, instruments that count the number of steps a person takes. She also gave pedometers to people who had visited CU's clinic and wished to lose weight but hadn't yet started a weight-loss program.

After comparing tallies, Wyatt discovered that those who were overweight and hadn't changed their habits took significantly fewer steps than did their thinner counterparts, averaging only 5,000 steps per day compared with those in the registry who were taking 11,000 daily steps. "Other studies report that physical activity is the best predictor of long-term weight maintenance," Wyatt says. "This agrees with what our registry people are telling us." Her findings were presented to the National Association for the Study of Obesity.

Finally, successful weight-loss maintenance seems to require consistent "self-monitoring." For instance, some NWCR participants weigh themselves daily, while others keep a precise food journal. "They're always watching for changes and respond to them quickly," Wyatt says. "They don't just let things go." Whatever the method, self-monitoring requires the same restraint and vigilance--what some experts refer to as "cognitive control"--as does committing to a weight-loss program.

"Cognitive control plays a big role," Wyatt notes. "But it doesn't mean that if you have a weight problem you don't have control. It's harder for certain people than for others; that may be where genes and physiology come in."

Not surprisingly, cognitive control is also key in losing weight, a struggle that varies in difficulty among individuals and genders. One recent national survey by the Calorie Control Council (CCC) found that 41 percent of women blamed weight loss failures on lack of self-discipline, and 36 percent admitted they eat for emotional reasons. In comparison, only 30 percent of men attributed an inability to lose weight to low self-discipline, and they were half as likely as women to eat emotionally. So while women are more prone to cite internal reasons for their failures, men point to external factors such as eating improperly at restaurants.

Despite differing opinions on the challenges of losing weight, men and women do agree on what is necessary to win: Both genders say it takes long-term lifestyle changes, not short-term fad diets. In fact, the majority of men and women surveyed by the CCC named exercising, consuming foods and drinks low in fat and sugar, eating smaller-portioned meals and combining calorie reduction with physical activity as the most popular methods for losing and controlling weight.

Ultimately, it appears there is no magic pill for keeping trim. Instead, the old adages prove true once again: Everything in moderation; live healthy, look healthy. But while making lifelong behavioral changes can be daunting, there is some reassuring news:

"People who have maintained their weight loss for three to five years say it gets easier," Wyatt says. Jeffrey Kluger, a Time magazine senior writer, agrees. And he speaks from firsthand experience.

"It really has gotten easier," says Kluger, who lost 20 pounds in 1985 and has since kept it off through both dieting and exercise. "I find the reward for remaining vigilant in the long run is much greater than the short-term gratification of indulging."

Maintaining your weight over the long term

http://mentalhelp.net/poc/view_doc.php?type=doc&id=4378&cn=219

At the end of the famous Aesop's fable the slow but steady tortoise wins the race even though his opponent the rabbit is a faster sprinter. Congratulations to you if, like that tortoise, you end up at the finish line you have set for yourself. While having met your weight loss goals is definitely cause for celebration, it is not a license for going back to your old "eat what I feel like" ways. Sustaining weight loss is not a sprint but rather a marathon of lifelong change. Long term weight loss and maintenance depends on dozens of daily choices made correctly more times than not over long periods of time.

Shift To A Nutritionally Balanced Maintenance Diet

In order to keep your weight off, you'll need to start on a maintenance diet sooner rather than later. If your reducing plan wasn't itself a nutritionally balanced diet make sure that you move towards eating such a diet as soon as you have met your weight loss goals. Continue to eat a balanced and nutritionally sound diet on an ongoing basis. Limit your sweets intake. Include more fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, healthy unsaturated fats and lean meats in your diet. Consider going organic if you have the resources to do so. Your body benefits every time you make a healthy food choice.

It may take you a while to determine the proper amount of food you can eat post-diet without gaining weight. While it's likely that you'll be able to eat more than you were while on your reducing diet (even allowing for occasional treats) and still maintain your gains, you will never again be able to eat whatever you feel like eating whenever you feel like it without risking weight gain.

Exercise

Your chances of sustaining your weight loss will rise dramatically if you begin and stick with a program of regular physical exercise of a sort you enjoy. Regular exercise will help you to burn excess calories, firm and tone your body, ward off illnesses, and help you manage stress. Exercise is truly an investment in your health.

Manage Lapses

It is not in human nature to be perfect. There will be times when, for whatever reason, you will give in to temptation or fatigue and eat things you should not, or fail to exercise when you should.

Your chances of sustaining your weight loss will also rise significantly if you create contingency plans to help you minimize the impact these lapses will have on your maintenance compliance.

The first useful thing you can do is to inoculate yourself against the idea that a lapse in routine is a failure. A lapse is nothing more than a small break with routine. It means little in the scheme of things if you manage the lapse in such a way that it doesn't spread or grow. A lapse is not a failure unless you let it become one. When you lapse (the chances are high that you will do so occasionally), do not panic about it. Simply accepting that you lapsed and returning to your maintenance program is the wisest course of action.

In addictions counseling the acronym HALT stands for four conditions that addicts are taught to avoid so as to minimize relapse: Hungry, Angry, Lonely and Tired. These same distressing conditions can make dietary lapses more likely too. Therefore, avoid letting yourself get too hungry at any given moment by making sure that you eat regular meals and snack on healthy snacks as you feel the need. Never starve yourself while attempting to lose weight. Starving one's self can lead to impulsive eating and can lead to eating disorders when taken to extremes. Do what you can to minimize the other three conditions too, and you will have assisted yourself in keeping to your healthy routines.

Consciously plan for occasional indulgences. If you are really craving something, allow yourself permission to occasionally have a normal portion of that food. If you try to deprive yourself of too many things for too long a time you will likely end up bingeing on the forbidden foods when you can no longer stand the deprivation. Such out of control eating can lead to emotional upset and abandonment of your maintenance program if you let it. It is far easier to avoid binge eating by simply giving yourself permission to eat what you crave not and then.

Actively plan for how you'll manage your diet over the holidays, rather than simply getting depressed about what you are missing. For example, eat a healthy snack before going to a holiday party so you will be likely to binge on party food. If you drink, alternate alcoholic beverages with glasses of water or club soda. This will make it less likely that you abandon your eating plan during a drunken judgment lapse.

Trying to diet when everyone else is celebrating between Thanksgiving and New Year's is really difficult. To cope, consider altering your diet goals during the holiday season. If you are in an active weight loss period during a holiday season then make it your goal to maintain your weight or keep weight gain to a minimum, rather than insisting that you continue to lose weight. If you are maintaining your weight, plan on increasing the amount of time and effort you put into your exercise program. Select reasonable portions of foods that you enjoy at holiday meals, including desserts. Eat slowly and enjoy the delicious food. If you do end up bingeing, remember that tomorrow is a new day and a new opportunity to go back to your maintenance eating plan. There should be no need to completely avoid all holiday foods.

When lapses occur, do what you can to learn from them. Have a sense of humor about the situation, and then react appropriately. Most people who keep weight off for extended period of time weigh themselves regularly, notice small weight gains, and address them right away by determining what is causing the weight gain and changing that behavior. It is far easier to keep

one's weight within a five pound range of normal than to shed it again after having let it build up. In addition to being easier to nip in the bud, small weight gains are also easier to cope psychologically than are large lapses. Small gains simply do not merit feelings of failure and unattractiveness such as are associated with large lapses so there is less resistance to bringing them under control.

Do not let lapses discourage your efforts. Your goals should allow for occasional slips.

In the end it is a lifestyle change that works; not being on or off a diet

You've probably heard the phrase "The price of freedom is eternal vigilance" before in reference to politics. It is equally applicable to weight maintenance. Truly long term weight loss is possible only when people make lifestyle changes that support weight loss; remaining committed to watching their diet and meeting their exercise goals on an ongoing basis. You are a valuable person and taking care of your body is a wise investment. There will be dozens of solutions for every obstacle you'll encounter if you'll look for them. Be patient with yourself, learn from experience what does not work and move on. The only real failure is to totally give up.

6 Tips to Maintain Weight Loss

By Audrey Okaneko

<http://ezinearticles.com/?6-Tips-to-Maintain-Weight-Loss&id=236470>

Congratulations!! You've lost the weight you've been working so hard to lose. Now, how do you keep it off?

I'll share some of my own tips for helping to keep the weight off that you worked so hard to take off.

1. **Stay accountable to yourself.** Weigh yourself either once or twice a week. In order to maintain your weight you need to know how much you weigh.
2. **If you do gain one pound or two, make the changes today that will aid you in taking off that one pound or two.** You know how to lose weight, you've done it before. Lose that one pound before it turns into 5 or 10.
3. **You know your weaknesses and triggers.** If keeping chips out of the house is what it takes, then continue to keep the chips out of the house. If planning out meals so that you know what you'll be eating each day is helpful, then keep doing it.
4. **If you've been journaling, then consider continuing to journal what you eat.** It is very easy to slip back into old patterns without even realizing what is happening. If you journal what you are eating, then the words are right there in front of your eyes.
5. **Continue to make exercise part of your everyday routine.** Consider changing what you do for exercise. Play tennis, take a swim, take a walk, take an aerobics class, take a dance class, ride a bike. Mix it up, but keep exercise in your daily routine.
6. **Don't skip meals.** As you learned during the weight loss period, your body does better with 3-5 meals a day, versus just one meal a day. Stay in the habit of eating at least 3 meals per day.

As you learned during weight loss, do not deprive yourself, instead take the necessary steps above to take off that one or two pounds and get back to the weight that is right for you.

Countdown to Maintenance

How to get ready for a lifetime of slimness

By Heather Hatfield
WebMD Weight Loss Clinic - Feature

Reviewed By Kathleen Zelman, MPH, RD, LD
<http://onhealth.webmd.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=56884>

After months of healthy eating and regular exercise, you're this close to getting into that pair of slim-fitting jeans. You're excited, proud, elated -- and, truth be told, a little nervous. After all your hard work, how can you make sure those pounds don't sneak back onto places they don't belong?

"Actually losing weight is the easy part, it's keeping it off that's hard," says James O. Hill, PhD, director of the Center for Human Nutrition at the University of Colorado.

Not what you want to hear, given that diets aren't exactly a piece of cake.

But dealing with difficulty is easier if you're ready for it. To help you prepare, nutrition and weight-control experts who spoke to WebMD -- along with a dieter who is keeping the pounds off -- offer some advice on transitioning to the maintenance phase of your weight-loss program.

Motivation and Support

First, the experts say, make sure you have a strong support system in place. That can mean family, friends, a doctor or nutritionist, online or real-life buddies who've been in your shoes, or anyone who is supportive and encouraging.

Don't make the mistake of thinking that once you've hit your goal, you'll no longer need help.

"Transitioning from the weight loss mode to the maintenance mode is the part of the dieting process that people usually don't get help with," says Hill.

And with little support available, some people simply try to stick to their weight-loss diet forever -- a recipe for failure. "Some people can do it for a long period, but you're doomed to fail if you try to stay on a 'diet' forever," Hill explains.

Also, you may need to re-examine what motivates you. **Keep in mind that you will no longer have the payoff of seeing the scale move steadily downward. Instead, your motivation will be the rewards of a healthy lifestyle -- looking and feeling good, and knowing that you're doing good things for your health.**

"The glory days might be over in that you're not seeing any significant changes in your body anymore," says Susan Moores, a registered dietitian and spokeswoman for the American Dietetic Association. "Now it's down to the nuts and bolts, and making the lifestyle changes that will stick for life."

Exercise Is Essential

Speaking of lifestyle changes, this is no time to slack off from your exercise routine. Believe it or not, physical activity becomes even more important in the maintenance phase.

"Physical activity helps during weight loss, but by and large most of the loss is through calorie restriction," Hill says. After the diet is over, however, that changes.

"You have a smaller body and your metabolism goes down," says Hill. "Now you require less energy than before you started dieting, so unless you increase your physical activity, you have to food-restrict forever, which doesn't work. The people who succeed after the diet are the ones who make up for the drop in the metabolism by being more physically active."

So plan to gradually start making your workouts a little longer, a little more intense. And now that you've gotten a bit fitter, how about adding some new activities to your repertoire? You don't have to start running or take aerobics if that doesn't appeal -- try golf, tennis, hiking, yoga.

Get Set for Setbacks

Despite your best intentions, setbacks are going to happen. So it's important to have a plan to deal with them.

"If you're meeting your exercise goals and monitoring your weight, just adjust your food intake to counter any increase," says Hill. "You have to have a strategy if your weight goes up, and for most people cutting back a bit on portion size will do it."

And, he says, don't panic! Instead, take your slipup as an early-warning system and get it under control before it affects your success.

"The first thing is to have a serious talk to yourself," says Hill. "'Well, I've gained back five pounds, but I haven't gained back the whole 40 -- it's still worth salvaging.' Even if you gain back a little, you're still at a much better place than before. Your first step is to not gain back any more. Then later on, you can worry about recouping that five."

"Go back to what worked with the original diet -- go back to what gave you the initial success," says Moores. "Then, take some time, by yourself or with a counselor, to find out how it happened, so you learn from the experience and pay attention to it so you can defuse it the next time."

And to make sure those small setbacks don't turn into large ones, weigh yourself regularly (weekly is often enough). Losing a couple of pounds is far less daunting than losing 10 or more.

Moore and Hill also say that it's important to:

- Get in tune with yourself. "People who lose weight successfully and keep it off really know their bodies and are in tune with themselves," says Moore. "They know when they shouldn't be eating something, and when they've eaten too much. It's an inner ability to do it because it's important for you -- for your health, appearance, energy level, strength."
- Find your balance. "Think energy balance -- keeping your weight off is matching your food intake to your energy expenditure," says Hill. "The more physical activity you do, the more you can eat. What we suggest is that you find an individual physical activity goal that allows you to maximize your physical activity in a way that's reasonable for your busy lifestyle."
- Figure out what works for you. "For most people it is such an incredibly individual process and experience," says Moore. "[It takes] knowing and recognizing that one size doesn't fit everyone, and there will be peaks and valleys. This will help you along the way before, during, and after the diet."

The Success Story

That's what the professionals have to say, but what about someone who's been there?

That would be Carolyn Castel of Brookline, Mass., who weighed in at 185 at the end of her pregnancy in June 2002, at 5 feet tall. A year later, she still weighed 142.

"For five months I was on a hard-core diet, and I lost most of the weight at the beginning," says Castel. "Now, I weigh 118."

The bottom line, she says, is that maintenance takes even more work than weight loss.

"I think keeping it off is harder," says Castel. "I had such success losing the weight, that there may be more anxiety in keeping it off."

But Castel, who went from a size 12 to a size 6, has kept the weight off and feels confident that her success will be long-term.

Her secrets?

"Not overdoing it, and really thinking about what I want to eat," she says. "Perfect example: I stopped to get a cup of coffee the other day, and decided to get egg on a bagel -- and the bagel was huge. I took the top part off and ate only the bottom part."

"I wouldn't have done that before, but I asked myself if I really wanted all that, and I knew I didn't."

And while exercise wasn't a part of her game plan during the diet, it is now.

"Exercise didn't play a role in the weight loss, but now it really is an effort to tone, to help maintain, to lose a couple more pounds, and to help me have a cushion," says Castel.

As for those inevitable slipups, her advice is right in line with the experts' -- don't freak out.

"The weekends are the hardest -- I'm more tempted to cheat, so I might start Monday morning a pound or two higher than I want to be," says Castel. "You can't panic about it, though. You just pull back on what you eat for the next few days."

Weight, Weight: Yes, Tell Me

Washington Post

Anyone who has tried to lose weight knows that trimming pounds is the easy (or easier) part. Keeping them off is the challenge, as boredom, tempting food and sedentary living erode your resolve.

Yet surprisingly few studies have examined how best to maintain weight loss, leaving a missing piece in the anti-obesity puzzle.

Now a Brown Medical School study published last week in the New England Journal of Medicine suggests that the bathroom scale, an emergency diet toolbox and cues from a spotlight might hold the keys to success.

The study took a lesson from the National Weight Control Registry, a group of more than 5,000 "successful losers" who have shed at least 30 pounds and kept them off for at least a year. Registry members have trimmed their waistlines in a variety of ways, from cutting calories and boosting exercise on their own to joining groups such as Weight Watchers.

One habit they share: regular weigh-ins and then adjustment of food and exercise when pounds start to creep back on. (Successful losers also rarely miss breakfast and get at least an hour a day of physical activity, such as brisk walking.)

But can their strategies help others maintain their reduced weight? That's the question tested by the new study, which involved 314 people who had lost at least 10 percent of their body weight during the previous two years.

All participants received a bathroom scale along with instructions to use it often. They were encouraged to report their weight weekly by telephone.

During the 18-month study, some participants were randomly assigned to receive extra help either through e-mails or in meetings; they got weekly tips for the first month, followed by monthly updates after that. A control group simply received a quarterly newsletter with eating and exercise tips.

Participants were instructed to keep their weight within three pounds of their current weight. That range was dubbed a healthy green zone, like the signal on a traffic light. Those who stayed in the zone received congratulatory phone messages and small rewards, including green tea, mint gum and even a dollar bill.

Adding three to four pounds moved participants to a cautionary yellow zone, where they were advised to tweak their eating and exercise habits to return to their starting weight.

Regaining five or more pounds landed participants in the red zone. They were told to start dieting again and were urged to open an emergency toolbox that included a pedometer, a diary to record their food intake and a meal-replacement shake. For inspiration, they received a copy of their own weight-loss success story that they had written for researchers as the study began. They also were offered one-on-one weight-loss counseling to get back on track.

Those strategies enabled Ed Messier, 64, of North Smithfield, R.I., to maintain his 56-pound weight loss during the study. Messier and more than half of his group -- those who met regularly throughout the study -- succeeded at stabilizing their weight. So did nearly half the e-mail group. (By comparison, just about a quarter of the control group maintained their weight, according to the study.)

For Messier, the regular meetings were helpful, but stepping on the bathroom scale daily "was the single most important tool," he says. "I still weigh myself religiously, and if I am up a pound or two and see things going in the wrong direction, I am much more diligent [about eating and exercise] in the next couple of days to make sure that I am not going too far off."

The scale is also key for Susan Kertzer, 57, of Providence, R.I., who carried the scale with her everywhere. "It was comical," she says. (And sometimes difficult, such as when she had to explain to airport security in Paris why there was a bathroom scale in her carry-on luggage.) But by stepping on the scale daily -- and adjusting food and exercise accordingly -- Kertzer not only maintained her weight, she lost an additional 14 pounds during the study.

"Using the scale is very objective behavior," notes the study's lead author, Rena Wing. "It's a lot easier to get on the scale each day than to start writing down your calories."

Wing likens using the scale to reading a thermostat: If the numbers stay steady, no need to make any changes. "But if things are not going well," she says, "then you can go back to writing down the calories" and find ways to boost metabolism with more exercise.

Susan Yanovski, an obesity expert at the National Institutes of Health, the study's funder, says the results prove for the first time "that it's better to catch the little weight regains" before they become big ones.

"The most successful people at weight maintenance are the ones who can stay in that green zone," Yanovski says. "They weighed themselves every day." And, she notes, "they have a game plan for getting back on track."

Body Positive

<http://www.bodypositive.com/replies.htm>

What is "supportive" and what is not, when it comes to body image? When another person says something to you about your weight or your eating or your health, (directly or indirectly) how do you feel about it?

(Note from Trish – many of these are part of our own self-talk. How many of the unsupportive things do you say to yourself ABOUT yourself? Your own negative self-talk can be your undoing!)

What feels unsupportive?

- Boy, you really tore into that piece of chicken!
- You're starting to look a little chunky.
- You're going to eat all THAT?
- If you'd just lose some weight you'd be a knockout."
- Oh, you're a big girl! You don't look at all like what your mother/ sister looked like at our age.
- You have such a beautiful face, why don't you lose some weight to show it off?
- You lost weight--you look great! (I hate that one. I struggled with depression throughout my twenties, and whenever my depression was at its worst, I would drop weight, dramatically. Then everyone would tell me how great I looked--not seeing the bags under my eyes, etc. I've ranged in these years from underweight to overweight--no one ever expressed concern when I was underweight, which proves the lie that the concern is about health. Also, if I make any change--new glasses, haircut, etc, I get asked, did you lose weight? It's as if losing weight is the stand in for everything good in life.)
- You shouldn't eat that...
- I've really been doing good on this diet, you should try it...
- Wow, look at the big butt on that girl!
- Lost any weight lately? If so, look behind you - I think I know where it is!
- How did you let yourself get like that?
- You'd be sooo pretty if you lost weight.
- Enjoy it now. You`ll be fat one day
- If it really upsets you, why don't you go to weight watchers or something?
- Any comment that assumes I'm on a diet, or prepared to share in that constant female preoccupation. Such as--"This is okay to eat, it's low in calories/fat/taste/whatever."
- Do you really think you should be eating that?
- When someone decides for me if I want something or not. "You're not hungry" or "she doesn't need that." I think almost any comment, is hurtful. Moms should watch what

they say, my mom has said to me, if you were smaller she would buy me all the expensive clothes, like my sister. It makes you want to eat the whole gallon of ice cream.

- When my husband tells me that "I've gotten soft," "I move like an old lady." Or tells me, "I wish you would go back to being the way you were, I guess I didn't praise you enough back then.
- Every time my mother in law sees me she says "you've lost weight." It gets on my nerves because I've been the same weight (slim to medium) for 15 years and my weight has never been an issue. So why does she say it, does she think I used to be fat?
- How can you eat so much?
- When my boyfriend looks at me strangely when I eat something unhealthy.
- You've gained weight, it suits you
- I work at a gym and whenever people tell me how they eat or the workout that they do I feel like they are trying to give me advice.
- The attentive looks of men that are not associates.
- You're going to regret eating that later.
- Let's just put this away before we finish it.
- (When offering someone something to eat), "Oh no, I have to watch my weight." or "Oh no, I don't dare eat anything like that."
- Just the comment, "you look so good, you have lost some weight," is enough to make me wonder, so did I look bad before? And also why is looking good and losing weight so intertwined. I also really hate being around people who are constantly pointing out people who would be cute if they weren't so "chubby." My brother in law was the worst he would point out any woman that didn't look like she only ate lettuce and icecubes, and comment on her. It was really stressful always trying to get him to stop treating women like items of furniture that you could criticize or ogle at any time. He was even over heard saying "he didn't see anything he was interested in" at a bar.
- You should go to the gym today. You haven't gone in a week.
- You don't look so thin anymore, and you look great! (makes me feel panic, fear, and makes me think I will become fatter and fatter and it will never stop)
- Comparing me to others, i.e...so and so is even bigger than you are. Persons acting as the diet police at work and at home.
- Any comment about my size, be it fat, skinny (and I have been both) and how this relates to my goodness as a person. eg "you look great, have you lost weight"
- You lost weight, keep up the good work!

What feels supportive (or, what would feel supportive if someone could do/say it?)

- You're one of those women who looks terrific no matter what she happens to weigh.
- I actually prefer full-figured women, especially those who are shaped like you are.
- You know, you are really looking good these days.
- Well, you've certainly put it on in all the right places - I think you look terrific!
- I love your energy.
- Compliments unrelated to being slim. `I love what you`re wearing` or even `You`ve got a great smile` When I compliment other women I try to avoid mentioning size, so it would be nice to receive similar compliments back.

- Being supportive, a lot of the time, is just being a good listener.
- Have you been working out? You look stronger. Women are always praised for getting smaller. That is not why I work out.
- You look so healthy, what's your secret?
- Hey, lets go for a walk...the sky is so pretty this evening.
- That color looks wonderful on you. You are lovely.
- I don't want to be judged by my size. Lots of things on my mind: For the most part I don't base my value on my size, and actually like being a woman of physical substance and size. My family is uncomfortable with it and refers to me as the big girl, even though I'm 42 and certainly no longer a girl. It is difficult to not take on their discomfort with my appearance. I know that I am not lazy or slovenly and that I am pretty and sensual. The holidays are the tough times.
- I'm proud of you.
- I like you for what's inside, not outside. [Am trying to be proud of myself, regardless of outward appearance.]
- You are beautiful, no matter what and I think you are fine just the way (or weigh!) you are.
- Anyone willing to admit and own that it feels and tastes good to eat! My favorite thing to say is: "I'm hungry," because it felt so wrong to say it for so long.
- I love the way you always smile so bright. You always look so pretty.
- "You are great the way you are."
- Love yourself.
- I like your body exactly the way it is. And even if it had a few more pounds, it would still be you. and you is what I love. You: your mind, your body, just the way it is
- You are beautiful as you are. I don't share my weight loss or exercise goals with anyone who I deem unsupportive, so I don't allow others to bring me down. I only accept comments from those who I share my journey with. We women need to put on blinders and ear plugs to society's messages and stop being victims. We need to lead our own journeys, with positive support.
- If people would just keep all weight comments about my weight to themselves and talk about something else. I don't like people to make comments on what my body looks like because it's my personal body and nobody but me and my doctor's business!
- Any comment about how I am as a person, my achievements, how I am feeling. ie anything not related to my external appearance. I would like to feel more connected to who I am, not what I look like.

Body Image

http://www.bbc.co.uk/health/healthy_living/your_weight/bodyimage_perception.shtml

What is body image?

'Body image' is the picture you have in your mind of your size, shape and general appearance - and how you think and feel about it. It can be positive or negative.

Unfortunately, it's all too easy to measure this picture against the slim and beautiful 'ideal images' in the media and magazines - and if you don't measure up (let's face it, who does?!), you may feel very negative or dissatisfied.

Body image and self-esteem

Having a negative body image can get to the very core of your self-esteem (how you like and regard yourself), which can mean if you don't like your body, you don't like yourself. And if you don't like yourself, you may feel you're not capable of making lifestyle changes to control your weight or you're simply not worth making the effort for.

Even if you start a weight-loss programme, a lack of self-esteem can still come into play. If you've started your weight-loss plan and slip-up, for example, negative self-talk may come pouring out - "I've blown it as always, I might as well give up" - and throw you off course. See Coping with bad days for tips on countering such feelings.

Improving your body image

Your body image relies on how you think and feel about your body. If you think and feel that it's awful (negative self-talk again), you're bound to feel negative about it.

If you asked a friend how they view your body, their answer would probably be very different from yours. And, while not always easy, it is possible to change how you view yourself, too. Try some of the exercises below.

Be good to yourself

Do you seem to spend your energy looking after everyone else? If so, perhaps it's time to show that you really do respect your body (and whole self) by looking after it.

Like anyone else, you deserve some time out, a little pampering, good sleep, a fake tan, seeing a live band or whatever makes you feel good. If you feel good, you're more likely to think and act

positively and believe more in your ability to do those things that are important to you, including manage your weight.

Body image exercises

Some of the following might seem quite difficult, but do give them a go. Come back and try again another time if need be. The more you challenge what you think about your body and yourself, the better and more positive you'll (rightly) feel.

- List four things you like about your personality, day-to-day achievements (no matter how large or small) or any aspect of yourself.
- List four things a close friend might say they like about your appearance.
- List four positive things about your body, any part of it - hair, nails, waist, eyes, toes, smile, ankles.
- Think how you respond when someone pays you a compliment. Do you brush it aside or believe it and say thanks? If not the latter, practise this new response.
- Start each day with a positive statement about yourself. Say it a few times.

Feel-good tips

- Try to separate self-esteem from body image. You are the sum of many wonderful and varied parts.
- Having a more positive body image can help you to achieve weight-loss goals such as being more active.
- Despite our 'slim obsessed' society, the effects on health are the main thing to be truly concerned about if you're very overweight, rather than appearance.
- Keep your expectations about goal weights and rate of loss realistic. Remember, we all have different and unique body shapes.
- Seek professional help if you feel that your body dissatisfaction is very distressing and stops you from achieving the changes you want.

The Emotional Side of Weight Loss

<http://gailsaltz.ivillage.com/health/>

In my opinion and experience, one dramatic reason it is so difficult for people to lose weight and maintain it is that there is always an emotional component to weight loss and maintenance. Yet this aspect is rarely addressed and most people are not aware of their own emotional roadblocks.

The possible emotional issues and explanations for them are infinite. Each person has her own unique history with food, exercise and body image. The story behind each of these issues often lurks in your unconscious and was created long ago by your experiences growing up and colored by your parents and households relationship to each of these arenas. These stories stay tucked away and all you may experience is "I can't lose weight" or "I always put it right back on." The reason may be that something is driving your need to eat, your difficulty exercising or your comfort having a normal weight body.

Below are some examples, but remember that your own personal story will be more nuanced and individualized. Once you can address the emotional component of weight management, your ability to diet and maintain a healthy weight will be easier.

Anxiety. Many people have fears, worries and nervousness that drives their eating. When they are afraid of something, rather than working to figure out what that something is and how they are going to deal with their anxiety about it, many people try to comfort themselves with food. Food may have always been their families' and their own way of finding comfort. And at that moment of anxiety, the food does distract you and make you feel comforted, so you set up a system of positive reinforcement for eating. You begin to associate eating as a way to calm anxiety. But in the long run, the food does not address what makes you nervous, so you just keep eating, and you start packing on the pounds while still experiencing the anxiety. Figuring out what's bothering you and why and how you can realistically deal with it is important to break the cycle.

Depression. Again many people struggle with sadness and it is unpleasant. They try to "cheer up" by eating food that makes them feel soothed and nurtured. They feel that yummy food makes them feel taken care of, like mom's pie or mac and cheese. Using food to comfort and distract yourself from feeling blue may be the most common reason people fall off their diets. Many people have memories of food being used at home to cheer them up — have an ice cream, don't cry, here is a lollypop. Again, this becomes cyclical because, at the moment, it does cheer you up, but in the long term it is more depressing and hence you eat more. Figuring out what's at the root of your sadness and finding other ways to cope with it can interrupt the cycle.

Exercise phobic. This is the person whose story tells them that exercise is very, very unpleasant. It may be they think they are totally un-athletic and therefore find it defeating and embarrassing to exercise. They think that they should be more competent at sports and other physical activities so they avoid doing exercise to not feel like a failure. Another common exercise avoidance issue

is pushing endurance. Many people feel that being out of breath, sore or very tired is scary. Some even find that sweating is anxiety-producing and a major turnoff. Understanding why you avoid exercise can help you debunk the story that keeps you from doing it.

Body image fears. Some people, particularly women, are afraid to lose weight because they are afraid of being sexy and attractive. It sounds strange, I know, but I see many of these women in my private practice. They struggle with being afraid of sex, or men in general, and are really frightened of themselves should they lose weight and no longer have that insulation as protection against men's attention and their own sexual urges. Some women fear they will lose control and be too sexually wanton. Others have a fear of the sexual act. And still others are afraid that men will hurt them. Women who have been sexual abused in their past may particularly struggle with this. Understanding this fear and working on that will free you to lose the weight and address the real — and perhaps even more important — issue.

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