

Successful Weight Loss: The Myth and the Truth



SCOTTSDALE
WeightLossCenter, PLLC

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Tip 1: Getting Adequate Fluids

Water is an important part of all of our lives. We recommend drinking at least 64 oz per day and 80-100+ oz when you are working out or in the summer. Water is important because our bodies cannot easily tell us the difference between hunger and thirst. Unfortunately, we often perceive thirst as hunger and eat food to quench it (our thirst), and really, what our bodies crave is the liquid. If you use 16 oz. bottles, this equals at least 4 bottles per day. We are often asked: can I use other fluids instead of water? This is a simple question, and the answer depends. Most patients continue to see great weight loss while drinking fluids contain-

ing artificial sweeteners. There is some recent data that calls the use of artificial sweeteners into question. Water is best, but it is better to drink fluids that contain these chemicals rather than avoiding drinking at all. If your weight loss slows, consider omitting these artificial sweeteners from your diet.

You don't drown by falling in the water. You drown by staying there.

- Unknown Author

Tip 2: Getting Enough Sleep

Getting adequate sleep is critical to losing weight. Medical studies show that sleep deprived individuals have higher cortisol levels (cortisol promotes fat accumulation in the belly) and more hunger. As a result, staying up late will cause you to be hungrier and your body to resist weight loss. Night shift workers have also been shown to have high levels of ghrelin, a hormone released from the stomach which causes increased appetite. As a result, they have more weight struggles.

We normally burn fat during sleep. So what happens when you stay up late? Often, you will have an increase in hunger, causing you to eat what Taco Bell refers to as: "The Fourth Meal-the meal between dinner and breakfast." This will cause an

increase in insulin, forcing the sugar you have eaten into your fat cells. The result: you will build fat during the time of day your body would normally be burning fat, and you may not lose weight that day.

How much sleep is enough? While it is different for each person, a minimum 7 hours a night appears to be adequate for most.

You see things; and you say "Why?" But I dream things that never were; and I say "Why not?"

- George Bernard Shaw

Tip 3: Begin Exercising

Engaging in regular exercise has been shown to be the best way to maintain weight loss. In addition, it is a great way to lose weight faster! A good rule of thumb is that you burn 100 calories for each mile that you walk or run. We recommend starting slow with deliberate goals and steadily increasing your exercise up to at least 30 minutes per day. For many people, you begin to burn fat after 30 minutes of exercise. Use your exercise time to talk or spend time with your spouse, significant other, friends or children.

Use this time to “process your thoughts” and as stress relief. Use exercise as an automatic activity that gives you the time to think about your day and problems and plan out how to deal with each of them. Studies have shown that exercise done first thing in the morning is more likely to be continued long-term.

What if you hate to exercise? A great way to start being active is to wear a pedometer. This simple device counts the number of steps you take. As a result, you get “credit” for any activity you do, including pacing while on your cell phone, taking short walks, taking the stairs, or parking your car further away from the supermarket (which saves on door dings as well!). 75% of those who successfully maintain their weight loss use walking as their sole activity. Remember, activity level most predicts your keeping off the weight you have lost.

You may delay, but time will not

- Benjamin Franklin

Tip 4: If Weight Loss Slows

Weight loss plateaus occur for a multitude of reasons. While there can be a mild slowing of your metabolism with reduction of calories, your intake is far less than the amount of calories you need. As a result, it is rare to maintain your weight on your prescribed plan.

What are the common causes of a weight plateau? Here is a list of the most common:

- **Menses (menstrual period):** The hormone changes occurring in our bodies can lead to 2-4 pounds of water retention each month. Your body will shed the water in the week after a menstrual cycle.
- **Sneaky calories:** The creamers added to coffee, alcoholic and sweetened beverages, the nibbles of food while cooking, and mindless snacks and candies can add up over a day. They

can make the difference between gaining and losing weight. Three ounces of half and half contains 120 calories. Do that every day for a year, and you have eaten 12 pounds of fat! You would have to run 1.2 miles per day to burn that many calories.

- **Lack of sleep:** Getting less than 7 hours of sleep each night has been associated with resistance to weight loss.
- **Inadequate water intake:** Thirst can be mistaken for increased hunger.
- **Lack of activity:** Regular walking increases your calories burned. Aerobic activities get your metabolism going. If you are inactive, start small.

Even 5 minutes a day will make a difference and give you a foundation to build upon. If you are unable to do your usual workout, take a walk. You are burning additional calories, and doing something is always better than doing nothing. Finally, if you are doing a lot of aerobic activity and not seeing results, adding weight training will boost your metabolism, and even increase the calories you burn while resting.

You must begin to think of yourself as becoming the person you want to be.

- David Viscott

Tip 5: Effects of Alcohol

Alcohol can be a common cause of weight gain. We suggest eliminating alcoholic beverages from your diet while trying to lose weight. Why? When you drink alcohol, your body will cease burning fat until all of the alcohol has been metabolized. The goal of weight loss is to maximize the number of hours in which you burn fat. If you must drink, try to choose lower calorie options, such as those without sweetened juices added. Alternating diet soda or water with your alcoholic drink will reduce your alcohol intake by half.

Here are some alcoholic beverages, and the number of miles you would need to run or walk to burn them off:

Wine 5 oz:	120 calories (1.2 miles)
Beer 12 oz	150 calories (1.5 miles)
Light beer 12 oz	111 calories (1.1 miles)
Apple Martini	235 calories (2.4 miles)

One way to get thin is to re-establish a purpose in life.

- Cyril Connolly

Tip 6: Hidden Calories

Many foods have so called hidden calories. A non-planned food with over 10 calories can be considered to have hidden calories. Some examples include lattes, creamers, adding fruit to shakes, nuts and many other snack foods. Another big source of hidden calories is in calorically dense foods. These foods have an enormous amount of calories in a small package. A Starbuck's Frappuccino may have over 500 calories. Many bagels and muffins easily top 600 calories. These calories can add up quickly in a weight loss program. An extra 200 calories eaten throughout the day will total 20 pounds of weight gain in a year or 10 pounds in 6 months. Some examples are nibbling on non-vegetable foods during the day, grazing, and tasting while cooking for the family. Repeatedly justifying it all by say-

ing, 'I'm only going to have just one' is a quick and mindless way to sabotage your weight loss efforts.

The secret is to know which foods have calories and which do not, and to avoid needless additions of 'hidden' calories throughout the day.

Your body is the baggage you must carry through life. The more excess the baggage, the shorter the trip.

- Arnold H. Glasg

Tip 7: Dimmer Thinking

For many, dieting has been an all-or-none way of life. Throughout the years, you have either been ON a diet or OFF a diet. The changes you make as part of a successful weight loss plan are better thought of as a light bulb. If we use this, the all or none thinker turns the light on or off with a rocker (on/off switch). Their light (diet) is either glowing bright or off and there is no middle ground. Think instead, that your diet is connected to a dimmer switch.

Take your light bulb and dimmer switch to the next wedding or large social gathering you attend. If the party starts with an appetizer and you eat one that isn't on your diet, your bulb goes from 100% down to around 97%. If you then have an alcoholic drink, it goes down to 90%. If your next drink is water, it stays at 90%. If you eat a lean and green meal, it may also stay at 90%. If you have a piece of cake, it may go down to 83% bright. If you then spend the next 3 hours dancing,

it may go up to 88%. The next morning, being a new day, if you go right back on your plan, the bulb burns bright again at 100%.

One meal or one particular food eaten “off your plan” (I never like the word “cheat”) has never ruined a diet. It is continually eating off the plan and lack of exercise that sabotages even the best diets.

When you get to a plateau, think of it as a landing on the stairway to your goal. And maintenance is a life-long plateau, so a bit of “rehearsal” for maintenance isn’t the worst thing in the world.

- Unknown Author

Tip 8: A Non-Food Focused Life

Integrating an active social life while on your plan can be a challenge. It’s hard for some to drink a shake or soup while friends are eating your favorite foods. Relying on will-power is not an effective strategy. When you deny yourself of a food you really want, you can develop emotional fatigue, eventually wearing down, and giving in to your desire to eat. You may find it easier to avoid tempting foods and restaurants. Instead, you’ll need to create other social venues. Here are some alternatives:

- Meet your friends after dinner at Starbucks. The chocolate and vanilla shakes mix well with coffee and sugar free sweetener.
- Find a walking partner to take regular walks together.

- Meet your friends at the gym, to celebrate your new lifestyle with a friend or spouse.
- Playing card games together is making a revival. Host Poker, Bridge, Mah Jong or Bunko. Serve raw veggies such as celery and broccoli, dipping in salsa instead of dressing.
- Schedule a hike in Sedona. The views are spectacular.
- Go to a movie. (If you have a hard time avoiding popcorn, bring along some celery to crunch instead.)

You wouldn’t worry so much about what other people thought if you realized how seldom they do.

- Eleanor Roosevelt

Tip 9: Urge Surfing

Hunger comes in 2 forms: head (psychological) and body (physical). Most patients, after 3-4 days on a program, have head hunger but not body hunger. Body hunger is the feeling of light head- edness or shakiness we get several hours after our last meal. Head hunger comes without physical symptoms of hunger. It is usually a specific food craving or strong thoughts of food that arise after seeing food on television, passing a drive thru or experiencing an event that used to trigger certain eating behaviors such as eating popcorn at the movies. Of note, growling of the stomach is merely fluid and gas movement, and is also not true hunger. This is a normal part of stomach function.

If you are hungry, first figure out if it is head or body hunger. With either one, first try having 1 bottle of water (make sure you are having at least 64 oz. or more water per day). Cravings or hunger start gradually and build over about 20 minutes and then dissipate. If you can occupy yourself by drinking water or with another activity for about 20 minutes, the urge usually passes. If you are having body hunger and it is mild, discuss this with your physician at your next visit. If it is severe, give the office a call.

Don't dig your grave with your own knife and fork.

- English Proverb

Tip 10: Goals and Strategies

Reaching a weight loss goal doesn't happen by chance. Your ideal weight will not be achieved just by thinking about it or willing it to happen. You have to commit to permanent changes in your life and to making these changes last. Success will require a strategy. Drs. Primack and Ziltzer are very supportive in helping you create a plan that is consistent with who you are and what you are able to achieve.

Goal setting is critical to accomplishing weight loss. It is possible to lose weight without having a goal and strategy. It will be easier to lose the weight and keep it off if you do set a goal. One study showed that setting a goal increased the

chances of reaching your weight goal by 84%.

Goals need to be specific, motivating, achievable, and rewarding. Strategies for weight loss need to be real, easy to evaluate, and revisable if not working. If you are having problems with your weight loss plan (strategy), it is not a fault in you or a lack of will-power. Discuss your concerns with your physician so that we may revise your strategy so that it works for you.

Your goals, minus your doubts, equal your reality

- Ralph Marston

Tip 11: A Sound Nutritional Plan

One of the most important keys to losing weight is to reduce the amount of energy (calories) you eat, while getting all of the essential nutrients your body needs to repair, maintain and function properly. These nutrients can be classified as either macronutrients (protein, fat, carbohydrates, and fiber) or micronutrients (vitamins and minerals). We have included fiber in the list of macronutrients, even though they have no calories. The other macronutrients have calories, and can therefore lead to weight gain.

Micronutrients are present in very small quantities, but are critical for most of the body's functions. Deficiencies in micronu-

trients have varied results. For example, a deficiency in iron leads to anemia, and lack of thiamin (vitamin B1) can lead to congestive heart failure, confusion and eventually death. For the purposes of discussion, we will focus on macronutrients. The important message is that: a calorie is NOT just a calorie. It is important to eat fewer calories, and just as important to have those calories come from the right types of foods. If you eat a diet high in protein and fiber, you'll be much more successful than if you eat a diet high in sugar (carbohydrates).

Macronutrients	Present in:	Function	Signs of deficiency
Protein	Muscle, blood	Repair, build muscles, homeostasis	Weakness, fatigue, muscle wasting
Fat	Fat cells	Enzyme function, hormones, energy needs	Rashes, loss of menstrual cycle, infertility, impotence
Carbohydrates	Liver, muscle	provides immediate energy needs	None
Fiber	Plants	Regulates bowel functions	Constipation

Tip 12: Focus on Protein

A plentiful amount of protein is critical for most of the body's functions. Protein is the main component of muscles and organs. When you separate the blood cells from whole blood, you are left with water and proteins. These proteins carry out the repair functions of the body. Proteins are used to replace dead cells and to grow new ones. Proteins are also contained in the hormones that promote sexual function, and help us respond to physical stressors, as well as fight off infections and remove waste.

Amino acids bound together make up proteins. Some amino acids can be man-

ufactured by the body, but the essential amino acids must come from the food we eat. Therefore, the source of dietary protein must be high in essential amino acids. Animal derived proteins such as whey and casein are high in essential amino acids, and soy based proteins are lower in the essential amino acids. Therefore, you can eat a smaller quantity of animal and milk based proteins and still get the essential amino acids you need.

Proteins make you feel full, with fewer calories than fat.

Tip 13: Understanding Fat

Contrary to popular belief, a small amount of fat is necessary for body function. Good sources of essential fat include ocean fish and canola oil. Failure to provide adequate amounts of these fatty acids can lead to osteoporosis (thin, weak bones), fatigue, and dry skin. Fat is an important component of stress and sex steroids, and therefore, plays a role in our response to stress and normal sexual function.

During prolonged exercise, we utilize fat for energy. This gives us a very large storage supply of energy. Each pound of fat contains 3,500 calories. This pound is enough to keep most of us moving for two days. Fat is an efficient way to carry around the energy we need. We live in an oil (fat) based economy. You would not want to run your car on hay. To get the same amount of energy from hay, your fuel tank would weigh at least 2 ½ times as much.

Tip 14: Focus on Carbohydrates

Sugars (carbohydrates) are used for our immediate energy needs when available. Our liver and muscles are the main storage source of sugar, in the form of glycogen. If we do not get enough sugar from food, our bodies will start drawing from glycogen stores in the liver. It takes a couple of days to deplete our bodies of glycogen. After that, we burn primarily fat for energy.

We do not actually need any carbohydrates in our diet, as long as we eat a plentiful supply of protein. Studies on athletes who had a diet with very little carbohydrates were able to perform just as well after they had a couple of weeks to adapt. We can convert our stores into sugar as our bodies need it. If our diet has an insufficient supply of protein, we will burn muscle, our major storage of

protein. This will decrease our metabolism. (That's a bad thing).

Successful weight managers know how to manage their insulin

When we eat carbohydrates, our pancreas kicks into action by secreting insulin into the blood. The job of insulin is to get the sugar out of the blood vessels (where high levels can lead to blood vessel damage), and into the fat and muscle cells. We only have about 1 ½ teaspoons of sugar in our blood at any given time. If you have more than this, we become diabetic; less than this and we pass out. Think about how hard our bodies have to work to remove all of the sugar from our blood after we eat a cup of pasta!

High carbohydrates lead to hunger, and especially fat storage

Tip 15: Focus on Fiber

Fiber is the plant cell wall present in fruits and vegetables. Our bodies cannot break down fiber. Instead, fiber slowly moves through our intestines, keeping our bowels regular, and giving us a feeling of satiety without calories. While fiber is not considered essential, diets low in fiber usually lead to constipation. Fiber is also present in pill form or powder (Benefiber

and Metamucil) and in Fiber One Cereal. These supplements are helpful when our diet is low in fruits and vegetables. Fiber may also reduce the risk of intestinal cancers, due to toxins removed from the body by fiber. The recommended daily intake of fiber is 30 grams. Fiber is your friend, and like water, it has NO calories.

Tip 16: Going to Class

We are often asked why we stress going to class. "Does it make a difference?" The answer is a resounding yes. Those who attend educational seminars during weight loss both lose more weight each week, and are more likely to keep it off. Studies at weight loss programs demonstrate greater weight loss in those who attend face to face classes. In contrast,

those who attend web based educational programs or self guided books lose less weight. Interestingly, patients who attended class but did not want to attend actually lost more weight!

"Knowledge is Power!"

Tip 17: Proper Shoe Fitting

One of the most important things to do when exercising is to equip yourself with the proper shoes. Properly fit shoes make up for some of the tendencies/inefficiencies that we all have in the way that we walk and run. The properly fit shoe will minimize injury that can result from these inefficiencies. All feet with their accompanying walking/running styles can be broken down into 3 types based on the height of your arch. One of the best ways to figure out the type of foot you have is to use the wet test. You can find a link to this test on our page,

<http://del.icio.us/scottsdaleweightloss>, under "take this simple test to learn your foot type". Another way to have this checked is at a local running store. Here are 2 recommendations:

1. Road Runner Sports

(www.roadrunnersports.com) at Scottsdale Road and Mayo Blvd in Scottsdale. (You can find your shoe type online by using their "shoe dog").

2. The Runner's Den

at 16th Street and Bethany Home in Phoenix.

Tip 18: Active Maintenance

Weight loss requires a specific weight loss plan. Accordingly, maintenance of weight also requires a specific plan. We call the process of keeping your weight off "Active Maintenance." Active maintenance consists of several components:

1. A specific nutritional plan: Important components are to stick with what worked during weight loss, and following that plan 70-80% of the time.

2. Feedback: Weigh yourself regularly, at least 3 times per week. Some people weigh themselves daily. Also, wearing clothes that fit is key. If these clothes are tight, it tells you that you are out of balance. Rather than buying new clothes, make the changes you need to keep the ones you have.

3. A high level of physical activity: Keeping active is the factor that most predicts maintaining your weight. This can include regular walks, or 3 hours per week of any moderately vigorous aerobic activity.

4. A plan to return to the office immediately if you are up by 5 lbs or more. NO GUILT, NO SHAME, NO QUESTIONS ASKED. Don't beat yourself up. Use weight regain as an opportunity to learn.

Living a healthy lifestyle will only deprive you of poor health, lethargy, and fat.

- Jill Johnson

Tip 19: Register for the National Weight Control Registry

After losing 30 pounds or more and keeping it off for a year, we suggest a celebration. The National Weight Control Registry is a compilation of data collected from "the masters of weight loss." These are people who has lost at least 30 pounds, and kept it off for a year. The group is now 6 years over and has lost over 50 lb on average. If you are a "master of weight loss", celebrate by enrolling in the registry. It will help others learn about what works, and what doesn't for weight

maintenance. By the way, the factor that most predicted keeping the weight off is a high level of activity, at least 3 hours weekly of aerobic activity.

We can do anything we want to do if we stick to it long enough.

- Helen Keller

Tip 20: Predicting Regain

So many of our patients are diet experts; they have been on every diet known, and modified them in every way possible. If you have lost weight in the past, you know how distressing it is to see the weight come back on. As it turns out, we can predict when someone is about to regain weight with some degree of certainty. Their history probably looks like this: As someone loses weight, they also increase their activity level. As long as they stay active, their eating habits stay in balance.

A drop in activity level is the most common sign that you are about to regain weight. This can occur due to illness, travel, family stressors such as the death or illness of a family member, or any of life's twists and turns. As soon as you stop exercising, you typically stop paying attention to the eating habits that lead to your weight loss. Following this, you might stop weighing yourself. After all,

who wants to face the scale when you are gaining weight?

This self destructive cycle can be interrupted by getting us involved as early as possible. No matter how much weight you have gained or the reasons behind it, we are here to help you get back on track. Here is one strategy that might help: If you can't exercise due to a life event or stressor, go back to the last diet plan that helped you lose weight. That will lessen the damage of stopping your exercise. Ask yourself what worked for you in the past, and what did not work. You'll be amazed at how some simple planning can avoid the yo-yo diet cycle.

Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.

- Confucius

Tip 21: Learn from Those Who Have Been Successful

You may have heard of the National Weight Control Registry (NWCR), but if not, it is a good way to learn from others that have been successful in weight loss. To be included in the registry, you have to lose 30 pounds and keep it off for a year. The registry started in 1994 and now has over 5000 members.

Registry members have lost an average of 66 lbs and kept it off for 5.5 years. Weight losses have ranged from 30 to 300 lbs. Duration of successful weight loss has ranged from 1 year to 66 years! Some have lost the weight rapidly, while others have lost weight very slowly--over as many as 14 years. 45% of registry participants

lost the weight on their own and the other 55% lost weight with the help of some type of program. 98% of Registry participants report that they modified their food intake in some way to lose weight. 94% also increased their physical activity, with the most frequently reported form of activity being walking.

A few more facts for maintenance:

1. 78% eat breakfast every day.

2. 75% weigh themselves at least once a week.

3. 62% watch less than 10 hours of TV per week.

4. 90% exercise, on average, about 1 hour per day.

To find out more about the registry, visit www.nwcr.ws

Tip 22: Revisiting the Effects of Alcohol

In the recent press, alcohol's beneficial effects have been touted while its detriments have been downplayed. In order to get the best results on your weight loss program you should minimize alcohol.

1. Nutritional Problems:

- There are a few ingredients in wine that have some beneficial effects but for the most part, alcohol does not provide us with any vitamins, minerals or other substances which benefit weight loss or general health.
- In addition, alcohol provides ample empty calories. You must eat less food to compensate for this. A serving of alcohol usually contains between 100 and 150 calories.

2. Medication Interactions:

- The use of alcohol while taking certain weight loss medications (phentermine or tenuate) may weaken the appetite suppressing effect.

- People on very low calorie diets (800 calories) may notice a magnification of the effects of alcohol on their nervous system and be much more sensitive to it.
- Alcohol will break the metabolic benefit of very low calorie diets and reverse the mild ketosis that is established. This will slow both weight loss and fat loss while increasing hunger.

3. Behavioral:

- In addition to stimulating the appetite, alcohol often weakens your resolve to stick to a diet plan. This may lead to overeating or eating off your plan.

Our recommendation is to minimize alcohol while on the plan and while actively losing weight. Many persons choose to fill a wine glass with diet soda and walk around a party feeling just as "social" as those drinking alcohol and don't overtly call attention to themselves.

Tip 23: Planning for a Feast

You have a big family event to go to, or a buffet, and you may be concerned that you are going to over eat. What will they serve? Who will be there? What will everyone think if I don't eat? These unknowns make planning very difficult. Pre-event planning is key in these situations. Know where the event is being held, what is being served, who will attend to better prepare yourself, and if there are any non-food related activities you can focus on. Try "preloading." This term refers to filling yourself up prior to the meal,

resulting in less intake at the meal. Begin with a salad, eating until you are satisfied. Follow this with 8 oz of water, coffee or another non-caloric beverage. If there will be a long lag time between an event and mealtime, consider taking a bar along. Eating a small snack will prevent you from getting overly hungry. By preventing excess hunger, you prevent overeating. When it is time to eat the meal, resist eating bread. Bread (carbs) causes you to be hungrier, resulting in further overeating.

Tip 24: Dealing with Self-Sabotage

"I know what to do, I just can't do it." These are the words we often hear when patients have had struggles with weight in the past. They are also a sign of self-sabotage. When sticking to a plan is difficult, it often helps to try and determine what aspect is giving you the most difficulty. For instance, if you are truly "body" hungry, then even the best intentions of sticking to your diet are often impossible to follow. If this is the case, a discussion with your physician is best to see if one of the multiple appetite suppressants that we use is appropriate for you. If the weight

is not coming off quickly enough for you, make sure you are getting adequate (at least 7 hours) sleep and exercising at an adequate level. When things get hard, it is often easiest to go back to a level of the program that was working for you in the beginning, whether that be full meal replacement or coming back to classes (even if you have completed the series). In any case, we are here to support you in your weight loss program, and the physicians are great in helping you get back on track with your program if you are having difficulties.

Tip 25: What is an Appropriate Serving Size of Carbohydrates?

We have developed a distorted view of what a true serving size should be. This is truer for carbohydrates than for any other food component. Start by dividing your plate in quarters. Half of the plate should be veggies or salad. At least $\frac{1}{4}$ of the plate should be a lean protein (white

meat chicken, lean red meat, fish or shellfish, egg whites/egg substitute, or low fat cheese). Limit the intake of starches to no more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of the plate. That means a serving of pasta, rice, potatoes or bread should be no more than $\frac{1}{2}$ cup.

Tip 26: Why Eat Breakfast?

Skipping breakfast leads to several unfortunate consequences. Delaying the intake of food results in greater caloric intake later in the day. You may become overly hungry by the time you eat your first meal and end up consuming more calories than you normally would. You may also find yourself "grazing" throughout the day, particularly between supper

and bedtime. We have previously discussed the effect of late night eating and its association with weight gain. Skipping meals also results in relative "starvation" and a lower metabolic rate. The body will turn to muscle to provide the essential metabolic needs, reducing muscle mass and dropping the metabolic rate.

Tip 27: Reevaluating your Goals

It is common during the course of any life goal to periodically reevaluate if your original goal(s) are still appropriate. This can energize us to get to the next level. We must know where we are going to successfully get there. We must also know how we are going to get there. Constantly revisiting your plan of action will keep you on track in meeting your ultimate goal. When our goals are unclear, we are likely to deviate, allowing other priorities to get in the way. Conversely, when our goals are clear, we let nothing get in the way. Our goals affect our thinking. Our thinking results in the choices we make each day.

How do you know your goals are unclear? A sure sign is falling off your plan. If you

often find yourself deviating from a plan, take pause. Use this opportunity to decide how important further weight loss is. If you feel strongly that you want to keep continuing to lose weight, you'll be motivated to do so. If you decide that maintaining your current weight is the best course of action, that's OK too. We can provide a plan that will ensure your success. Either way, you'll be a success because you turned your goals into reality.

Life will not go according to plan if you do not have a plan!

- Unknown Author

Tip 28: How to Stick with a Healthy Diet and Exercise Plan

For many people, starting a new diet is much easier than sticking with an old one. But in order to enjoy long-term weight loss success, you need to figure out how to make the same healthy lifestyle choices over and over again—including staying on track with diet and exercise. Find out how to stay motivated once the initial thrill of a new diet and exercise program has started to wear off.

How To Stick With A Healthy Diet and Exercise Plan:

- **Get support:** Everything is more fun when you're doing it with other people. Even if you started your diet alone, it's never too late to seek out support from like-minded people. You might find a group of diet buddies online or partner up with a workout partner to hit the gym.

- **Keep setting new goals:** A combination of short-term and long-term goals is needed to keep most people going. Set weekly or monthly goals that you can celebrate in addition to your long-term goal of reaching a specific weight. As you set your short-term goals, remember to take a moment to reward yourself, and then set new ones!
- **Monitor your progress:** It's hard to stay motivated if you can't tell that your efforts are paying off, and you may be the last person to notice your results. In addition to keeping track of your weight, consider keeping track of your body measurements, body fat percentage, or number of days in a row that you've worked out.

Remember that it's natural to get bored and consider giving up. This isn't a sign that you lack will-power or can't achieve your goals; you just need to plan ahead to prepare for these potential obstacles. With a little support and planning, you can overcome the motivation hump and stick with your diet and exercise goals.

Tip 29: Link Between Sugar and High Blood Pressure

High sugar (carbohydrate) diets are a leading cause of obesity. New research also shows that high sugar intake is associated with elevated blood pressure. Data published in The American Society of Nephrology links diets high in fructose, a common sugar, to hypertension. Individuals who consumed above average amounts of fructose had a 30 percent greater risk of high blood pressure.

What the study does not do is show cause and effect, and clearly this is just the tip of the iceberg in the hotly contested battle over high fructose corn syrup. There are some good reasons why this association may exist:

1. The combination of sugar, salt and fat is particularly addicting. People who eat lots of sugar probably use salt to excess. These associations are well documented in David Kessler's book, "The End of Overeating." Dr. Kessler was a former head of the FDA and spokesperson in the fight against obesity.
2. A large intake of sugar leads to release of inflammatory factors in the blood stream. This can lead to a cascade of events, possibly constriction of blood vessels. Other effects of inflammation are blood clotting and plaque formation in arteries. People are known to

be at increased risk of heart disease when they have elevated CRP levels. CRP is a measure of inflammation in the body.

At Scottsdale Weight Loss Center, we favor a diet high in vegetables, lower sugar (non-tropical) fruits, and lean proteins,

and moderately low in sugar, especially simple sugars. When we show people how to lose weight, they frequently feel less hungry. Our internal studies show a decrease in blood pressure after only modest amounts of weight loss.

Tip 30: Lose Weight and Other Lifestyle Changes That can Boost Good Cholesterol

Having high cholesterol increases your chances of experiencing a heart attack significantly. There are two types of cholesterol - the good and the bad. "Good" cholesterol, also known as HDL cholesterol, keeps your arteries clear of the "bad" cholesterol, also known as LDL cholesterol. With some simple lifestyle changes, you can easily reduce your LDL levels while increasing your HDL levels, and gain long-term health benefits as well.

- **Lose weight:** You can increase your HDL just by losing 10 pounds. If you can achieve a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 25 or lower, you'll have made considerable improvement to your HDL levels.
- **Quit smoking and cut back on alcohol:** Your HDL may jump as high as 4 points just by quitting smoking, and limiting your alcohol consumption to one drink per day for women and two per day for men can increase it by another 4 points.

- **Exercise regularly:** Increase your HDL levels by sticking to a regular routine of 20-30 minutes of moderately intense aerobic exercise.
- **Watch what you eat:** Try to eliminate saturated fats and trans fats. Avoid processed foods and focus on unsaturated fats such as olive oil or flaxseed oil. Simple carbohydrates like cakes and cookies should be avoided completely and replaced with a good source of fiber, like fruits and vegetables, and omega-3 fatty acids, like fish.
- **Take your vitamins and supplements:** Niacin, fibrates, and statins all play an important role in boosting your HDL levels.

Although it may take time to lose weight, starting to make lifestyle changes can help you lower your bad cholesterol and raise your good cholesterol even before you reach an ideal weight.

Tip 31: How to Start a Fitness Routine for Weight Loss

Almost every weight loss expert will tell you that adding physical activity into your life improves your weight loss efforts. Even products that claim to produce miraculous weight loss results suggest adding “a sensible diet and exercise” for best results. But if you’ve never exercised regularly before, figuring out where to start can be overwhelming. Follow these simple steps to get moving towards your weight loss goals:

- 1. Walk:** It’s easy and you already know how to do it. All you need is a comfortable pair of walking shoes to get started. Go outside and walk as quickly as you can for as long as you can. If this means you spend 10 minutes walking around your block, that’s OK. That’s 10 more minutes of physical activity than you did yesterday.
- 2. Walk farther:** After you’ve been walking for several days, you’ll notice that your endurance is improving. Set small goals for yourself to walk a little bit more. If you walked for 10 minutes every day last week, try walking for 12 or 15 minutes this week.

3. Walk faster: You can’t spend all day exercising, no matter how important weight loss is to you. Once you’ve reached about 30 minutes of continuous walking, bump up the intensity of your workout by walking more quickly. Start paying attention to the distance you’ve walked, and focus on covering more ground in the same amount of time.

4. Change it up: Doing the same exercise for weeks on end will get boring. That doesn’t mean you don’t care enough about weight loss or aren’t disciplined enough; it means you’re human. To stay motivated, change up your routine a bit. You might try a new walking route or experiment with a new exercise altogether. Try riding a bike, swimming, or jogging. Expect to make changes to your routine at least every 3 months, if not sooner.

You’re officially exercising! Once you get comfortable with the idea of making fitness a part of your life, continue to look for new ways to be physically active. You might add strength training to your routine, consider taking a class, or join a sports league! The options ahead of you are endless. Just start by taking a walk.

Tip 32: Gaining a Pound a Year Doubles Breast Cancer Risks

A new study from the National Cancer Institute has found that women with a normal body mass index (BMI) at age 20 who gained a pound a year are at twice the risk for post-menopausal breast cancer when compared to women who did not gain weight as they aged. There are many risk factors for breast cancer, including family history, your age when you first menstruated, or the age that you gave birth, but weight gain is a major risk factor. Weight gain accumulates excess body fat, which in turn increases the level of estrogen, a major element in fueling the growth of post-menopausal breast cancer.

It can be frustrating to keep your weight down, especially since your metabolism slows down as you age, but with some effort and planning using the following tips, you can reduce your risk of post-menopausal breast cancer:

- **Reduce your calories and increase your activity.** The simplest way to lose weight is to eat fewer calories and burn more through increased physical activity. One pound of body fat is equivalent to about 3,500 calories, so if you can reduce your calories by 300 a day and burn 200 a day with additional activity, you can lose a pound a week.
- **Build muscle.** Your metabolism will remain high as you age if you build muscle, which burns more calories than fat. Additionally, you begin to shed

muscle after the age of 40, so it's important to maintain your muscle mass as well.

- **Watch out for hormonal birth control.** Many birth control methods are known to cause weight gain in some women. If you're experiencing weight gain when using birth control pills, intrauterine devices, or a shot like Depo-Provera, talk to your doctor about an alternative method.
- **Get quality sleep.** Your risk of heart disease and metabolic syndrome can increase with too little sleep. In addition, your body won't produce enough leptin, a hormone that regulates your hunger drive, and so sleep deprivation can lead to overeating.
- **Eat several small meals a day.** By eating one small meal every three hours, you can control your eating and resist binge eating. This type of approach can also help boost your metabolism and regulate your blood-sugar levels. Limit your meals to 250 to 300 calories each and make sure they have a balance of protein, carbohydrates, and fat.

Tracking your progress can help you see how these small changes make a difference. You don't have to be a slave to your scale, but weighing yourself regularly will help you to keep on track and maintain the healthy weight that you want.

Tip 33: Tips for Taking a Family Walk

Walking has been called the perfect exercise, mainly because it's something that just about anyone can do with little or no training or financial investment. It's a simple way to get yourself in shape. But walking can also be a great way to help your entire family become more physically active and for those of us who may need it, lose weight. Regular walks with the family can improve everyone's health while allowing you to spend more time together. Follow these tips to enhance the walking experience for everyone in the family.

3 Tips for Taking a Family Walk

- **Play "I Spy."** This is a great way to get everyone in the family connected and keep kids interested for the duration of your workout. Make a list of objects to look out for while walking, such as a red mailbox, a blue car, or specific type of plant. You may want to consider where you'll be walking when making the list. Give the list to each member of the family and see who can "spy" the most things on the list during your walk.
- **Designate "Quiet Time."** Walking can help you focus your mind, gain clarity, and generate new ideas. But getting quiet time on a walk with kids can be a challenge. To help, set aside a specific amount of time as "quiet time." Ask a question of the day and set a timer, and tell everyone they have to wait until the end of Quiet Time to answer. This is a great way to teach your kids how to practice quiet thinking.
- **Give everyone a pedometer.** These are inexpensive gadgets used to count the steps you take. Giving one to everyone in the family may encourage a little friendly competition and have your kids looking for excuses to be more active. It can also help you set goals for each walk. For example, you may all decide that you'll keep walking until you've taken 2,000 steps, which is generally equivalent to a mile.

Remember, experts agree that you need to move at a moderate pace for at least 20 minutes to get the most benefit from walking. Using these tips on family walks can make it easier for you to walk quickly enough and for long enough to get the exercise you need.

Tip 34: Choosing Olive Oil

Contrary to old weight loss wisdom, cutting all the fat from your diet is not the best way to get healthy. Instead, you should focus on replacing bad fats with good fats. Bad fats include saturated or trans fats, while unsaturated fats are considered good fats because they can actually improve your health when consumed in moderation.

Olive oil is an excellent choice for a good fat and can be used to replace the saturated and trans fats in butter, partially hydrogenated oils, and other cooking oils. Olive oil contains monounsaturated fats, which can lower your total cholesterol and your “bad” cholesterol levels, helping you avoid heart disease. The Food and

Drug Administration recommends consuming about 2 tablespoons of olive oil a day. However, olive oil, like all fats, does contain a large number of calories. You’ll get the most benefit from olive oil if you use it to replace your use of saturated fats rather than simply adding more fats to your diet.

While all types of olive oil are good for your heart, virgin olive oil and extra virgin olive oils that have become popular recently may provide even more benefit. These are the least processed forms of the oil and have the highest levels of polyphenols, a powerful antioxidant that also can promote heart health.

Tip 35: Nutrition and Healthy Eating

If you’re in a weight loss program and trying to “eat right,” you’ve probably been told to pay attention to the nutrition labels on the foods you eat. But pay attention to what, exactly? A quick glance at a nutrition label reveals a lot of information, including details about calories, fat content, grams, and percentages. What does all of that information mean, and which is most important to pay attention to?

A nutrition label will tell you how many calories are contained in a serving size of food. It will also list the ingredients and

tell you how many grams of fat, protein, and carbohydrates (as well as other micronutrients) are included. Nutrition Facts labels will also list a percentage next to each nutrient. This percentage indicates the “percent of daily value.” If a label indicates that the food has 10% of protein, that means that it contains 10% of the recommended daily protein intake. But, for whom? Daily value percentages are based on a 2,000-calorie diet, which may or may not be comparable to your own daily caloric needs.

Which numbers should you watch?

If you're trying to manage your weight, you probably want to pay attention to the total calories. You may also keep an eye on the number of calories that come from fat so that you can determine what per-

centage of your daily calorie intake comes from fat calories. It's recommended that healthy adults get 20 to 35% of their daily calories from fat, with no more than 10% coming from saturated fats.

Tip 36: Portion Control is the First Step to Weight Loss

According to recent statistics, 26.7% of Americans are obese. One of the reasons, say experts, is that we struggle with eating the right amount of food. Restaurants and fast food chains offer oversized and super-sized entrees that distort our perception of proper portion sizes, and emotional eating can cause us to eat too much before we even realize it. Try these tips for getting portions under control.

- **Never eat straight from the container.** If you're snacking from a bag, it's hard to determine exactly how much you're eating. Instead, put your food into a bowl or plate so that you can actually see your portion size.
- **Let your plate be your guide.** Many nutritionists recommend dictating portion size by strategically dividing up your dinner plate. Fill half your plate with vegetables. Split the remaining half of your plate equally between proteins and carbohydrates.

- **Stop when you're full.** Eating more slowly and deliberately can make it easier to recognize the physical cues that you've had enough to eat. When your stomach signals that you've had enough, put the fork down no matter how much food is left on your plate.
- **Understand why you're eating.** Physical hunger is just one reason why we eat. Many people also eat out of habit, boredom, or to deal with feelings like stress or sadness. If you're not eating because your body is physically hungry, you may be more likely to eat large portions and make poor food choices.

Tip 37: Arizona has Greatest Increase in Childhood Obesity

New statistics on obesity in Arizona are troubling. A study published in Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine showed Arizona had the greatest increase in childhood obesity between 2003 and 2007. What is even more concerning is a near doubling of the rate of obesity in Arizona's girls. According to the study, "The prevalence of obesity varied substantially across the states, with Mississippi having the highest prevalence (21.9%) and Oregon the lowest prevalence (9.6%)." Approximately 31% of Arizona's children are overweight.

What can we do to improve the health of Arizona's children?

Here are my thoughts:

- 1. Increase fruits and vegetables (5 per day).** It's hard to gain weight by over-eating these healthful foods.
- 2. Increased access to physical activity and reduced time spent in front of the TV (no more than 2 hours daily).** Obesity rates increase with screen time. Sending kids outside when they are bored allows them to find active ways to deal with down time. They will naturally increase their activity, and stay away from the fridge. I rarely see kids outside sitting or lying down.
- 3. Eliminate the intake of sweet beverages.** Intake of sweetened beverages increases the intake of calories.