

IF YOU WANT TO LOSE WEIGHT...

Forget dieting.

Stop right now. Eliminate the word “diet” from your vocabulary if you have to. The word “diet” implies a temporary change in our food consumption and patterns. Most diets are based on deprivation of some sort, which usually set us up for a major binge on those foods we have deprived ourselves of in the near future. We often diet in hopes of losing the weight we want while secretly or not so secretly looking forward to the day we can go back to eating our old foods.



So first and most important, get honest with yourself. There is no magic to losing weight. There really is no special food combining formulas to lose weight. The bottom line is that if you take in more calories than you burn, you will not lose weight, and you will continue to gain.

So instead of dieting I suggest from this day forward focusing instead on coming up with a lifelong eating plan for yourself. It doesn't mean never having dessert, or having wine with dinner. It means changing your relationship with food.

Be Portion Conscious.

Has anyone else noticed that the size of muffins and bagels has doubled over the past 20 or so years? If we like the food, we tend to consume that which is placed in front of us even if we've already reached our satiation point. So pay attention to portions. At restaurants eat half and take the rest home. Some sources recommend getting a take-out box and immediately putting half of your dinner away before you even begin to eat. Serve yourself smaller portions on salad size plates to give the appearance a plate-full of food. Eliminate snacking between meals, or if you must snack, make healthy choices. Develop an eating plan that meets your needs, and works for you. Make adjustments as you need to. But remember, changing your eating habits requires commitment. Losing weight won't happen just because you want to lose weight.



Move That Body.

Incorporate exercise into your daily activity. All weight loss and weight management information I am familiar with stresses the importance of combining cutting calories with regular exercise. It is recommended you engage in some form of aerobic activity 3-5 times per week for 30-60 minutes. A 30 minute walk at a moderate pace will burn 150 calories for a person 150 lbs. Weeding the garden also burns the same amount of calories, and some household chores burn even more calories depending on the activity and person. You don't have to join a gym, and if you're short on time make gardening or cleaning the house your exercise.

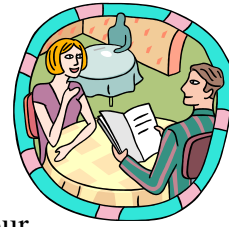


The focus here is on long-term results. Eliminating a 1 oz. bag of potato chips and exercising for 30 minutes daily such as walking moderately will burn 300 calories per day. If you maintain this behavior you will lose approximately 30 lbs. in a year. This may not sound like much, but the point to remember is that even making very small changes in your eating and activity level will yield

significant results. Eating smaller portions of healthy food and exercising on a regular basis can lead to even greater results. You design the plan.

Eat to Live

Do you eat to live, or do you live to eat? For weight management to be successful, we must look at our relationship to food. We have to develop new insights into why we eat, whether it be out of emotional hunger or social situations. Overeating has served an important purpose in helping us manage and get through stressful events in the past, but we need to alternate coping mechanisms. We need to find an alternative to eating that will soothe our emotions. When we find ourselves overeating, we have to ask ourselves, “what is it that I am really hungry for?” If what you really crave is a hug or a quiet intimate talk with a friend, no amount of ice cream or chocolate cake will satisfy you. As Geneen Roth, author of “When Food is Love” has said, “You can never get enough of what you don’t really want.”



So begin to examine your eating behaviors, thoughts and emotions in relation to food. Begin to differentiate physical and emotional hunger, and find alternate ways to address and meet your emotional, social needs. Instead of always meeting a friend for lunch or dinner suggest a hike instead. Get yourself whatever support you need to be successful at weight management whether it be a weight loss buddy, support group, or some counseling or psychotherapy to address emotional issues. Become conscious of your eating and listen to what you are truly hungry for instead.

You know all this. Now do it. No excuses. And if you slip up, forgive yourselves, and go right back to healthy choices and moving that body. As in AA, it’s always one day, and sometimes one moment, at a time.

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