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*A Moment With Dr. Moore,
our PhD Psychologist/
Eating Behaviorist*



Skills and Strategies for Weight Loss Success

At the beginning of a diet, it's common for dieters to start out strong. We keep temptations at bay and remain focused on our goals. We feel immune to those glazed donuts at the office and even the cocktail party after work can't lead us astray! However, despite our best intentions, this "strength" eventually seems to wear off. Before we know it, we're back to our old habits . . . and our old weight.

Research shows that there are a number of thoughts and behaviors that actually account for these "slips" and ultimately, relapse to our old ways. Fortunately, with only two steps, you can keep your early motivation for dieting in tact. First, you must raise your awareness of those thoughts and behaviors that pull you off track. Next, develop a plan to counteract them. Use the research proven tips below to help you achieve success on any diet or lifestyle plan.

- 1) *Get (and stay) motivated.* Before starting any diet, write a list of 15 to 20 reasons why you want to lose weight. Post this list in the pantry, on the refrigerator, or keep it in your purse or wallet. Read this list every single day and add to it as new ideas enter your mind.
- 2) *Ditch spontaneity – Plan and Prepare.* A typical reason for diet failure is a strong preference for spontaneity. Dieters who plan in advance and self-monitor their behavior are more successful than those who don't. Keep a daily calendar. Plan out meals and snacks for the day, then prepare food as needed. See how your behavior matches your plan and adjust as needed. Brainstorm ways to get your behavior in line with your plan.
- 3) *Overcome sabotaging thoughts.* There is an important link between your thoughts and behavior. Dieters have hundreds and hundreds of thoughts that lead them to engage in unhelpful eating behavior. Identify those thoughts that lead you off track and 'talk back!' For example, when you think, "I really want this!" Tell yourself, "What I really want is to reach my goals. This isn't worth the few moments of pleasure it will bring and it's definitely not worth the feelings of guilt and shame that will surely follow!"

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Weight Loss Myth

Restricting calories is the best way to lose weight.

Both cutting back on calories and moving more will help you lose weight and maintain the lean muscle mass needed to boost metabolism. People often believe the diet and exercise myth that they must take drastic measures to lose weight, such as eating less than 900 calories per day, but such diets usually do not provide adequate fuel for the body and may slow metabolism. Drastic measures rarely equal lasting results, so start small and eliminate 100-300 calories consistently from your daily diet, and you will reap the reward.

Doctor's Orders by Kent C. Sasse, M.D., MPH, FACS, Medical Director of iMetabolic

Park farther away.

Park at least an extra two rows away from the entrance to your work. Or the entrance to your gym or grocery store or any other place you routinely visit. It's a win-lose proposition: You win by saving time (because you're not randomly, repeatedly circling the parking lot, trying to get closer) and you lose – pounds.

The key here is sustainability. Two extra rows might not seem like much, and that's a good thing: How hard is it simply to walk that small distance? It's an easy habit to get into. Do the math: Burning an additional 50 calories a day by parking and walking can add up to 18,250 calories over the course of a year. That translates into more than five pounds lost each year, just from one little change.

Helpful Links:

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4) *Ride the craving wave.* Learn to distinguish between physical hunger and psychological cravings. Hunger is what you feel when your stomach is empty, whereas cravings are urges to eat, even if your stomach is full. Practice distracting yourself, getting busy, or doing something fun until the craving passes. Aim only to eat at planned meal and snack times. Recognize that cravings are often important signals to take care of yourself. Listen! You might find that you are craving rest, relaxation, pleasure, or stress management rather than food!

Continue practicing these new skills every day. Don't aim to be perfect. Make progress toward incorporating these strategies into your new lifestyle for long-term success!