



SIZZLING Special

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A moment with Brie A. Moore, PhD, our Eating Behaviorist

6 Tips for Weight Loss Success

We all know that the secret to weight loss isn't really a secret at all: combine healthy eating habits with an active lifestyle. Although its common knowledge that we must burn more calories than we take in, finding and keeping this balance is the biggest challenge. In order to get the most success from your weight loss efforts, employ these tried and true strategies:

1. Make a commitment

Permanent weight loss takes time and effort. It requires focus and commitment. Before you embark on a weight loss program, take time to evaluate your goals. Is this a short term fix to look good for that upcoming vacation, or are you really ready to make a lifestyle change? Commit yourself to a lifestyle make-over. Find support for those issues that may be at the root of any emotional eating. Weight loss can improve your health and well-being, but it can't solve financial problems or marital stress. Moreover, these problems may distract you from your weight loss goals and tax the emotional energy needed to change well-established habits. Ask yourself if you're ready to take on the challenges of serious weight loss. Once your focused on your goals, take personal responsibility. No one but you can make you lose weight. In fact, studies have shown that pressure from others may actually make matters worse! Make sure that this lifestyle change is one that is for you and will bring you greater well-being.

2. Get emotional support

To succeed in losing weight, you have to take responsibility for your own behavior. But that doesn't mean that you have to do everything alone. Seek support when needed from your partner, family and friends. Identify those special people in your life who provide you with the right kind of support when you need it.

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Depression And Weight Loss Surgery—by Dr. Kent C. Sasse, Medical Director, iMetabolic

I saw a patient today who has battled with depression intermittently throughout her life and also struggled with obesity. She wonders if the two are related, but also about how she will manage the depression after her weight loss surgery. Is it still possible to take medications should she need them? Might her depression improve if she undergoes weight loss surgery?

Interestingly, the research on depression and obesity shows it is a two way street: depression leads to more obesity, but obesity itself exacerbates depression. It makes sense, if we think about it. Depressive feelings can lead to overeating and loss of motivation to exercise. Likewise, obesity can lead to feelings of lower self-esteem and lower one's mood.

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

17. Get enough sleep.

Studies show millions of people in this country are suffering from chronic sleep deprivation. Studies also show that sleep deprivation has a direct impact on weight gain (Patel, 2006) and that we eat more and metabolize less with sleep deprivation (Spiegel, 2004).

Human beings need seven to eight hours of sleep a night, and it's become harder and harder to get that. Put together the stress of the job, the hours with the kids, the household duties, the worry about the economy and the escalating price of gas, plus all the electronic ways in which our jobs can go on long past the hours actually spent at the work site, and it's no wonder so many of us aren't sleeping.

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Research also indicates some people do experience improvement in their depression after weight loss surgery.

Similar data exists about non-surgical weight loss. Of course it is hard to separate out which comes first, better feelings of self-esteem and higher motivation that lead to successful weight loss or some improvements in weight, leading to better body image and some improvement in mood. Ultimately, this chicken and egg question may be difficult to answer, and the most important advice is to seize the day and to work very hard on both problems. By this, I mean that if you struggle with depressed mood then seek help immediately including psychological counseling and visiting with health professionals who may offer effective antidepressant medications and recommend mood elevating activities like exercise. Likewise, if you are overweight or obese, don't let another day go by without working on this problem too. Seek professional help. Follow the strategies outlined here and in my books and you will benefit with lower weight and an improved mood.

For my patient today, I also let her know that antidepressant medications can be taken and absorbed after Roux-en-Y gastric bypass surgery. We do believe it is best to change from any extending release formulations (for example Effexor XR) to the standard release formulations that usually must be taken two to three times a day rather than only once a day.

You may find it hard to turn off your thoughts and fall asleep, or you may find yourself waking up after a few hours unable to return to sleep. Depression and stress can both cause you to wake during the night and stay awake. If this is what's keeping you from getting your Zs you may be able to solve the problem with a visit to your doctor, or you may look to a more complicated answer involving a diagnostic sleep study or counseling.

There are also physical reasons you may not be sleeping well. Chronic pain can interrupt sleep. Many people who are overweight suffer from a medical sleep disturbance such as sleep apnea. If you know that you snore or anyone has ever told you that you snore (and people are often likely to tell you the minute your snoring wakes them) you may have sleep apnea. Another symptom is a temporary pause in breathing. Stopping breathing or ongoing snoring are both major signs that you have sleep apnea that needs to be treated (Shamsuzzaman, 2003).

Sleep deprivation means more than just being groggy in the morning. Along with the actual physical stresses to the body, sleep deprivation hurts your chances of losing weight. And just as importantly, losing weight will help you sleep better. Talk to your doctor. Ask about sleep studies and potential psychological or stress-related causes to your sleep impairment. If you live with someone who can witness your sleep habits, find out if that person has noticed anything unusual. Get professional help if you need it – it's important.

6 Tips for Successful Weight Loss Continued—Dr. Moore

Some people are great cheerleaders and will encourage you when you're feeling down. Some people provide great instrumental support and are your problem-solvers. Others are great at just providing a caring ear when you're feeling overwhelmed. It's not uncommon that one person can't provide all of this support for you. Find a workout partner and surround yourself with others who share your priority to develop a healthier lifestyle.

3. Set a realistic goal

When you're considering what to expect from your new eating and exercise plan, be realistic. Over the long term, it's best to aim for losing 1 to 2 pounds a week, although initially you might lose weight more quickly if you make significant changes — just be sure the changes are health supporting. To lose 1 to 2 pounds a week, you need to burn 500 to 1,000 calories more than you consume each day, through a low-calorie diet and regular exercise. When you're setting goals, think about process and outcome. "Exercise regularly" is an example of a process goal, while "Lose 30 pounds" is an example of an outcome goal. You should establish process goals because changing your habits is the key to weight loss and is essential to reaching your desired outcomes. Make sure that your goals are SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and trackable. An example of a SMART goal is aiming to walk for 30 minutes a day, five days a week, and logging your results.

4. Enjoy healthier foods

Just because you are decreasing your total calorie intake, this doesn't mean that food has to be bland and boring. Healthy foods can taste good, provide satisfaction, and even be easy to prepare. Increasing fresh foods, including seasonal fruits and vegetables, is a great way to introduce healthy variety into your diet. Try fresh berries for dessert. Stick with high fiber foods and whole grains to curb your appetite and stay full longer. Strive for variety to help you achieve your goals without giving up taste or nutrition.

5. Get active, stay active

Dieting alone can help you lose weight. Cutting 500 calories from your daily diet can help you lose about a pound a week: 3,500 calories equals 1 pound of fat. But add a 45- to 60-minute brisk walk four days a week, and you can double your rate of weight loss. You know that exercise burns calories. How many calories you burn depends on how often, how long, and how intense your exercise is. One of the best ways to lose body fat is through steady aerobic exercise — such as walking — for more than 30 minutes most days of the week. Even though regularly scheduled aerobic exercise is best for losing fat, any extra movement helps burn calories. Lifestyle activities may be easier to fit into your day. Think about ways you can increase your physical activity throughout the day. For example, make several trips up and down stairs instead of using the elevator, or park at the far end of the lot. Don't forget the other benefits of exercise as well. It can be a great opportunity to lift your mood, socialize with others, and develop a sense of accomplishment!

6. Change your lifestyle

It's not enough to eat healthy foods and exercise for only a few weeks or even months. You have to make them part of your lifestyle. Lifestyle changes start with taking an honest look at your eating habits and daily routine. After evaluating your personal challenges to weight loss, try working out a strategy to gradually change habits and attitudes that have sabotaged your past efforts. It's not enough just to recognize your challenges — you have to plan for how you'll deal with them if you're going to succeed in losing weight once and for all. Just like other important areas of life, develop an action plan to overcome obstacles and reach your goals. You likely will have an occasional setback. But instead of giving up entirely, simply start fresh at the next meal. Practice turning your road blocks into stepping stones. Evaluate what happened and develop a plan for handling the situation more effectively next time. Watch out for “what the heck” thinking and remember the additive nature of calories. There's no point at which getting back on track wouldn't be helpful. Remember that you're planning to change your life. It won't happen all at once, but stick to your healthy lifestyle and the results will be worth it!

Adapted from the Mayo Clinic