

Maintaining Weight Loss

You've done the work, put in time, made the changes, reached your goal weight and improved your quality of life. You should be proud of yourself! Have you been here before and then slipped back into unhealthy habits again and gained the weight back? If so, you're not alone. Many people work hard to lose weight, but end up where they started. Here are some tips to help keep the weight off...for **GOOD**:

Eat breakfast.

Studies show that those who eat breakfast tend to be healthier overall and maintain weight loss. One study looked at people who maintained a 30-pound weight loss for at least one year and found that more than 75% of those people reported eating breakfast every day. Having breakfast sets a healthy tone for the day. It prevents you from becoming overly hungry, overeating later in the day, and also kick-starts your metabolism.

Get back to the basics.

- Remember the fundamental rules of healthy eating. Base your diet on whole grains, lean protein, fruits and vegetables, and heart-healthy fats. Avoid refined carbohydrates and processed foods. Remember to stay hydrated and include a source of protein and fiber at each meal as they help you feel full after eating. It may also help to track food intake as a reminder of what you're actually eating. Try using a food journal or meal tracking app to stay aware and prevent mindless eating.

Keep track.

- Having a food diary or using a tracking app is a great way to help you stay on track with achieving energy balance. Tracking once a day or even just a couple days a week can help keep you accountable and figure out areas of your diet that need improvement.

Get lifting!

Lifting weights or practicing weight resistance exercises may prevent loss of muscle. Maintaining muscle mass helps keep your resting metabolic rate elevated, meaning you burn more calories when resting.

Plan for pitfalls.

If the holidays are right around the corner or you have a vacation coming up, make a plan! These types of events make healthy eating challenging. Think of ways to celebrate with items besides food. Refer to the Holiday Tips handout for other ideas.

Rest up.

Getting enough sleep will help keep your energy levels up, so it's easier for you to be physically active. Being well rested also prevents you from reaching for caffeine, sugar and refined carbohydrates for an instant energy rush.

Hold yourself accountable.

Share your progress and goals with a friend, co-worker or family member. Pick a person you know will help motivate, support and encourage you. Have a friendly competition with someone, such as who takes the most steps per day or who has the most active minutes in a work week.

Don't lose sight of your "why".

- Remember your reason for starting a weight-loss journey. Visualize success and keep it on top of your mind for motivation.

Avoid getting bored.

People can get bored of their routine — and this can cause them to fall off track. Keep challenging yourself to try something new, whether it's a new physical activity or a new recipe.

Check in with the scale!

- Weighing yourself daily or even weekly is not always ideal for people long term. However, it may be a good idea to step on the scale once in a while to keep your eye on your weight. When we get comfortable in a routine, sometimes we can gain (or lose) weight without even realizing it.

Continue to be proud of yourself!

- Don't forget about the accomplishments you've made along the way. Allow yourself to sometimes think about the "old you" and the progress you've made. You should acknowledge that you feel better, healthier and happier — and remind yourself that you don't want to go back to how you felt before you lost the weight.

Don't forget about your dietitian!

Schedule a follow-up with your registered dietitian. Think of your dietitian as another layer of support, motivation and encouragement for you to stay on track. They can help you adjust your calorie level and fine-tune your goals and help you create new ones. Sometimes even just a minor adjustment in your routine can have a big impact!