

Tips for Managing Your Weight

Weight Management is a challenge for many people. If you are trying to lose weight, you will increase your chance of success if you understand why you want to lose weight and how you will need to change your lifestyle and attitude to do so.

Why do I want to lose weight?

People are motivated to lose weight to improve their self-esteem, increase their energy levels, improve their current health, decrease future health problems, or for other personal reasons. Identifying your level of motivation and how important your reasons are to you will improve your chances of achieving your weight-loss goals.

What will I need to change to lose weight?

Successful weight management usually involves a combination of increased physical activity *and* healthier eating habits. These two changes work more effectively when combined. The equation for maintaining your weight is simple: **Calories In = Calories Out**. If you want to maintain your weight, you need to keep these balanced. If you want to lose weight, you need to use more calories than you are taking in. A simple way of applying this principle is the “**200 strategy**.” You can decrease your daily calorie “total” by 200 if you:

- Increase the amount of exercise you do to burn off an extra 100 calories *and*
- Eat 100 calories less than usual (skip 1 cookie, eat a smaller portion of a food at one meal)

Studies have shown that people using this approach can lose about 21 pounds a year by making this one, small lifestyle change.

Tips for Increasing Your Physical Activity:

- Park further away from your destination or walk short distances instead of driving.
- Whenever possible, take the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator.
- Do something you have enjoyed in the past: riding a bike, swimming, dancing or gardening.
- Do your normal chores at a more vigorous pace (put on fast music to get you moving).
- Join a team sport, an exercise class, or exercise with a buddy at a set time.
- Get a dog to exercise with, or walk a friend’s or neighbor’s dog.

Tips for Healthier Eating:

- Do not skip meals, especially breakfast, which jump starts your calorie-burning process.
- Pack a healthy lunch instead of eating out.
- Use small plates so your portion size looks bigger.
- Instead of packaged snacks eat fruits and vegetables, aiming for 5 servings or more each day.
- Drink water in place of high-calorie fruit juices or sugar-filled sodas.
- Eat fish or skinless white meat poultry instead of red meats or processed deli-meats.

Start by trying one of the suggestions above for a week. Choose a change you think you can easily incorporate in your daily routine and add others as you feel you are ready.

Is this the best time for me to change?

To successfully lose weight and keep it off, you will need to make changes in your life. This requires taking time and energy to focus on you. If you are distracted by other concerns, you may not be ready to commit yourself to your weight loss plan. If you feel concerned about one or more area listed below, take a moment to write down your concern:

Family _____

Health _____

Job _____

Friends _____

Something Else _____

If any of these could get in the way of maintaining your planned changes you might chose to focus on solving the problem first and commit to weight management at another time. Sometimes exercising or improving your eating habits can also *help* you to more effectively tackle other life problems.

What barriers might get in the way of the changes I'm planning?

Sometimes changing eating or exercise habits can be difficult to manage and maintain. Once you've identified one or two changes you plan to start, it helps to write them down and think about possible barriers to your success. Planning ahead for possible "surprises" can make it easier to avoid them. Here's an example:

Planned Change	Possible Barrier	Plan to Overcome Barrier
I will bring a healthy lunch to work.	I forgot my lunch so I decide to buy fast food instead.	I will keep a can of soup in my desk or a frozen meal in the freezer at work to microwave if I forget.
I will walk for 30 minutes on 3 days each week.	Winter brings rain and cold weather, so outdoor walks are less appealing.	I will buy a better umbrella and decide to walk anyway or find an indoor place to walk, like the mall.

Now you try it! Start with just one or two small goals and add more lines on a separate piece of paper if you need them:

Planned Change	Possible Barrier	Plan to Overcome Barrier

Am I confident that I can do this?

To successfully lose weight and keep it off, you need to believe that you can! If you **believe** that you can make the changes you need to achieve your weight loss goals, you will succeed. Using the number scale below rate your confidence that you will succeed by marking the number from 1-10 that best fits what you believe (1= little/no confidence, 10=totally confident).



If you rated yourself at a **7 or higher**, you are probably ready to successfully make your planned changes toward your weight-management goals. If you have rated yourself below a 7, you may want to re-evaluate your goals and aim for a smaller change toward weight management. Go back to your goals and pick one or more that would be easier for you to accomplish right now. Then rate your chances of success again. Continue to modify your plan and goals until you can honestly rate yourself at a 7 or higher in terms of your level of confidence.

Now that I am ready to start, how can I feel supported along the way?

Once you are sure you are ready to start (or restart!) a weight management program here are some ideas for additional sources of support:

- Visit your healthcare provider if you feel you have health issues which may pose special dietary or exercise restrictions.
- Talk with friends and family members about your plan and ask for their support.
- Consider setting up a support system with other people who are trying to lose weight.
- Join a group dedicated to helping people achieve their weight management goals and offer support to help you get through challenges. Today, many programs offer online programs in addition to in-person sessions, so you can make them work with your schedule.

Resources

See a complete list of resources and learn more from our online **Nutrition and Weight Management Health Center** at www.HillPhysicians.com/YourHealth.

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