

# Weight maintenance: Keep the weight off permanently

Even if you've lost and gained before, this time can be different. Make weight loss last with these tips for long-term weight maintenance.

You did it. You've taken off the pounds you've been battling for years, or at least a good many of them. You're delighted with the results — you have more energy, your cholesterol is down and so is your blood pressure — and you're justifiably proud of yourself. But at the back of your mind is a nagging fear: "What if I gain it all back?"

Weight maintenance is much like weight loss. The principals are essentially the same: eat healthy foods and exercise regularly. And like weight loss, weight maintenance requires a long-term commitment. Indeed, the key to successful weight maintenance is permanent lifestyle changes.

## Assess your goals and motivation

How you approached weight loss — both your commitment and your plan — goes a long way toward keeping you on the road to success. First, take a look at your motivation. What prompted you to lose weight? If you make a long-term commitment to your health and well-being, rather than losing pounds for a special event, you're already ahead of the game.

In general, focusing on health rather than appearance is a better approach in terms of long-term success, especially if you pay attention to the many ways you feel better as you drop pounds. Also, focusing on the process of lifestyle change rather than the end result is important. Losing just 5 percent to 10 percent of your body weight can reap big health rewards in terms of lower blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar levels and risk of joint problems, such as osteoarthritis. As an added bonus, it can improve your energy level and self-esteem and ease daily aches and pains.

## Successful weight-maintenance strategies

Once you've lost the weight, you can't stop your efforts. Weight maintenance requires daily exercise, a healthy menu, a long-term commitment and constant vigilance. The following habits are essential to weight maintenance:

- **Continue your exercise program.** One of the most important things you can do for weight maintenance is to continue a vigorous exercise program. Studies suggest that it takes 30 to 60 minutes of moderately intense physical activity daily to maintain weight loss. Moderately intense physical activities include fast walking and swimming.
- **Enjoy healthy meals and snacks.** Focus on low-calorie, nutrient-dense foods, such as fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Keep saturated fat low and limit sweets and alcohol. Remember that no one food offers all the nutrients you need. Choose a variety of foods throughout the day. It's not out of the question to eat and enjoy small amounts of high-fat, high-calorie foods on occasion. But the main thing is that you choose foods that promote weight maintenance and good health more often than you choose foods that don't.
- **Know and avoid your food traps that cause you to eat.** Know which situations can trigger out-of-control eating for you. The best way to identify food traps and emotionally triggered eating is to keep a journal. For as long as you find it helpful, write down what you eat, how much you eat, when you eat, how you're feeling and how hungry you are. After a while, you should see some patterns emerge. Once you know these patterns and triggers, you can plan ahead and develop a strategy for how you'll handle these types of situations. This will help you understand and stay in control of your eating behaviors.
- **Monitor your weight regularly.** People who weigh themselves at least once a week are more successful in keeping off the pounds. Monitoring your weight can tell you whether your efforts are working and can help you detect small weight gains before they become larger.
- **Be consistent.** Sticking to your healthy-weight plan during the week, on the weekends, and amidst vacation and holidays increases your chances of long-term success.
- **Create a support network.** Getting support for your efforts, whether through a friend, family member, trained professional or group of fellow travelers on the same path, can ultimately mean the difference between success and failure.

## **The best-laid plan**

If you really want to lose weight and keep it off, the best approach is to focus on lifestyle changes and develop an eating plan that's enjoyable, yet healthy and low in calories. This approach results in weight loss that you can live with — that is, that you can maintain over a long period of time. The good news is that weight maintenance gets easier every time. After two to five years, the odds of keeping the weight off increase greatly. Achieving and staying at a healthy weight does take planning and effort, but the rewards are great.

## Final Quiz

- 1) Name three benefits of consuming soy protein.
  - A)
  - B)
  - C)
- 2) To lose one pound per week you need to reduce your calories by \_\_\_\_\_ calories per day.
- 3) Name 3 things that can assist your metabolism?
  - A)
  - B)
  - C)
- 4) Name 3 things that can help you control portions.
  - A)
  - B)
  - C)
- 5) Which foods are considered high fiber foods:  
Peas, lima beans, chocolate, broccoli, soda, white bread, red meat, whole wheat bread
- 6) T or F, cleansing your body is a bad idea.
- 7) Is it better to order Premium Chicken Breast Strip meal or Grilled chicken without mayo?
- 8) T or F, junk sugars include all refined sugars?
- 9) In order to commit to an exercise program, you should:  
Circle correct answers  
Commit to a specific schedule, slack off on weekends, keep it to yourself, make working out a high priority, don't beat yourself up.
- 10) T or F, The following are risk factors that can not be changed concerning heart disease:  
Increasing age, gender and heredity
- 11) The most widely used drugs are those to lower \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
- 12) Successful weight maintenance strategies include \_\_\_\_\_.

13) What does the FITT principal of exercise stand for?

14) Please list three things you most liked about this challenge.

1.

2.

3.

15) Please list three things you have changed concerning your eating/nutritional habits

1.

2.

3.