

How to maintain your weight after dieting

If only you had a penny every time you heard the *'make a lifestyle change'* mojo. It must be one the most used phrases in recent weight loss times and its almost used as to say you do this and all your problems will be solved. Well I wouldn't go that far but there is a reason behind its popularity. To put it blandly it is your eating and lifestyle habits which make you put on weight. You can diet but the moment you go **back** to your old eating habits then the old pounds will come back as well. Make **small lifestyle changes** which will last forever. You don't have to change your whole life, unless you want to obviously, but you can add a few small changes which can make a big difference.

Stop dieting

The problem about maintaining the weight is in the whole 'dieting' concept. You follow a weight loss 'diet'/'plan'/'regime' (etc) for 'x' amount of time and then you stop, and then what?

Yes if you look above you need to make lifestyle changes but does that mean 'dieting' for the rest of your life? Let's take it from the start.

Most weight loss diets tend to be more specific and are for a limited amount of time. Use such diets to get to a weight loss routine or to kick start your plan but don't depend on them.

Escape the 'diet' and adapt that into an everyday habitual eating which will still promote weight loss and weight management.

Example adaptations:

Cut down your portions and consume fewer calories

*Introduce greens and vegetables and reduce chips and breads
(refined carbs)*

Adopt some exercise in your week

Stop deep frying and roast or steam instead

And the list can go on and on.

You don't have to completely change your whole eating and that is the trick in some ways. Once you have reached your weight loss goal it could be as simple as eating same foods but more calories.

Don't binge

So another bonus here for not 'dieting' as such is that you don't have to **say goodbye to junk food**. Let's be honest, even the skinny people like to have a takeaway, or a burger or a desert, even if they swear by their lettuce.

So why not have a take away or a chocolate once every so often, or once a week? What is the secret? Don't binge eat; you don't have to do the 'man v food' challenge on the take away night and consume all the weekly calorie allowance in one sitting.

Think about it this way, you can have it again next week not next year so it's ok. At the same time don't make junk food the 'treat' food. It is not a reward, or a medal for your hard work it is just food.

If you start giving food a special role like a reward then you are creating 'food' habits and perceptions which then you are struggling to break.

If you believe that the deep fried chicken covered with triple cheese and chips and in a bun (an imaginary dish for example) is your reward for doing well then this automatically becomes something special which then you have to convince yourself that you must not eat all the time, so then it feels like you punishing yourself.

Don't obsess

You have been a size 14, 16, 20 etc for most of your life. Maybe you've been bullied or just admired the 'pretty' clothes from afar, never got a date with the hot boys/girls and so on. Now though you are a winner, you lost weight, joined the gym, possibly did some plastic surgery and you are sitting on the other side.

You want to lose more weight, you weigh yourself every day, you are like a maniac with **calorie counting** and before you know it your stressed out self will have enough and explode. You can sustain the weight by keeping to some healthy habits and still enjoy life.

Do weight yourself once a month just to keep in touch with your weight and if you notice a big difference (not a couple of lbs!) then be slightly strict for a couple of weeks. Obsession will only make you hate weight loss and go mad.

Exercise

Just to make it clear, exercise alone is not the answer to weight issues and just because you exercise it doesn't give you the green light for eating just about everything under the sun (in one sitting).

Yes **it will help** a lot as it will increase your muscle mass and therefore your metabolism etc. However, it has its limitations and also depending on how you exercise it may actually lead to the opposite results. If you do follow some good exercise principles you will gain both health and weight related benefits. Exercise can contribute in a number of ways which can all help in maintaining the weight loss.

Apart from increasing your metabolism and the calories you use daily, it can boost your confidence, help improve psychological health, increase your social life etc. Don't forget if you are happy you are more likely to stick with it. Sometime these things are more important than calorie counting in losing and maintaining weight.

Be realistic

To be truthful here sometimes going for a large size to a smaller size can come with problems. Being overweight/obese since a young age and maybe for a few years can have an impact on the body and the works of it such metabolism.

It doesn't mean that dramatic weight loss can't happen or sustaining the weight can't happen either. However, it may be hard and maybe not always within reality. Your body may be struggling to get used to its new weight and eating habits, or there may be metabolic issues which have been developed after years of weight gain.

Be realistic with yourself and don't despair or punish yourself. It may be a matter of getting more of professional help such as from a dietician, or your physician or even a support group. Also what is possible for one person it may not be possible for someone else.

Going from a size 24 to a size 14 it may be what your body can happily do and sustain it rather than a size 8.

Motivators

Why did you lose the weight, what got you through the weight loss, what **motivated you** to start and finish it? Whatever your motivator was is it important to you? Then write it down and stick it in your kitchen wall (or any other wall in your house).

It may be that you lost weight for your health and on the process you got lost with the excitement of buying new clothes or having a good time partying, or just being fed up with it all. Yea ok you got here but you want to bin all 'diet' books now.

Keep reminding yourself what was so important and why you worked hard to make the changes in your life.

Love yourself

If you had the most beautiful and rare diamond in the world would you spend the time to polish it, keep it safe, insure it maybe and show it off on special occasions? You wouldn't wear it for gardening nor to wash the dishes, scratch it crack it and then chuck it away in the corner of your bedroom, would you? Ok some people may do but overall the answer would be 'no'.

A diamond is just a material thing so thing that your body is even more priceless than a diamond! Regardless of your shape or weight don't you want the best for that body, polish it, and keep it safe and so on?

Basically it's not about being skinny or overweight, it's about being happy and healthy and loving whatever it is you have, because if you love what you have you will look after it and you will want the best for it. The rest will fall into place.