

Rejane's Blog

OCTOBER 2019

10 Tips for Successful Weight Loss

Weight loss and weight maintenance are really two sides of the same coin. In reality the habits and changes you make to drop those kilos are the same ones that will help you maintain your weight loss.

So how do you know when your weight loss is successful? Maintenance..... if you maintain the goal weight you have reached, then it is successful.

If you ask people who have successfully lost weight how they did it, they'll often say that losing weight is the easy part—but keeping it off is a lot tougher. Sometimes you're so focused on weight loss that you're paying more attention to the end results—like what the scale says or how your jeans fit—than you are on establishing new habits. But once you've reached your goal, it's easy for those old habits to sneak back up on you.

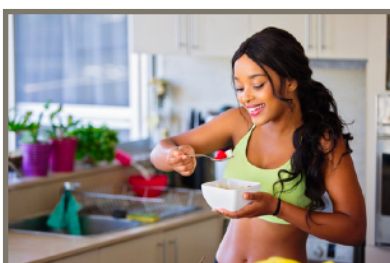
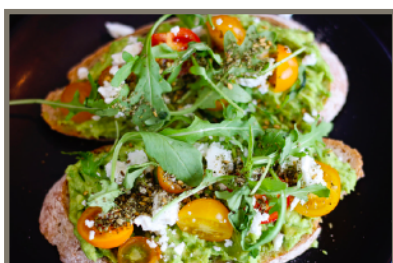
Some people are more successful at losing weight than others. Many people set unrealistic goals or try to lose weight too quickly, and this can undermine dieting efforts in no time. Drastic changes, even if they lead to short term weight loss, are hard to sustain. And dieters then convince themselves that they don't have what it takes to win the battle of the bulge.

Instead, it helps to think more about replacing old habits with new ones and shifting attention away from the end results. In other words, pay more attention to the journey rather than the destination. As new behaviours become established and take hold, the weight will usually take care of itself.

We've learned a lot from people who have successfully lost weight and maintained it through two studies. In Germany, the Lean Habits Study¹ is following about 7000 successful weight losers. And in the US, more than 4000 people are enrolled in the National Weight Control Registry². Participants in these studies say that the best weight loss strategy involves establishing new behaviours, rather than relying on drastic or unrealistic diet and exercise plans.

1 Westenhoefer J, et al. Int J Obes Relat Metab Disord. 2004 28(2):334-5.

2 Wing R, Phelan S. Am J Clin Nutr 2005 82:222-5S.



Top 10 Weight Loss Strategies of Successful 'Losers'

1. They get to know themselves really well

One key to success is learning how to manage your own high risk situations, such as eating when you're stressed or cleaning your plate out of habit rather than hunger. Successful weight losers are adaptable and plan ahead. They know what situations might get them into trouble and have a backup plan for dealing with them. They learnt to read the signals their bodies were giving them and were also more prepared in daily schedule so as not to get caught out. Knowing your trigger foods plays a huge part in eating only what you plan, being truly successful.

2. They get a lot of exercise

On average, the National Weight Control Registry enrollees burn about 2000 calories per week through exercise. That's a lot. They get about 60-90 minutes of moderate to high-intensity exercise daily. The most popular exercise is walking, and they average 4 klms a day. Don't freak out and think that is what you have to do, research has found a regular 30 minutes of exercise daily incorporating resistance exercise with cardio is a great start to get the ball (or weight) rolling.

3. They set goals and monitor their behaviour

Setting small daily goals—ones that you can measure and then tick off as goals achieved and high five yourself, like how many minutes you will walk, what food choice changes you will make this week, or how many squats you will do—are helpful because you can track whether or not you meet these goals. Successful weight losers keep track of how much exercise they get, and they keep food journals. Sometimes they use a food log to plan meals ahead of time. These self-monitoring strategies are critical and provide much needed feedback on behaviour changes.

4. They have regular meal patterns and frequency

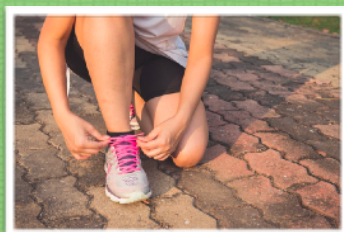
Many people get in trouble with their weight because their eating patterns are so disorganised. Successful weight losers report that eating at regular intervals and snacking only when they're hungry or to avoid long periods of time between meals are keys to success. Skipping meals usually backfires. And having routine meal times means that you don't go long stretches without food, which often leads to excessive snacking or larger meals later on.

5. They eat a low-fat, nutrient dense diet

No surprises here, but a high-quality diet—one with plenty of protein, fruits, vegetables and whole grains—is what keeps people satisfied. The fruits, veggies and whole grains are bulky and filling containing fibre and proteins, but their calorie cost is relatively low. Adequate protein is key, since protein is highly satisfying and will keep hunger at bay between meals.

6. They practice portion control

By learning what size portion you need to eat to feel 'not hungry any more'—as opposed to feeling 'stuffed'—you can trim your food intake significantly. Portion control strategies include using smaller plates, serving your food in the kitchen (rather than having serving dishes at the table), and using



*My goal is not to be better than anyone else,
but to be better than I use to be*

Wayne Dyer

meal replacements such as protein shakes, or frozen meals. Learning and implementing the 'eating to 80%' rule along with 'mindful eating' strategy play a large part in successful portion control

7. They practice stress management

Food is so often used as a comfort when we're stressed, but we usually feel guilty afterwards which just increases the stress and keeps the cycle going. Successful weight losers have learned to find other ways to reduce their stress and they learn what triggers their stress. They exercise, call a friend, or practice some meditation or deep breathing.

8. They had an attitude adjustment

Many people who have successfully lost weight say that they had to change their thinking about dieting and weight loss. Some felt it was 'in their genes' to be fat, or that they couldn't lose weight because they'd never been successful in the past. Eventually, they faced the problem head on, recognising that weight loss and weight maintenance success would come through a series of small steps and a lifelong commitment to a healthy lifestyle.

9. They adopted a plan, and they stayed with it

Once you have an established routine of how you generally eat and how frequently you exercise, learn to stick with this routine day in and day out. People who have lost weight and are successful in maintaining that weight loss do this—even on holidays or when they go to restaurants. Many dine out less often, because they prefer having more control over what they eat by preparing more meals at home.

10. They have learned to control their environment

Successful weight losers learn how to control situations that are most likely to get them into trouble. The foods that are available in the refrigerator or cupboard at home, in restaurants, at the workplace or in the grocery store are in environments that can be controlled. To gain control over the food environment, keep 'safe' foods in the house, choose restaurants where you know you can get the healthy foods that you want, bring appropriate foods to work, and prepare a shopping list before you go to the supermarket.

Credits to Susan Bowerman, M.S., RD, CSSD, CSOWM, FAND – Senior Director, Worldwide Nutrition Education and Training



All of these strategies plus much more are part of my group online coaching programs, if you would like a sample of more, I invite you to join my **Free Five Days 'Think to Shrink' Online Challenge**

Free Five Days - 'Think to Shrink' Online Challenge
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