

Weight Loss Tips for Your Long-Term Success



By
Alissa
C.
Robertson

If you have managed to lose weight and have successfully accomplished your health and wellness goals, or you're on your way to doing so, this article is for you.

It has been hard work to develop better lifestyle habits, but you've persevered. You feel so much better than the first day you began your weight loss journey; you have more energy, and you're fitting into the clothes you haven't worn in years. You understand the importance of reducing belly fat to prevent heart disease, diabetes, stroke, and cancer, and you want your hard work to last a lifetime. The only problem is that you fear the inevitability that, at some point, you'll have the urge to eat the donut at work or stop at McDonalds for a super-sized fry. You begin to wonder how you're going to be able to keep the weight off permanently.



Starting a new diet and watching the scale drop each week can be exciting, and certainly provides the initial encouragement and motivation to keep up with your weight loss program. Once you reach your goal, however, the excitement fades and the ongoing temptation of junk food is enough to make you stray from a healthy lifestyle.

You're not alone. Research from the Penn State College of Medicine finds that only 1 in 6 people who have been overweight or obese are able to maintain their weight loss. Sustainable weight loss can be a very complicated process – especially if you're in the "diet mode" mentality, as I call it. Living a healthy lifestyle is not simply about making healthy food choices and engaging in regular physical activity; it is also important to control confounding factors such as stress, mood, and lifestyle changes which can cause the pounds to reappear.

Attitude is Key to Permanent Weight Loss

When excess weight is lost too quickly, our innate survival mechanism takes control of our subconscious mind in an attempt to replace stored fat. This is why slow and steady weight loss is a more realistic and safer way to lose weight for good. While we will no doubt have challenges along the way, we do have the power of mind and attitude which can help us overcome the urge to fall back into old habits. Here are a few key tips to help you keep the weight off for good:

Tip 1: Don't Skip Meals

Skipping meals is the biggest mistake people make when trying to maintain lost weight. The thought is that they'll avoid the calories, and maybe even drop a few more pounds. Our

metabolism is quite sophisticated, and will force you to make up the difference and then some through between meal snacking. Long periods of time without eating slow our metabolism down, increases food cravings – especially for carbohydrates and sweets, and will cause you to overeat at your next meal. Plan to eat every 3 hours or so, which will equate to approximately 5 small well- balanced meals each day to keep your metabolism burning efficiently, while reducing the opportunity for a calorie packed junk food splurge.



Weight yourself once a week, but don't obsess over the scale.

Tip 2: Weigh Yourself Weekly and Use Clothing as Your Check System

Weigh yourself only once per week on the same day and time, and keep track of the results in a journal. This creates an important awareness of your current weight and allows for adjustments if you have strayed from your healthy habits. Avoid weighing yourself more than once per week, as you don't want to become obsessive about your weight. Stepping on the scale is simply a way of keeping yourself in check and reminding yourself of your goal. Instead, pay attention to how you feel. How is your energy level? How is your clothing fitting? If you notice the pounds creeping back or the

clothing getting tight, begin keeping a journal of your dietary intake and physical activity to build self-awareness and enable you to make the necessary changes to get back in control.

Tip 3: Eat a Variety of Foods

It is important that you look at your new habits as a lifestyle – not a diet, which means you must be able to maintain it permanently. By including healthy choices from all food groups, you provide your body with the critical nutrients you need, which will reduce the likelihood of you wanting to binge between meals. Variety is the spice of life :).

Tip 4: Physical Activity Every Day

Regular exercise must be a natural part of your new lifestyle. If physical activity seems like a chore to you, it is important and critical to find something different that you DO like to do. Remaining active throughout the day should be natural for most people after losing weight, and it is imperative to your permanent success.

Millions of people just like you are trying to lose weight by following a weight loss program, yet the most alarming fact is that vast majority of them will put the pounds right back on in within the first 1-3 years. We can overcome this setback by adopting a positive attitude and outlook on life, and having a mindful approach to achieving permanent weight loss. Following these tips and nutrition strategies will be the key to you living a long and healthy life.

Alissa Robertson is a Registered Dietitian who will be contributing health-conscious articles to NewBedfordGuide. She is the owner of Lifestyle Management and Nutrition, which is based in Vermont, but she has clients all over New England. You can contact Alissa at: alissacrobertson@yahoo.com.

Keeping Off Holiday Pounds Is Up To You!



By
Alissa
C.
Roberts
on

'Tis the season of food, food, and more food. How will you fare this Holiday season when it comes to maintaining your waist line? You can actually make it through in good shape if you remember this important fact: It's all in your head!

It may seem hard to believe, but it is completely realistic to avoid adding those expected holiday pounds we regretfully accept each year. By practicing the following nutrition and wellness strategies, you will breeze through the holidays without having to revert to wearing your "fat clothes" or killing yourself at the gym.

The first thing to do is to set some goals for yourself. Write them down on a piece of paper and commit to reading them out loud each day. Make sure to approach your goals by saying "I can," rather than, "I can't."



Fat Santa or Skinny
Santa-Its all up to
you.

Unfortunately, it is natural for us to focus on the foods we cannot eat. It's not our fault, since most diet and weight-loss programs set this premise. We tell ourselves we can't eat any of our favorite holiday foods, or that we can't have an alcoholic drink. We go to our holiday parties and don't eat certain things because we are worried about the consequences. We consistently deprive ourselves of everything, leading us to hate what we're doing and lose sight of our goals. It's not surprising that diets only last a few days for most of us before we simply cannot take it any more.

When you begin telling yourself you can't do something, you have already set yourself up for failure. You lose sight of your goals and lose the willpower to continue. On the other hand, when you approach your goals with a positive attitude, you are mentally in a place to handle the challenges you will face this holiday season. With that in mind, here are three ideas to help get you into a strong mental space that will get you through the Holidays:

1. Focus on positive actions only. Make sure to read your goals OUT LOUD every day. Rather than obsessing over the foods you can't eat, focus on all the positive and healthy

choices you are making. Give yourself credit where credit is due! It's not what you do one time that makes you healthy or not healthy, it's what you do MOST OF THE TIME that matters most. Focus on moving your body. Take every opportunity you can to engage in some sort of exercise. Park your car further away from mall when you do your shopping. Do sit-ups during commercial breaks, stretch while watching television, go for a walk, or perhaps you can find the time to get to the gym. Every time you move your body, write it down. You'll be amazed at how having a focus on positive, healthy behaviors can empower you to keep going.



Plan to skip the
cake and eat
healthy this
holiday
season...and you
will!

2. Make preplanning a priority. It is important to plan for the unexpected. If you're going to a holiday party, eat a little something before you go, or bring a healthy dish that you will eat – you'll be surprised at how many other people will eat it too! Bring snacks in your purse or in your car so you'll always have a healthy option, regardless of where you are. Remind yourself of your goals prior to going out to eat or going to holiday parties. Remind yourself that these foods will always be available another time. Decide which foods are most important for you to have, and allow yourself to have a

small amount of it. It is also important to schedule time to exercise. During this busy time of year, exercise is often put on the back burner. Make exercise a priority and schedule time EVERY DAY to move your body.

3. Reward yourself for positive action. At the end of each day, make sure to take the time to evaluate how you did. Reward yourself for all the positive actions you took. Did you exercise? How were MOST of your food and beverage choices during the day? Did you read your goals? Did you drink water? Did you eat every 3 hours or so? Did you resist temptation or eat less of something you would normally have eaten more? Make sure you DO NOT use food as a reward. Reward yourself with new clothing, a book you've been wanting, a nap, a massage, or getting your hair or nails done.

It's all in your beliefs – what you think about, you bring about! If you tell yourself you won't gain weight this holiday season, you truly won't. Believe in your goals, and most importantly...believe in yourself.

Alissa Robertson is a Registered Dietitian who will be contributing health-conscious articles to NewBedfordGuide. She is the owner of Lifestyle Management and Nutrition, which is based in Vermont, but has clients all over New England. You can contact Alissa at: alissacrobertson@yahoo.com.

Keeping Your Bones Healthy



By
Alissa
C.
Roberts
on

Whether you're young, old, or somewhere in between, bone health should be on your radar. Having weak bones is not just an issue for older women. In fact, osteopenia (low bone mineral density) is being diagnosed in both younger women AND men, most often in lower weight individuals. So if you're an athlete who is lower in weight OR if you're a person who hasn't exercised regularly for quite some time, read on to learn how to protect your bone health!

There are a number of foods and nutrients that can boost your bone health and are shown to have protective benefits!

Lycopene – This phytonutrient is found in tomatoes, ketchup, tomato sauce, watermelon, canned tomato products (I suggest buying low-sodium), pink grapefruit, red peppers, apricots, and guava.

Flaxseed oil – Contains ALA Omega-3 Fatty Acids, which may help to protect bone matrix formation and bone mineralization. Add to salad dressings, in your shakes, or into your oatmeal.

Protein – Choose at least 60 grams daily for women, and 80 grams for men. The amount varies based on your weight and how active you are. You will definitely need more if you strength train regularly. Choose lean protein sources such as: skinless chicken breast, skinless turkey breast, fresh fish, tofu, beans or lentils, veggie burgers, lean turkey burger, unsalted nuts or seeds, low or non-fat Greek or plain yogurt, eggs or egg whites, and peanut, almond, or soy butter (be careful with portions).



Calcium – 1,000 mg per day for those under age 50; 1,200 to 1,500 mg after age 50. Supplementation can be extremely beneficial as getting this amount of calcium from our foods is challenging.

Vitamin D – This vitamin is essential for calcium absorption. You need 600 IU per day up to age 70, and 800 to 1,000 IU per day after age 70. These figures were updated just yesterday, however many health professional are of the opinion that the preventative dosage should be higher. I recommend supplementing with Vitamin D at least 2,000 IU per day up to age 70 (and up to 4,000 IU during the winter months) and 4,000 IU per day after age 70. This is especially important for those of us who live in the Northeast due to the fact that during the winter months, the sun is not strong enough for the skin to make vitamin D!

This may come as a surprise to you, but decreasing your grain intake can also be a beneficial step in protecting your bone mass! Researchers at Tufts recently found that breads, cereal, rice, pasta, tortillas, and pastries release sulfuric acid when metabolized, which can add to the acid load, and may result in the body's breaking down of bone and muscle in order to neutralize the excess acid.

You're probably wondering: What can I eat? Increase your consumption of fruits and vegetables! YUM!!! These foods are broken down to bicarbonate and add alkali to the body to help neutralize the acid. There are so many fruits and vegetables to choose from and so much you can do with them. I encourage you to try some that are new to you!



Healthy bones are essential to a healthy body.

How can you transfer this information to your every-day life?

- Have a stir-fry with lots of vegetables; a small amount of chicken, tofu, or shrimp; add a half cup of brown rice, wheat pasta or quinoa.
- A small amount of whole-wheat pasta with tomato sauce, mixed vegetables and 4 ounces of ground turkey breast, lean meat such as sirloin, flank or 93% lean ground beef, veggie crumbles, or texturized vegetable protein.
- A 6" tortilla (use brands such as Joseph's, La Tortilla Factory, or Cedars Whole Wheat) filled with beans, sauteed peppers, onions and mushrooms, avocado and salsa.

These tips and your motivation to live a healthier lifestyle will help you to keep your bones strong for a lifetime!

Alissa Robertson is a Registered Dietitian who contributes health-conscious articles to NewBedfordGuide. She is the owner of Lifestyle Management and Nutrition, which is based in Vermont, but has clients all over New England. You can contact Alissa with questions or comments at: alissacrobertson@yahoo.com.

Vitamin D: The Wonder Vitamin



Imagine a treatment that could build bones, strengthen the immune system, and lower the risk for illnesses like diabetes, heart and kidney disease, high blood pressure, depression, and cancer. Seems unrealistic, doesn't it?

Research suggests that such a wonder treatment already exists in the form of vitamin D. Vitamin D is a nutrient that our bodies create from sunlight. It can also be found in fish, cheese, some cereals, and fortified milk.



The Sun is
the best
source of
vitamin D.

Despite the many potential health benefits of vitamin D, as many as half of all adults and children are thought to have less than optimum levels. More alarming is that as many as ten percent of children are highly deficient, according to a 2008 report in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition.

The amount of vitamin D a person has can be influenced by various lifestyle choices, and also the location in which they live. Those of us who live in the Northeast are unable to get vitamin D from the sun for six to seven months out of the year! If you take into account all the rainy and dreary days

during the spring and summer, our ability to get vitamin D from the sun is reduced even further.

Another less obvious factor is that we are told by health professionals to quickly apply sunscreen anytime we are going to be outside, in an effort to prevent skin cancer. While this strategy works well to block harmful rays from the sun, it also prevents the absorption of vitamin D into our bodies.

Getting enough vitamin D from food alone would require a diet rich in fish and milk. You'd need to drink 8-9 glasses of milk every day to get the amount of vitamin D necessary to prevent deficiency, which would lead to a new set of problems because of all the calories you would gain from the milk!



In the absence of sunlight, supplements are the next best source of vitamin D.

The bottom line is that supplementation is virtually the only way to get an adequate intake of vitamin D. Vitamin D helps your body to prevent and treat severe chronic diseases. It also helps fight off the common cold that so many Americans suffer from throughout the year, especially during the winter. However, not all supplements are created equal. A high-quality supplement is as important as vitamin D itself. Taking a "run of the mill" supplement may not be effective due to binders and fillers, which cause a decrease in absorption and bioavailability.

Vitamin D is an important part of our bodies natural chemistry, yet its not something that people worry about. Moving to the Caribbean, or somewhere equally as sunny, would

go a long way towards making sure you get enough Vitamin D, but that isn't realistic for most of us. A more plausible solution is to find a good vitamin D supplement, and make it a part of your daily routine.

Alissa Robertson is a Registered Dietitian who will be contributing health-conscious articles to NewBedfordGuide. She is the owner of Lifestyle Management and Nutrition, which is based in Vermont, but has clients all over New England. You can contact Alissa at: alissacrobertson@yahoo.com.