

3 MENTAL HABITS THAT Keep You From Losing Weight

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You probably think that you know how to lose weight. You need to eat less, and exercise more. However, to slim down successfully, you have to prepare mentally as well as physically.

The psychological factors may be more important than you realize.

Subjects in one university study lost 5 times more weight than average. The secret was learning a visualization technique where they imagined reaching their goals, and the impact it would have on their lives.

Put your mental powers to work for you. Take a look at 3 common habits that could be holding you back and learn what to do about them.

Be Realistic Instead of Overreaching:

- 1. Practice patience.** If you cut calories too drastically, you're likely to lose muscle tissue and deprive your body of essential nutrients. **Losing about 1 to 3 pounds a week is a safe schedule for most adults.**
- 2. Take baby steps.** Small changes add up. **Focus on one habit at a time** instead of trying to transform your lifestyle in a single day. You might try eating an additional serving of vegetables each day or switch from full fat to low fat dairy products.
- 3. Avoid comparisons.** Celebrate your own body and personal strengths. Forget about keeping up with celebrities who have the time and money for expensive

spas and day-long workouts.

4. **Allow some leeway.** Forget about forbidden foods too. A diet that is too restrictive may make you more vulnerable to temptation. Enjoy your favorite treats in smaller serving sizes or save them for special occasions.

Seek Support Instead of Going it Alone:

1. **Ask for help.** Many studies have found that the social support in programs like Weight Watchers can make a big difference. Let your family and friends know what kind of help you need. Ask your partner to refrain from teasing you or hang out with someone who eats healthy.
2. **Find a buddy. Slimming down is more fun when you have a fitness partner.** You may also feel more accountable knowing that someone else is depending on you.
3. **Go online.** Are you relying more on virtual communications these days? Use your computer to take Zumba classes or work with a nutritionist. Join a forum where you can share advice and encouragement.
4. **See your doctor.** You may need to check with your physician before you start a weight loss program. That's especially true if you're significantly overweight, sedentary, or coping with a chronic condition.

Plan Ahead Instead of Eating Mindlessly:

1. **Set goals.** Increase your chances for success by setting specific and compelling targets. You might aim to lose a certain number of pounds or inches off your waistline each month. You could also use process goals, like eating breakfast each day or cutting back on sugar.

2. **Create menus.** It's easier to make healthy choices when you decide what to eat in advance. Who needs junk food when you have delicious and nutritious meals and snacks to look forward to?

3. **Shop carefully.** More than 70% of supermarket items are ultra-processed products high in sugar, salt, saturated fat, and empty calories. **Stick to the outer aisles where you'll find vegetables, fruits, and other whole foods.** Read labels carefully to understand what you're buying.

4. **Monitor your schedule.** Do you eat for entertainment or comfort? Try managing your time differently, so you can enjoy more enriching non-food activities. Turn off your TV and play tennis. Invite friends to join you for a hike instead of your usual weekend brunch.

Changing your mindset can give you the motivation you need to lose weight and keep it off. Develop mental habits that will help you to reshape your body and enjoy a long and active life.