

Maintaining Willpower While Losing Weight

Going on a diet may be easy, but actually sticking to it can be very difficult. Many people lack the willpower, decisiveness and internal strength to change their lifestyle and avoid lapsing back into poor eating habits. Some people choose to exercise more to enhance their fitness, but they abandon their workouts if the weather is poor or if something unexpected arises. Soon, they are back to spending time sitting on the settee instead of exercising.

There are things people can do to improve their willpower, increasing the likelihood that they will stick to their new lifestyle changes. Here are some suggestions on how to keep your willpower when dieting and exercising.

Have a Realistic Approach and Goal

Having realistic goals is one of the most important aspects of dieting and weight loss. If you begin your weight loss programme with the expectation of losing 4.5 kilograms each week, you might feel discouraged when the first week ends without meeting that target.

Goals should be attainable, but that doesn't mean they should be easy. An appropriate weight loss goal may be the number of pounds you can lose as long as you follow an appropriate diet and exercise schedule. An appropriate weight loss approach could be simple lifestyle changes, such as "I will not eat fried food for a month," or "I will use the stairs instead of the lift." These kinds of goals and approaches are healthy and attainable, and they will help you achieve your ultimate goal of losing weight.

Keep the Benefits in Mind

Remind yourself every day of the health and life benefits you will reap as you lose weight. All too often, dieters are overcome with thoughts about how hard it is to lose weight. Try replacing these negative thoughts with positive ones, such as:

- You will feel better physically and emotionally.
- You will be less susceptible to injuries, illnesses and certain diseases.
- You will have more energy.
- You will be able to wear clothing you had previously outgrown.
- You will not get tired as easily.

Replace Bad Habits with Good Ones

One of the hardest things about staying on a diet or weight loss regime is overcoming your bad habits. Whether it is having a chocolate bar in the middle of the afternoon or choosing to eat fast food instead of making something healthy for dinner, bad habits are probably responsible for much of your weight gain.

Bad habits are not easily overcome, but one method many people find useful is replacing bad habits with good ones. For example, if your morning routine involves buying a coffee and a pastry, perhaps you can try a new morning routine of making your own coffee and having a bowl of porridge. If you have a burger for lunch at a restaurant several times each week, try implementing a new routine of bringing a salad from home with a different dressing for each day.

If you do not replace your existing bad habits with new habits, it will be difficult to make a change.

Make Exercise Fun

Many dieters are unsuccessful because they view exercise as a chore, but if you think of it as a fun activity or hobby, you will be more likely to enjoy it. There are several ways to do this:

- **Join a sports team or league:** Exercise does not have to be a solitary hike up a stair-climbing machine. Most towns and cities have different sports and recreational leagues, while many larger cities are home to leagues run by private companies. Join a league and play a sport you enjoyed when you were younger, such as softball, football, volleyball, or basketball.
- **Join a club:** In many cities, there are clubs for people who like to run, cycle, rollerblade, and swim. Whether you're just starting out or have been at it for a while, these activities tend to be far more enjoyable when shared with one or more fellow enthusiasts.

Have a Diet/Exercise Partner

Dieting and losing weight is not something that is easily done alone. If you have a diet or exercise partner, it will significantly increase your chances of being successful. Your partner will be there to encourage you to get out for a jog on days when you're not feeling up to it, as well as to celebrate with you when you reach one of your diet goals.

Likewise, you should provide the same encouragement and support to your partner, praising their achievements and helping to push them towards fulfilling their goals. You might even find that there is a healthy competition between the two of you that drives you both towards your personal goals.

Your partner can be a husband, wife, partner, colleague, friend, neighbour, or even someone you've recently met who has the same objective of losing weight and embracing a healthier lifestyle.

Reward Yourself

Diets and weight loss plans are not about depriving yourself of things that taste nice. They are about changing behaviours so that you do not rely so heavily on unhealthy foods for nourishment and spend such a lot of time doing sedentary activities like watching television and browsing the internet.

If you make healthier choices in your diet, you can still enjoy a slice of cheesecake every now and then. If you establish a consistent exercise routine, afternoons spent sprawled on the settee watching the football will turn into the exception instead of the norm. The rewards you earn through hard work and dedication will be far more satisfying than those you once relied on.

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