

Behaviour Change in Managing your Weight

Introduction

Research shows clearly that people who are able to make permanent changes to their eating and activity habits are much more likely to lose weight and keep it off than people who look for a “quick fix” solution. Also, when people choose for themselves which changes to make, they are much more likely to succeed.

Most people who are trying to lose weight will be having difficulty with one or more of the following areas:

- Fitting meal planning, preparation and shopping in with a busy lifestyle
- Eating when bored or as a comfort
- Not recognising the body’s signals that show us we are full
- Saying “no” to food especially in social situations or on holiday
- Knowing what to eat to help weight loss
- Addiction to food
- Lack of helpful support from family and friends
- Fitting physical activity into a busy lifestyle

The following is a checklist of actions which people who have been successful in changing behaviour have found helpful. Select a few to work on and once they are established, select a few more:

Planning and Preparation

	✓	Date Achieved
Pre-plan menus for each week	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Involve the family in menu planning and food preparation	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Keep your food and activity plan handy so you can refer to it regularly	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Eat meals and snacks at planned times	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Plan ahead to do exercise or other activities instead of snacking and stick to the plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	
When preparing meals, only prepare as much as you think you or the family will eat	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Shopping

	✓	Date Achieved
Write a shopping list and stick to it	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Shop for food on a full stomach, not when hungry	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Buy healthy foods in line with your food plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Avoid buying ready-to-eat snack foods such as crisps, snack bars, chocolate bars	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Eating Behaviour

	✓	Date Achieved
Eat all food in the same place i.e. at table and sitting down	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Use smaller plates and utensils	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Serve and eat a small portion at a time	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Take one small bite at a time and eat slowly	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Chew thoroughly before swallowing	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Put fork down between mouthfuls	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Stop in the middle of a meal and assess how hungry you are	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do nothing else while eating i.e. no TV, reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Concentrate on enjoying food	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Wait at least 5 minutes after finishing a meal before deciding if you need a second helping	<input type="checkbox"/>	
If there is any food left over, save for another occasion or throw away	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Coping with Parties, Holidays, Social Events

	✓	Date Achieved
Think about where you are going and plan what you are going to do in advance	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Practise polite ways of refusing food e.g. "That was lovely, I don't think I could manage any more"	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Drink fewer alcoholic drinks and make up with water or diet mixers	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Food and Family Support

	✓	Date Achieved
Remove high fat/sugar foods from house and store out of sight	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Keep healthier foods visible for easier access	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do not store food in areas other than kitchen	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ask for help and support from family and friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Rewards

	✓	Date Achieved
Decide which behaviours you are going to reward e.g. keeping to food and activity plan, overcoming binge eating, weight loss	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Size of reward depends on what you have achieved e.g. small reward for every day achievements, big reward for weight loss	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Rewards <u>should not be</u> food based, instead choose something which is a treat for you e.g. flowers, perfume, foot massage, new book, visit to theatre/cinema	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Managing your Thoughts and Lapses

	✓	Date Achieved
Focus on progress not shortcomings	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Challenge self-defeating thoughts with positive ones e.g. instead of "I've really blown it today, so what's the point of carrying on?" try "Today was only 1 day in the year and tomorrow is another day"	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I identify your triggers for lapsing - diaries are useful here	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Plan in advance how to prevent lapses	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Make a list of ways to manage high risk situations	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Make a list of activities which are incompatible with eating	<input type="checkbox"/>	

You can use the Personal Action Plan in “The Way to Lose Weight” leaflet to record your progress.

Useful Websites

1. www.bdaweightwise.com - comprehensive information can be downloaded, part of official website of Registered Dietitians in UK
2. www.realslimmers.com - self calorie controlled meals but also provide online support and information, information compiled by Registered Dietitians
3. www.weightconcern.com - registered charity, programme compiled by psychologists and dietitians, useful information and support