

Getting Back on Track.

It takes effort and commitment to form healthy new habits, and admittedly there are times when our efforts stall. Hectic schedules, stress, emotions, poor food choices, or just plain old complacency can get in the way of our good intentions. And this can be discouraging. The idea of getting back on track can make us feel like we're starting the whole thing from scratch.

But is that really the case? It certainly doesn't have to be if we approach it with the right frame of mind.

For starters, remind yourself that it happens to everybody. Even the most successful over-achievers experience the occasional setback on the road to self-improvement. They'll tell you the point is not that it happens, it's what you do about it when it does. How quickly do you put it behind you? What did you learn? How much more are you resolved to keep it from happening again?

You call the shots.

True, some factors that affect weight loss are beyond our control. We learn to live with that. With others, however, we're completely in the driver's seat. Whether or not we pick ourselves up and get going again is totally up to us.

Of course we all know these things. But we all still need the occasional reminder and word of encouragement to reaffirm our resolve to stay on course. We also can benefit from the practical advice of health experts as well as those who have overcome the same challenges we're facing.

Let's take a look at some practical, proven suggestions that can help you keep your good weight loss habits on track. If they worked for others they can work for you.

Physical Activity.

Why do people find it so difficult to maintain a regular exercise program? One reason is the time it takes. People view exercise as one more commitment to their already packed schedule. Understandable, yes. But considering the undeniable health benefits that exercise brings to any weight-loss program, could we eliminate time from other areas (TV time for instance) to make room for it?

Lack of motivation is another classic enemy of exercise. Some have found it helps to keep their workout clothes by their bed, so they're ready to go when they

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wake up. Others keep workout clothes in their car, and stop by the gym on their way home from work.

Obviously, it will help your motivation to find activity you enjoy. But is there a solution if you don't like any exercise at all? Yes... Sorry, but there is no indirect way to say this... *do it anyway*. Choosing the right way to view exercise will help. Instead of dwelling on how much you don't like it, focus on the good it's doing you. Some of the most hard-core former couch potatoes admit that regular exercise greatly improves their overall sense of well-being.

Exercise doesn't have to be costly, either. If you don't want the expense of a health club membership, just get a good pair of walking shoes. Then use them. If you like, dumbbells and other small-investment equipment can be added as you progress.

Diet habits.

Most nutritional experts agree that planning your meals is a helpful way to stay on a healthy diet. This allows you to purchase healthy food and have it on hand when it's time to eat. In turn, you'll avoid situations where you're tempted to make panic runs to fast food stores and vending machines.

Poor food choices are usually made when we're hungry, rushed, or stressed. Preparing our meals at times when we're not pressured, such as packing a lunch the night before, greatly reduces these situations. In all, your chances of having a healthful, low-fat, no-added-sugar meal are much greater if you plan ahead.

The Barix nutritional guide is a valuable tool for helping you plan your meals and snacks. It will help you stay focused on the food that's good for you and your weight loss goals.

Portion size is also key to a healthy diet program. People tend to see whatever is on their plate as a normal portion. The more you train yourself to see smaller portions as normal, the more they will satisfy your hunger. At first, carefully measure your servings. You'll soon learn to recognize the right portions by sight. Use mental comparisons – three ounces of meat is the size of a deck of cards or a computer mouse, a half-cup serving equals half of a baseball, your thumb is about the size of an ounce of cheese, and so forth.

And never forget that every day of healthy eating puts a little more distance between you and your old habits. And someday in the not-so-distant future, the unhealthy foods won't even appeal to you anymore.

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Correcting your thinking patterns

Nobody's perfect, and sometimes we form opinions that simply aren't true. Maybe a past experience has formed our point of view. Maybe we're rationalizing something to be the way we want it. Or maybe we're simply misinformed. Some of the most common negative things we tell ourselves are:

- **“This too will fail.”** With this attitude we could view bariatric surgery as just another weight loss attempt that won't work.
- **“Exercise really isn't necessary.”** The faulty thinking here is self explanatory, and totally false.
- **“It's not fair.”** This defeatist feeling comes from comparing the success of others with our own situation. Never a good idea.
- **“There's something wrong with me.”** This is the refusal to accept the positive changes that are happening to you, and not allowing your old self-image to change.

Recognizing these incorrect thinking patterns and replacing them with accurate ones can have a huge impact on our staying on the road to a healthy lifestyle.

And always remember that self-improvement is a journey, not a place. So our focus should be on how far we've come and how far we want to go. Wherever we happen to be at the moment is merely a stopover. Cultivating the right frame of mind, and acting on it, will get you back on track in no time at all.

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