

NEED TO LOSE WEIGHT? THINGS TO OVERCOME BEFORE YOU CHANGE YOUR DIET FOR THE BETTER

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Starting something new can be hard if you are not prepared particularly when it involves something you do numerous times each day -- like eating and drinking. Adapting your eating patterns will definitely fall into the “as-hard-as-it-gets” category. Prepare yourself mentally, plan properly and make sure you have a support system in place. If it is possible, get someone to keep you accountable for your decisions and actions.

1. MAKE A COMMITMENT

Start making a commitment to yourself by writing up a contract. This contract may include things like the amount of weight you want to lose, the date you'd like to lose the weight by, the dietary changes you'll make to establish healthy eating habits, and a plan for getting regular physical activity. Sign it and let a witness also sign (preferably the person that will keep you accountable).

2. TAKE SMALL STEPS

Make small gradual changes. Changing everything at once can be harder than actually following a simple diet. Set weekly goals, this will be easier to keep track of and if you had a bad week you will at least have time to get back on track. This will also give your body and mind time to adjust to the new behaviours.

3. REWARD YOURSELF

Avoid using food as a reward. Find something you like to do. If you like going to the movies, award yourself with a movie after every 2kg that you lose or have managed to exercise 5 times in the week.

4. SET THE SUPPORT SYSTEM IN PLACE

Make sure your family is prepared to eat what you are eating and if you fall off the wagon that they will support you. If you do not like to exercise get someone to exercise with you, go for family walks and arrange your weekend around family activities.

Visit a dietician and set frequent follow-up visits. This will ensure that you report back to someone that can help you and give you professional advice where needed.

5. KEEP A DAIRY

This can help you keep yourself accountable. As soon as you write something down you can see and get your head around what you are eating and how much you are exercise. Write down what you are eating, how you are feeling and what you did for physical training the day before you go to bed. This will also serve as a motivation for you to do better or if you had a very good day you have it in writing. Remember to have a section where you can write down your emotional struggles.

6. REMEMBER TO EXERCISE

This is just as important as eating correctly. For you to lose weight effectively and quicker and to maintain it you will have to put in a proper exercise program. Make sure you exercise at least >30 minutes of moderate physical activity or >20 minutes hard physical activity or > 15 minutes very hard physical activity more than 5 times a week. If you spend most of your day sitting at a desk in an office, take the stairs and park further away from the entrance. Every bit of energy that you burn during the day helps.

How active are you?

Moderate physical activity	Hard physical activity	Very hard physical activity
Walking 1.5km in 15-20 min	Walking or jogging > 30min	Jogging > 40min
Treading water	Swimming laps (light effort)	Swimming laps (vigorous effort)
Bicycling (16 km/h)	Bicycling (20 km/h)	Bicycling (>22 km/h)
Dancing	High impact aerobics	Step aerobics
Yard work/gardening	Mowing lawn with hand mower	Digging a ditch
Hiking	Playing doubles tennis	Playing singles tennis
Vacuuming	Moving furniture	Playing basketball or soccer
Playing actively with children	Weight lifting	Hiking up a mountain

7. GOALS TO SET YOURSELF IF YOU HAVE METABOLIC SYNDROME

What is metabolic syndrome?

Metabolic syndrome is a condition that you have if you have at least 3 of the following conditions:

- Abdominal obesity
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- High triglycerides
- High blood sugar levels

Goals to set yourself if you have metabolic syndrome:

CONDITION	LIFESTYLE CHANGES	PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS
Abdominal obesity (measured by waist circumference) Men: greater than 102cm Women: greater than 80cm	Weight loss	Lose 250g a week; aim for losing 10kg in a year
	Increased physical activity	30 minutes of moderate activity 5 days a week
High blood pressure 130/85 mm Hg or greater	Weight loss	Aim for 10kg loss/year
	Reduced salt intake	Salt shaker off the table; no salt when cooking
	More fruits and vegetables	Get at least 5 servings/day
	Low-fat dairy products	Get 3 glasses of skim milk, low-fat yogurt, cheese/day
Low HDL (good) cholesterol Men: less than 40 mg/dL Women: less than 50	Weight loss	Aim for 20-pound loss/year
	Increased physical activity	30 minutes of moderate activity 5 days a week
	Eat more monounsaturated fats	Replace cookies, candy, cakes with unsalted almonds, walnuts, peanuts

mg/dL		
High triglycerides level 150 mg/dL or greater	Weight loss	Raise omega-3 fatty acids Aim for 20-pound loss/year. Eat fish twice/week
	Reduce simple carbohydrates	Replace soda, juices with seltzer, water, diet soda
	Limit alcohol	Limit: 2 drinks/day for men; 1 drink/day for women
High blood sugar after fasting 110 mg/dL or greater	Weight loss	Aim for 10kg loss/year
	Increase soluble fibre	Replace white bread with brown bread, whole grains and breakfast meals. Futurelife [®] serves as a great convenient high fibre food.

8. HOW TO PREPARE YOURSELF MENTALLY

- Understand why you want or need to adjust your lifestyle and eating habits.
- Look at different diet options and which one will suit your lifestyle best
- Set up a daily schedule. Example: 6:00 – 7:00 walking, 8:00 – 17:00 working, 18:00-18:40 cooking, and 19:30 – 22:00 relaxing and writing in your diary. 22:00 bed time.
- Keep it simple. The less complicated the better the chance is that you will stick to what you are planning.
- Schedule time to see a dietician and someone to help you with your training program.
- Allocate a calendar to your diet and training program. Mark the days that you need to weigh yourself, make sure you stick to your goals and if you have away weekends planned make sure you do not miss training day the week before. This will help you to shorten the quilt trip if you eat a little more than you should over the weekend.
- Stick to the starting date. If you postpone every week and every Friday say you will start on Monday it will get more difficult and you will lose confidence in yourself to stick to your promises.
- Plan your shopping days. Make a list, and keep to your list. Never go shopping when you are hungry!
- You are allowed to “cheat”. Plan these days ahead and make sure you stick to only these days. If you know a “cheat” day is coming it will serve as a motivation to keep on track for the month. (Food should not be a reward, but it can definitely serve as motivation.)

Change is as good as a holiday. Working on a new body is the best rewarded job you will ever get and if you are dreaming on becoming your own boss, now is your chance.

REFERENCES

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