



What Makes Weight Loss So Difficult?

Losing weight can be difficult for a number of reasons, including, but certainly not limited to, the following:

- Genetics
- Culture and Environment
- Metabolism
- Illness and Medications
- Sleep
- Personal Behaviors
- Psychological Aspects

Most of these factors are the same things that cause obesity in the first place. All of these issues need to be addressed throughout the process of weight loss as well as throughout the process of weight maintenance, which is every day.

The following will review each of these areas one at a time, focusing on the aspects over which there is some influence to change and those that are unlikely to be able to change.

Genetics. There is very little we can do to influence or change our genetic propensity for obesity in the present moment. ACCEPTANCE of this fact is necessary in the weight loss process. Think of it like this: if 1000 people ate the same thing for a year and did the exact same exercise at the exact same time every day, not everyone would end up weighing the same amount.

Culture and Environment. Culture and environment are areas over which you have some influence. Regardless of what culture you are from, you are able to make healthy choices in regard to what you eat. The typical American diet, for example, is filled with the classic burger, fries and soft drink. In other cultures, traditional foods may include rice, pasta, and tortillas. Things you can influence regardless of what cultural foods your family regularly partakes of:

- * You can ask for cooperation from those with whom you live to refrain from eating unhealthy traditional foods in front of you and to keep them where you do not have easy access to them.
- * You can consider making healthy eating changes for those with whom you live, introducing healthier options for everyone and learning to cook traditional foods in healthier way
- * You can make both your home and your personal work area places that are healthier for you.

Remember, you don't necessarily have to like something in order to do it! Most people like getting a paycheck, even though not everyone likes their job. If you want the paycheck, regardless of whether or not you like your job, you do it. It's the same with exercise. You don't have to like it, but if you want the benefits of exercise, you have to do the work!



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Metabolism. You can have some, but limited influence, when it comes to metabolism. There are ways you can increase your metabolism to some degree. These include:

- * Exercise
- * Portion control
- * Get a good night's sleep

Illness and Medications. We have some influence over both illness and medications. There are a number of medications that can result in weight gain for some people. Medications for both diabetes and psychiatric illnesses are known to result in weight gain for many people. In addition, steroids and antiseizure medications, as well as others, commonly result in weight gain for some people. Be sure to talk with your doctor about the medications you take in relation to weight issues. There are times when you have the option of trying a different medication that may not result in weight gain. There may be times when you and your physician agree that the medication is necessary in spite of the weight gain.

Sleep. When it comes to getting enough sleep, there are things you can do to positively influence this, although things such as working shift work, being sick, and some medications can make this difficult. Put effort into getting more if you need it. Adjust your schedule when you can, and eat your best no matter what!

Personal Behaviors. You have the most influence over your personal behaviors. This is the area in weight loss programs referred to as “behavior modification.” Your personal behaviors in relation to weight loss and keeping weight off include:

- Food choices
- Exercise
- Keeping unhealthy food in your home, car, and desk
- Who you spend your time with and where you go

Be sure to put a lot of effort into avoiding dangerous places and people when it comes to your personal behaviors in relation to food and exercise.

Psychological Aspects. This is an area that you can influence in some ways. You CAN get help to deal with psychological issues that may be interfering with motivation, depression, anxiety, other psychiatric issues, etc. There are a number of issues that can lead to depression, anxiety, and other psychological issues. These include unresolved childhood issues and unresolved grief that negatively affects self-esteem, self-worth, and self-confidence. When it comes to psychological issues, being open-minded, aware, and willing to get help are important and are areas over which you have influence.



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