



What Makes Weight Maintenance Even More Difficult?

Since you are a wise individual, you are going to spend your time, energy, and EFFORT focusing on those things you CAN influence when it comes to keeping weight off!

And those things over which you have the MOST influence when it comes to both losing weight and maintaining weight loss involve those referred to by most weight loss programs as BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION.

BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION means exactly what the words imply: modifying, or changing, our behaviors. That makes perfect sense when it comes to losing and maintaining weight loss. A person clearly has to change some behaviors in order to lose weight. They then need to follow through with those behavioral changes in order to maintain the weight loss. Most people who are wanting to lose weight have already done so once or twice in the past. Some people have been able to lose 50, 75 or 100 pounds, but most have struggled to keep that weight off. When they are asked what they did to lose the weight in the first place, the vast majority state they changed what they ate, and they exercised regularly. The “Changed what they ate” and “exercised regularly” are the behaviors they modified, or changed, in order to lose weight.

No surprise there, really. To lose weight, most people have to change some of what they’re eating and start exercising or increase the amount of exercise they’re doing.

When I ask people why they regained the weight after losing it, the answer is almost always the same: “I returned to my old habits,” meaning they did not follow through with the changes they made.

So, what happens to make people not follow through and let “the old habits creep back in?” People often say it’s because “life got in the way.”

This is furthered by talk of stress, time management, and not making themselves a priority. Here’s the thing! Most people do well when they are in a supervised weight loss program and have additional accountability.

While in a formal program, people check in with the program group and specialists, and they continue using the monitoring techniques, such as food and exercise journals, that help keep them accountable and stay on track.

If you know that checking in with others and using monitoring devices to keep track of food intake and exercise helps keep you on track, it would be a really good idea to keep doing those things!

“But it costs too much money to participate in the program long term.”, yet being involved with the program kept you on track and in better health. Not to mention the cost of the program is a whole lot less than poor health, which often involves one or two or twenty different medications,

Week 2 Behavior



What Makes Weight Maintenance Even More Difficult?

doctor visits with accompanying copays, and the medical equipment sometimes required for weight-related health problems, such as C-pap machines, walkers, or prosthetic feet.

So the money you're spending on that program sounds like a bargain. And it works to help you maintain a healthy weight.

"But it takes up so much time to go see the dietitian, attend the program, complete the food log and the exercise log," yet doing those things kept you on track and in better health. Think of the time it takes to get prescriptions, fill the prescription box, ask for additional time off work to go see the doctor, then wait in the office to actually see the doctor. Make that "doctors" because weight-related illnesses often involve several specialists: cardiologists, endocrinologists, pulmonologists, orthopedists, and, of course, your primary care doctor.

Those few hours a week it takes to complete those logs, meet with your program providers, and squeeze in some exercise sounds like a bargain now. And it works to help you maintain a healthy weight.

"But I have a lot of people for whom I am responsible: my family and my aging parents, and they simply must come first."

To which the response is: OKAY! But do they have to come ONLY? And before you share the "there are a limited number of hours in the day" excuse, just ask yourself how much time you spend watching television (which, by the way, you can do while you exercise), how many hours you spend on social media, or talking on the phone, or shopping, etc.."

Hmmm. That hour a day it takes to engage in meal prep and exercise? I'm betting those people who rely on you would be happy to watch tv during that hour.

The list of excuses is endless if you don't want to put forth the effort in doing the things that work to lose weight and keep it off.

By the way: there are many free ways to keep track of your food intake and exercise. But there is only one person who can do this for you.

The bottom line? The thing that makes maintaining weight loss so difficult is following through. Follow through with the behavior changes that WORK!

What this means is that in order to maintain weight loss, people need to be willing to DO what it takes.

Week 2 Behavior



What Makes Weight Maintenance Even More Difficult?

We know from research that monitoring/writing down food intake, exercise, water consumption, and hours of sleep aid in weight loss and weight maintenance.

Being accountable to others is also shown to be helpful. Your accountability doesn't have to come in the form of a formal weight loss program that costs money. But it does need to be sharing the truth with someone who is going to be lovingly honest with you, both when you're following through and when you're not!

So, set yourself up for a lifetime of living a healthy weight for your body by **DOING** the behavior modifications that you know work.

If you're not following through with self-monitoring of food intake, exercise, water consumption, and amount of sleep, it would be a good idea to consider what issues may be interfering with your ability or willingness to do so.

If you struggle to follow through with behavior modification, then it's important to consider issues such as low self-esteem, or an overall feeling that you're just not "good enough."

Oftentimes, a person's self-care, including what they put in their body and whether or not they get exercise, reflect how they feel about themselves. People who like themselves generally take good care of themselves.

In order to keep that weight off, people have to deal with any underlying issues that can influence whether or not they follow through. If someone is depressed or feels they aren't deserving of a healthy, happy life, then they need to treat those core issues.

In some cases, obesity is a symptom of the problem, and treating the symptom won't fix the problem.

Food addiction is another issue that can prevent people from success. People who struggle with a food addiction want to make changes in their eating and in their health, and many can—for a short while.

But they return to the unhealthy behaviors. Often sweet, or salty/fatty foods are problematic for those with a food addiction.

Food addiction is too large an issue to address here, but if you think you might have a food addiction, please read about it and get help for it.



What Makes Weight Maintenance Even More Difficult?

References:

Elfhag, K. and Rössner, S. (2005), Who succeeds in maintaining weight loss? A conceptual review of factors associated with weight loss maintenance and weight regain. *Obesity Reviews*, 6: 67-85.
doi:[10.1111/j.1467-789X.2005.00170.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-789X.2005.00170.x)

Rena R Wing, Suzanne Phelan; Long-term weight loss maintenance, *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, Volume 82, Issue 1, 1 July 2005, Pages 222S–225S,
<https://doi.org/10.1093/ajcn/82.1.222S>

Butryn, M. L., Phelan, S. , Hill, J. O. and Wing, R. R. (2007), Consistent Self-monitoring of Weight: A Key Component of Successful Weight Loss Maintenance. *Obesity*, 15: 3091-3096.
doi:[10.1038/oby.2007.368](https://doi.org/10.1038/oby.2007.368)