

Healthy Weight Helps

Balanced Strategies for Permanent Weight Loss

Cindy had many challenges in her life. She made a positive choice to quit smoking but then gained 80 pounds. “I felt miserable and had a terrible self-image. I was plagued by headaches and stomach pain. I decided that it was time to change my attitude, my thinking, and my choices to turn my life around. I went from *wanting* to lose weight to *winning* my battle of the bulge.” Here’s how:

1. I saw my need *and* potential as they really were. Knowing I had a problem was one thing—discovering that God had a purpose for my life gave me hope and helped me address my depression as well as my lifestyle choices. **“For I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” Jeremiah 29:11 (RSV)**

2. I chose to believe I could change. I stopped listening to the negative “failure-based” messages I had rehearsed for years. I stopped making excuses and feeling sorry for myself.

3. I chose faith in God to activate my decision. My faith gave me power to push through obstacles and learn new habits. **“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.” Psalm 32:8 (NKJV)**

4. I accepted the support I needed to persist in my decision. I joined a walking/jogging club with other positive-minded people. My husband, Brian, was a tremendous support, and he lost 45 pounds himself! Daily exercise became a priority for me.

5. I learned to daily accept responsibility. I daily rehearsed new positive choices instead of giving up over mistakes.

6. I chose to act on my decision every day. I made two key lifestyle decisions that were key to moving forward to reach my goals. I learned how to choose healthful, high-fiber fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and beans and stopped buying impulse “comfort” foods (See *Five Shopping Secrets*). I determined to exercise every day, and gradually increase the intensity and frequency, challenging myself to become stronger.

7. I learned to see tomorrow's reward in today's discipline. Cindy lost 80 pounds and has kept it off for years now. Most importantly, her thinking and mindset were healed in the process, not just her body. Every good choice today yields a gift tomorrow. Now that's something to look forward to!

Five Shopping Secrets for Successful Weight Loss

1. Plan ahead. Create a grocery list and stick to it. Go shopping right after a meal so you are satisfied and not hungry. Stay in the area of the store that has the healthier choices.

2. Go veggie! Focus on fresh fruits, salads with lots of leafy greens, crunchy raw veggies, and whole grains. Choose healthy fats like walnuts, avocados, and lemon and olive oil on salads.

3. Beware of bottles, bags, and bars.¹ **Bottles:** Soda pop and sweetened drinks are the number one source of added sugar in the American diet. Just one 12 oz. can of soda a day adds 75 cups of sugar to your diet in one year! **Bags:** A small bag of fried chips can be as much as 420 calories! A baked potato is only 110 calories. A savory ear of corn is just 60 calories! What a difference in flavor as well as fill-up value! **Bars:** Candy bars, even so-called "health food bars" are often loaded with calories, low in fiber, and short on appetite satisfaction.

4. Shift from calorie "dense" to calorie "sense." When you take away the fiber and nutrition of whole plant foods, you get sugar, fat, and salt. You would have to eat 25 carrots to get the calories in just one 8 oz. chocolate bar! And how quick does a bar like that disappear, only to leave you hungry and craving more? When it comes to weight loss, the real question is, "Are you eating ENOUGH to lose weight?" "Are you eating enough fiber foods (at least 30-50 grams per day) that provide true satisfaction?"

5. Watch for hidden calories. The closer you stick to the produce department, including wholesome beans, unrefined grains such as brown rice, oats, and whole wheat, and fresh vegetables, the less you have to be concerned about calories, fat, sugar, and salt!

- Each good choice makes way for another. Eating delicious, high-fiber foods eliminates the need for eating all day long. Put a "fence" around mealtime and drink plenty of water between meals. This reduces cravings for snacks and sugary drinks, and improves digestion and energy.
- More energy and fewer eating episodes means more time, energy, and inclination for daily exercise! And that means more muscle, better metabolism,

and deeper, more refreshing sleep—all essential to balanced living, better mood, and successful weight management.

The Living Word

It takes time and perseverance to recover lost ground and form healthy habits. God will give you guidance, power, and the will to stick with it. Cindy won her battle of the bulge and learned to replace the negativity trap of failure-based thinking with positive, can-do thinking. She tapped into God's power, promises, and plan, and so can you. **“He satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagles.” Psalm 103:5** God knows your needs and understands the challenges you face. We all need His plan and power in life. Would you like His renewing power in your life? Would you like to tell Him now, “I am ready—let's do this!”

What is a powerful new habit that you would like to focus on or strengthen this week as your first step? God will give you power and the will to make this positive choice so that you can reach and maintain your healthful weight—and enjoy better health, better habits, and a better life!

Visit us at LifestyleMatters.com or call 1-866-624-5433 for your resources to build a better brain, body, and lifestyle.

¹ Food & Health Communications www.foodandhealth.com