

11 Steps to Successful Weight Loss

Below, you will see a list of 9 things you can do to promote a healthy weight loss program. However, the title says "11 Steps to Successful Weight Loss"! What gives?

You see, I will begin almost any discussion of weight loss with the reminder that the two cornerstones of any healthy weight loss program will be proper nutrition and activity. Notice, I did not say "diet", and the only reason I did not say "exercise" is because the word tends to scare people off. Exercise is huffing and puffing and feeling bad, while "activity" can be a walk in the park - literally and figuratively.

So, the 9 items below are intended to enhance the effects of the two major aspects of a healthy weight loss program - nutrition and exercise...I mean activity, of course.

1. **Make a Food Diary and More:** You will often see advice to begin a weight loss program by writing down everything you eat for a few days. This means everything related to eating...what, when, where, how you felt, who you were with. As part of your "exercise program", I am going to ask you to pick up that pencil or pen a little more as you will see below.
2. **Take Your Time When You Eat:** When your body begins to signal that it is hungry, it will take approximately 20 minutes for anything you eat to make that signal go away. This is a fact, but it is also ammunition. If you stuff down a 750 calorie burger in two minutes, you still have to wait about 18 minutes more for the hunger signals to subside. Don't go grab a bag of french fries because you just ate a burger and are "still hungry". Hunger is your body's way of saying that it needs fuel, and you are right to respond to that message, but remember the 20 minutes you have to wait before your body opens the envelope, turns up the light, puts on its glasses and reads the food message you sent.
3. **Eat Things You Like:** I could write a couple of thousand words on this item alone! However, to keep it simple, just think logically. How long have you, or anyone else, ever stayed on a diet of foods they didn't like? It's bad enough that you psychologically blackmail yourself every time you "go on a diet", and we won't even go into what happens with your cortisol levels. If you are trying to exist and subsist on foods you don't like, and avoiding the ones you do, you won't stay on that diet very long...at least not without great willpower and determination.
4. **Eat The Bulk Of Your Calories Early In The Day:** Eating a good breakfast and lunch, not to mention a few healthy snacks along the way, can help prevent overeating throughout the day and make it easier to control the intake of excess calories in the evening and before bed. Also, eating more calories earlier in the day helps provide the energy fuel you need for your...ahem...activity.
5. **Plan Your Exercise Times And Activities:** Hey! I got both words in that one. Okay, let's be real. You need some exercise, but if you leave to chance or "work it in" somewhere, it won't get done. Schedule it, plan it, and modify it if you have to, but make it as important and regular as bathing. This is where you pick up the pencil again. Write it down! Put it in your appointment book. If you don't have an appointment book, go buy one and write down when, where, and how you are going to exercise.
6. **Plan To Avoid Temptations:** We all have them. Some place, some activity, some foods, some people, something trips some kind of trigger inside and we eat more than we should, or we eat the wrong things. Plan ahead, see these things coming and arrange to avoid them. Pick up the pencil again and write it down. Scan the list occasionally so that you won't get caught off guard. Be proactive, which brings us to the next point.
7. **Plan Things To Take Your Mind Off The Desire To Eat:** It can be something as simple as some hobby that occupies your hands and brain. Pick up the pencil again, and make a list. You'll be surprised at how easy it is for your mind to go blank when the desire to eat hits. Having a list prepared brings you back to reality and gives you a tool to continue your weight loss program
8. **Focus On Health And Fitness:** It's always great to have goals, and you need them to help you chart your course to success whether in life, your job, or in your weight loss program. It is also great to have plans and guidelines,

but if your goal is to weigh what you weighed in high school, and if your plan is to eat two from column A and one from Column C, except on Tuesdays if you have had a glass of buttermilk, you are going to find the whole mess confusing and impossible to attain. Go back to basics. You know the pie has too much sugar, so eat an apple instead. You know you need to take the walk, so don't sit down and watch TV. Watching TV and the pie CAN be a reward sometimes, but your goal should be to do the things that are geared towards your health and fitness. Do that and you will find that the weight loss program just hums along in the background doing its thing and doing it well.

9. When It Comes To Eating, Get Real: As I hinted above, one piece of pie is NOT going to hurt...not if you are doing the other things you need to do to succeed. However, eating pie every day and in large quantities will hurt, even if you are doing everything else properly. However, there will be times that events will place you in situations where it is nearly impossible to "stay on your diet"...or your sensible, healthy weight loss plan. Do what you can, make adjustments if possible, but just accept the inevitable for a day or two.

For example, if you normally dread Thanksgiving get-togethers because of the temptation to overeat, why not work sensibly and calmly Sunday through Wednesday and enjoy the heck out of that particular Thursday? Your weight loss program is NOT ruined just because you took a day off and ate a kazillion pounds of Mom's turkey and Aunt Grace's stuffing! Go ahead. Take some turkey and stuffing home with you for later...after you've had a couple of days to get back on your program. It can be another reward and a reminder that you don't have to give up everything to get where you want to go.

Donovan Baldwin is a Dallas area writer. A graduate of the University Of West Florida (1973) with a BA in accounting, he is a member of Mensa and has held several managerial positions. He has written poetry and essays for his own use, and instructional media in many of the positions he held. After his retirement from the U. S. Army in 1995, he began writing articles on various subjects for websites he owned as well as for use by other webmasters. He has a keen interest in health, fitness, diet, and weight loss. He has a blog on [weight loss](http://nodiet4me.blogspot.com) at <http://nodiet4me.blogspot.com>, and a web page where he provides brief reviews of products related to [weight loss](#) and health.

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