

Getting Started

Step 1 - Making A Commitment

Examine reasons why you wish to lose weight or control your weight in terms of your physical health, mental health, relationships, work etc.

For example, examine the following statements and see how you feel about each one:

I want to lose weight to increase my energy level.

I want to look more attractive.

I want to be able to move more easily.

I want to be able to be physically active.

I want to feel good physically.

I want to be able to fit in my old clothes.

I want to like the way I look in photographs.

I am often depressed about my weight.

I'm afraid I'll lose my spouse/partner because of my weight.

I am satisfied with myself as a person. Okay, so you think you're committed, but be aware that being committed to any task or project takes much more than simply stating the fact. Without adequate thought and planning, most commitments will not last long, particularly where the changing of lifestyle habits for weight control are concerned.

Commitment takes much more strength of mind and purpose. The "eggs and bacon" analogy helps demonstrate the difference between commitment versus simple involvement: the chicken that provided the eggs was simply involved in that particular breakfast; the pig that provided the bacon was fully committed!

Reference Library Articles:

Body Fat Distribution & Health Step 2: Preparing Mentally - Beating Barriers to Lifestyle Change Successful weight control means making lifestyle changes with regard to diet and physical activity as well as adopting a positive mental outlook and high level of motivation. All this takes a lot of dedication and attention to the psychological issues that can intrude into and disrupt our good intentions.

In most cases, the only barriers to success are those barriers that we impose upon ourselves.

Another analogy - the 'Mexican jumping fleas' analogy: When placed in a glass jar, Mexican jumping fleas easily escape. Place a lid on the jar, and the fleas bump their heads on the lid. They soon learn to only jump to a height just below the lid. Now, take off the lid and what happens?

You'd think that the fleas would immediately escape; but, no, they keep jumping to the same height as though the lid was still there. The lid represents the mental barrier that we impose upon ourselves.

We need to plan a defense to beat the barriers that will surely arise during our attempts to lead a healthy, balanced, active lifestyle. To avoid the dropout syndrome, you need to create a lifestyle defense plan that anticipates the obstacles ahead and protects your new habits while they are still unfamiliar and vulnerable.

Your written lifestyle defense plan should include in-depth answers to the following four questions:

How Much Do I Want This?

How will this change fit into your values and beliefs about what is important in life? What trade-offs are you willing to make to achieve the change? To make this change, I will:

What Stands In My Way?

Is your work schedule, financial situation or lack of family support likely to become a problem (or an excuse)? Have certain people, activities or attitudes blocked your progress in the past? You should also consider your fears and how to counter them.

Identify potential barriers and plan now for how you will meet these obstacles head-on. (for example, "I will tell my boss about my program and refuse to let new work-related projects sabotage my health.")

Potential barriers, and how I will meet them:

Where Is My Support?

Plan your support system. To whom will you turn for advice and encouragement (your family, friends, medical professionals, trainer)? Which resources (internet sites, books, videos, equipment, clothing) will inspire you to succeed?

Sources of support:

What Does Success Mean To Me?

How will you know when you have accomplished your goal? What will it look and feel like to you? Remember to focus on the process of changing, not just out the outcome. For example, "I will be walking regularly for one hour, three times a week. I'll feel invigorated and more confident about my body, and I'll remember to congratulate myself often. My friends will know this new habit is part of my schedule and I'm sticking to it. I'll have appropriate shoes and comfortable clothes to wear while I work out. I'll think of this new habit as a gift I'm giving myself - time I need, not just for my health, but to keep my life in balance."

When I am successful, I will: