

6 KEYS

TO MAKING ANY WEIGHT LOSS PROGRAM WORK



BETTY FELLOWS

About Me

I've noticed that so many people I know lose weight but then gain it back. Is this something you have experienced? In my life, I've done this many times. I started my first diet 50 years ago, as a teenager. I was very excited when I lost the weight. Can you imagine my frustration when 4 months later I had gained it all back. Since then, I've repeated that more times than I can remember. I never planned to gain the weight back but always did.

Three years ago I decided to lose weight again, knowing that it is harder to lose weight as you are older, I had to find a way to keep it off. I've lost 85 pounds and have kept it off. I discovered that keeping weight off is much more than food. These 6 keys are what I've used to keep the weight off.

Setting yourself up to succeed

First, find a diet buddy. A diet buddy will help you keep motivated. You can share your successes and your challenges.

I found that taking a few steps before I got started made all the difference. These steps will be different if you live alone or if you live with others. If you live with others try negotiating kitchen, cooking and shopping with them.

Getting those you live with to buy in to do some of the shopping and cooking and to try some of the healthier foods you make. It is also important to get them to support your diet as it will make your life easier.

When I started my diet I was also the caretaker for my Mom. I did all the shopping so that was easy. I still needed to buy some items, especially candy, that I would not be eating. For those items I could put them in her room.

Preparing your kitchen

Out of sight, out of mind! First step is to remove the food you will no longer be eating. Community food banks are great places to donate food. I gave away all my chips and chocolate bars.

If you share your home with others, see if you can reorganize the cabinets and use separate cabinets (or shelves) for those items you will not be eating. This includes some “junk food”, sweets, possibly breads. Do the same thing with your refrigerator.

Shopping

Do you do all the shopping or do you have a spouse or other adult that can do the shopping for the foods they want? Are the other adults able to shop for those items you don't eat?

I always shop with a grocery list and I don't buy anything that isn't on it. That really helps me avoid the products that I don't want to eat while I'm dieting and maintaining my weight.

I've heard all my life, "don't shop when you are hungry." The reason for that is everything looks good when you are hungry. It is also harder to resist snacks or sweets. I've found that it is true. I try to shop after a meal.

I find that avoiding or limiting process foods is good. I'm big on reading labels and if I see ingredients that are synthetic I avoid it. I'm buying more fresh vegetables and fruit really has helped.

Cooking and preparing food in advance

One of the times people run into problems sticking with their diets is when they are really tired and/or really hungry. Have you come home exhausted and just want something, anything to eat and you wanted it now? I've found having something ready is a huge help.

I now have pre-cut jicama in the refrigerator will take the edge off my hunger so I can then make better decisions about what to eat next. I also have "go to meals" which I made and froze that can be thawed & heated in the microwave.

Finding healthy recipes. There are a number of sites that have healthy recipes which include nutritional values. Those sites all have the option of printing a shopping list of the ingredients.

Experiment with new recipes. I make the recipes which usually serves 4 to 6 people and freeze the extra servings. That saves me time going forward. But if it turns out I don't like the meal then I can dispose of it.

Cooking soups, frittatas, fish and other dishes and the packaging them in individual servings and freezing really great. Many soups are low in calories and are good for cold weather. I often set up cooking days when I will cook many different items and then freeze them.

Exercise

It is possible to lose weight without exercise but it is a lot harder. We lose weight by burning more calories than we take in. So if you don't add exercise you have to cut back even more on calories.

First, find an exercise buddy. They may or may not be the same person as your diet buddy. A buddy will help you keep going, even when you are feeling unmotivated.

What counts as exercise. Everyday life activities count towards your exercise goal. There is a fancy name for it: non-exercise activity thermogenesis or NEAT. That includes cleaning the house, gardening, any amount of walking including in malls, warehouse stores, grocery stores, etc. Anytime you are not sitting counts as movement/exercise.

Walking is a great exercise, doesn't require special equipment and can be done anywhere. In bad weather you can also walk in warehouse stores, megastores and indoor malls.

If you have a dog, your dog will love to walk with you. If you don't have a dog, borrow your neighbor's dog. If you enjoy it you can even become a dog walker and earn a little extra money. Many indoor malls are dog friendly.

I started exercising slowly and then increasing it. I starting walking my dog after breakfast, 3 times a week. I increased that until I was walking daily. Then I made the walk longer. My next increase was to walk him after lunch and finally I added either before or after dinner.

I'm walking my dog 2 to 3 times a day, every day. I'm now checking out 15 minute HIIT workouts in YouTube. YouTube has a lot of HIIT, High-Intensity Interval Training exercise videos. You can search YouTube for: HIIT for bad backs, for bad knees, for beginners, for weight loss, etc.

You can, of course, join a gym or hire a trainer. That is good but can be expensive. We I have had a trainer in the past she really kept me motivated as I knew If I didn't work-out between sessions with her she would know that I hadn't.

Some exercises take a while to learn the correct form which a trainer will really help with.

Keeping track of what you do

One way of finding out what is working for you is to track what you are doing. This includes food and exercise and weight. There are various ways of doing the tracking.

- Weight. I weigh myself almost every morning, before breakfast. I then update the weight in myfitnesspal.
- Food journal. I started food journaling 3 years ago. Aft first I just used an old fashion paper notebook. Then I found an app that I could easily use. I'm using the free myfitnesspal app from myfitnesspal.com
- walking/exercise tracker.
I started out with a pedometer and eventually moved to the fitbit flex. I have myfitnesspal tied into fitbit so I can view everything from the one app.