

Burn the Fat, Keep it Off

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We often discuss ways to burn off excess fat and calories, but what we do to take off weight is only a small part of the equation – keeping it off needs just as much attention, probably more.

Why can't we keep it off?

Here's my belief: When we desperately want to lose weight we engage in activities that are too darn difficult to maintain. For example, we drastically reduce our caloric intake – eat too much less – or too differently - to be able to keep doing it for very long.

We start an exercise program that is too demanding – too physically tough, takes too much time, is too expensive - to keep up for very long. Soon we just stop doing them. Then, very often, because we cannot maintain the program that we set up, we have a backlash. We punish ourselves emotionally and physically by overeating, not exercising at all, and basically giving up.

Then, a few weeks or months or years later, we become desperate to lose weight again, and we start another, "too difficult" plan to take the weight off, and once again it fails. This cycle goes on and on for so many people.

How do we stop this (try to lose weight/give up) cycle?

Here's what I suggest:

1. Take a good hard look at your past attempts and assess what is realistic and what is just too unlikely for you to sustain?
2. Don't be hard on yourself about the past, it's done, it's gone, it's over, but useful for informing the future.
3. Accept the fact that work is involved. You are going to have to change your ways, give up some things, adjust, adapt, and accept that a new way of eating and a new level of activity will take a concerted and focused and deliberate effort.
4. Be your own champion. Give yourself realistic goals and build yourself a support system, but

remember that you and only you can make this happen; you must champion the change.

5. Don't let a lapse, or setback, in your new plan become a relapse or ending to something that you have started. There will be mistakes, missed workouts and unplanned meal experiences but that is all part of the program when you are doing something for the long haul. Being able to stick with it means allowing for lapses.

6. No more "if – thens." If I lose weight, then I will buy a new outfit/look for a new job/start dating – no. Your life is in session now; so don't act as if it will begin when you lose the weight. Getting yourself to engage and take action in all areas of your life will help you champion your own fitness/weight loss program to success.

I know you can do this if you start off with a realistic idea of what your plan should and shouldn't look like (#1). If you are kind to yourself (#2) you'll be more likely to keep going when the going gets tough (and when your plan doesn't look exactly like you thought it would).

Your desire to change must be matched by an effortful willingness to change (#3), and you'd do well to invite other caring individuals into your plan (#4) while you remember that your opinion (and decision) is really the one that matters. Progress moves forward and back (#5) and now is the time (#6) to make your commitment to not just lose weight but live healthfully from here on out.

Peace and Happy Healthy Trails,
Debbie Rocker