

## Staying On Track Over the Weekend

*“I’ve been good all week long with my eating and exercise. The weekend is here and I just want to relax and have some fun. All my hard work goes out the window! Oh well, I’ll start over again on Monday.”*

If you’re like most people, the weekends are not “planned” as well as the weekdays are. Weekends are less structured and vary from week to week. You may have a wedding one weekend, go out to the movies another weekend, enjoy a road trip the next weekend. These types of events lead us to poor meal planning. Without a plan, you’re more likely to stray from the healthy habits you have been working so hard to develop.

So how can you avoid stalling your progress or even gaining weight over the weekend after you have successfully lost throughout the week? Here are a few tips:

- Plan family activities like bike rides or walks in the park. This builds in exercise, but also includes family time. If you are outdoors for long periods of time, pack a healthy “lean and green” picnic and enjoy that with the family.
- Carry a water bottle with you to your weekend activities. Just like during the week, it’s important that you get enough water. Also, having water handy helps you to avoid high calorie sodas and juices.
- If you are doing some mall shopping, avoid the Food Court. Instead, pack some portion controlled meals or Ready To Drink Shakes in case you get hungry. If you must have a meal in the Food Court, pick a healthy option like Saladworks and watch your portion sizes.
- Plan ahead!! If you are going out to eat, find the restaurant's menu and nutritional information on-line. You’ll have plenty of time to make a healthy choice before you get there.
- Keep up with your food and exercise journal on the weekends. Use it to pinpoint your difficulties, so that you can evaluate ways to attack your weaknesses.
- Batch-cook some of your favorite foods over the weekend. This keeps you thinking about healthy choices and supplies you with enough food for the week so all you will have to do is reheat.
- Saturday or Sunday is a good day to choose as a rest day from exercise. Monday through Friday you should hit your workouts hard, but on the weekend, take a day off, and the other day, and go for something lighter like a walk.
- If you know you're going to a social event (wedding, birthday party, girls’ night out) where there will be foods not on your weight loss plan, have a shake or bar beforehand. That way you won’t feel as hungry and can enjoy a few of the healthier foods and not go overboard.
- Avoid alcohol. Easier said than done for some, but those empty alcohol calories will add up big time after only one drink. Fill your wine glass with diet iced tea or seltzer with lime instead.
- Talk with your Health Coach prior to the weekend and let him/her help you prepare to make the right choices.

Stop the viscous cycle of gaining over the weekend, losing during the week, which in fact keeps your weight loss at a plateau. “Starting over on Monday,” should be a thing of your old life. Start new every day! Keep your health the number one reason that you remain on course for a healthy lifestyle.