

What Is A Healthy Weight?

Your weight can affect your health and the way you feel about yourself. How much you weigh mainly depends on your lifestyle and your genes. A **healthy** weight is a weight that does not create health or other problems for you.

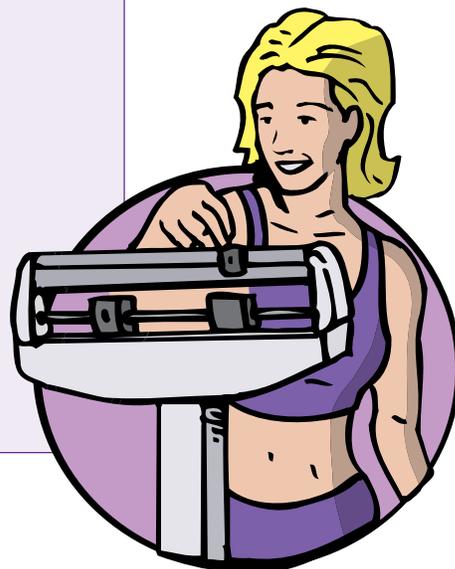
Many people think this means they need to be thin or skinny. But being as “skinny” as a fashion model may not be what is healthy for you. Not everyone can or should be thin. But with the right choices, everyone can be healthier.

Is my weight healthy?

Use the chart below to find the maximum weight that is healthy for your height.

MAXIMUM HEALTHY WEIGHT CHART

Height (ft, in)	Maximum Healthy Weight (lb)
5'0"	125
5'1"	125
5'2"	130
5'3"	135
5'4"	140
5'5"	145
5'6"	150
5'7"	155
5'8"	160
5'9"	165
5'10"	170
5'11"	175
6'0"	180



What is Body Mass Index (BMI)?

Body Mass Index (BMI) adjusts your weight for your height. The maximum healthy weights shown in the chart on page F-1 are based on BMI. The higher your BMI is, the greater your chances of heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, diabetes, osteoarthritis, some cancers, and/or sudden death.

Do I have a healthy BMI?

With a calculator, it is easy to figure out your BMI. Use this simple formula (using pounds and inches).

$$\text{BMI} = \frac{\text{Your weight X 703}}{\text{Your height X your height}}$$



The example below shows the BMI for Sarah, who is 5'3" (63") and weighs 150 pounds.

Step 1: Multiply Sarah's weight by 703: $150 \times 703 = 105,450$

Step 2: Multiply Sarah's height (in inches) by itself: $63 \times 63 = 3,969$

Step 3: Divide 105,450 (Step 1) by 3,969 (Step 2): $105,450 \div 3,969 = 26.56$

Step 4: Round up the number in Step 3: Sarah's BMI is **27** (overweight).

What does my BMI mean?

You are **underweight** if you have a BMI **less than 18**.

- ❖ Take note! You have a lower chance of getting heart disease and diabetes, but being underweight can also be unhealthy.
- ❖ Talk to your doctor if you recently have lost a lot of weight without trying: sudden weight loss can be a warning that you have a health problem.

You are at a **healthy weight** if you have a BMI **between 18 and 24**.

- ❖ Good job! Your weight does not increase your chances of having heart disease and other related health problems.
- ❖ Talk to your doctor: your cholesterol and triglyceride levels, your blood pressure, and your family history may still increase your chances of heart disease. Your doctor can help you figure out how to lower the risk.

You are **overweight** if you have a BMI **between 25 and 29**.

- ❖ Attention! Your weight increases your chances of having health problems such as heart disease, diabetes, stroke, osteoarthritis, and some cancers.
- ❖ Make eating well and being active part of your daily routine: you can get back to a healthy weight and live life to the fullest.

You are **obese** if you have a BMI of **30 or above**.

- ❖ Watch out! Your weight means you have a greater chance of getting heart disease, diabetes, stroke, osteoarthritis, and some cancers and/or you could die suddenly.
- ❖ Take steps now to change your lifestyle and lose weight: bringing your weight down can help you avoid serious health problems. Make eating well and being active part of your daily routine.

Bananas, Pears, and Apples

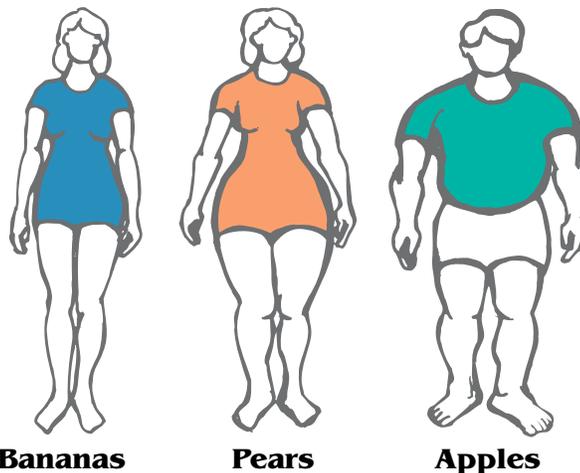
What are the three body shapes?

People are born with one of three basic body shapes: Bananas, Pears, and Apples.

Bananas are tall, thin and have low percent body fat. They may have trouble gaining weight or muscle.

Pears are larger at the bottom than the top. They have low to moderate body fat. They tend to gain and lose weight more easily.

Apples are larger on top than on the bottom. In other words, they have more weight around their waist and chest than in their hips. They tend to have big bones and medium to large percent body fat. They have a harder time losing weight.



What does my body shape have to do with my health?

Your health is not only affected by how much body fat you have, but by **where** it is. Apple-shaped people (with more fat around their waists) have a greater chance of having heart disease, diabetes, and other related diseases than people shaped like pears or bananas.

You can't change the basic body shape that you were born with. But that doesn't mean that you can't help prevent heart disease and other health problems. If you know your shape, you can stay healthy by eating healthier and being physically active. Apple-shaped people especially need to stay at a healthy weight.

What's MY body shape?

Look in the mirror. If you can't tell what shape you are, here's how to find out:

- ❖ Use a cloth tape measure. Wrap it around your waist, above your belly button. Write down the number in inches.
- ❖ Next, wrap the tape measure around the largest part of your hips. Write down the number in inches.
- ❖ Compare the two numbers:
 - Waist size greater than hip size = apple shape.
 - Waist size smaller than hip size = pear shape.
 - Waist, hips, and shoulders all about the same size = banana shape.
- ❖ If you have a waist size of more than **35 inches**, you may be more likely to have future health problems like type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease.

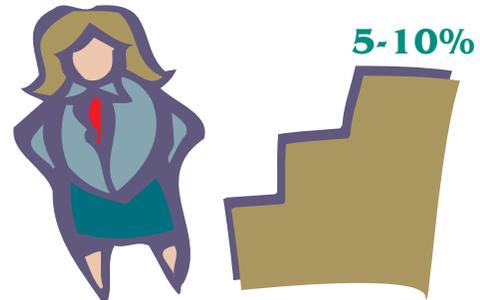
Getting Started

I am ready to lose weight. Where do I begin?

- ❖ Look at the *Maximum Healthy Weight* chart on page F-1. If you weigh more than the maximum healthy weight for your height, try to lose 5-10% of your body weight. (See the *Easy Math Chart* below.)
- ❖ For example, if you are 5'6" and you weigh 170 pounds, you could start by trying to lose 9-17 pounds.

Why 5-10%?

- ❖ Losing just 5-10% of your body weight can lower your chances of getting heart disease and diabetes.
- ❖ Losing 5-10% is a goal you can reach.
- ❖ Losing 5-10% can give you the confidence to lose even more.
- ❖ Best of all, it can help you feel better!

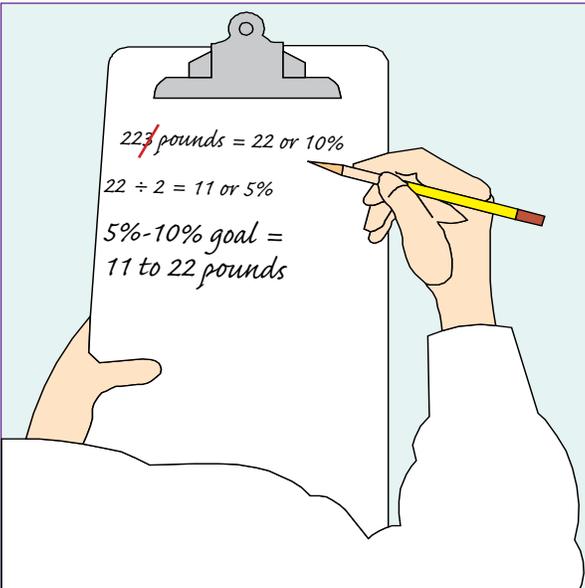


What if I want to lose more?

- ❖ If you want and need to lose more weight after losing 5-10%, go for it!
- ❖ Take things one step at a time. It's easier than trying to lose a lot of weight all at once.

How much should I lose each week?

- ❖ It's safe to lose 1-2 pounds a week. (That's about 4-8 pounds a month.)
- ❖ It's unhealthy to lose more than 2 pounds a week, and also harder to keep the weight off.



223 pounds = 22 or 10%
 $22 \div 2 = 11$ or 5%
5%-10% goal = 11 to 22 pounds

Easy Math Chart

To figure out **10%** of your current weight, take your weight and drop the last number:
~~223~~ pounds = 22 pounds

To figure out how much **5%** of your weight is, divide the 10% number by 2:
22 pounds \div 2 = 11 pounds

So if Sally weighs 220 pounds, her **5-10% goal** would be to **lose 11-22 pounds**.

Tip the Calorie Balance

When you eat food, you take in calories.

Calories in food come from fat, carbohydrates (starches and sugars), and protein. Alcohol also has calories. Fat and alcohol have the most calories per gram.

Calories measure the energy you use up or "burn."

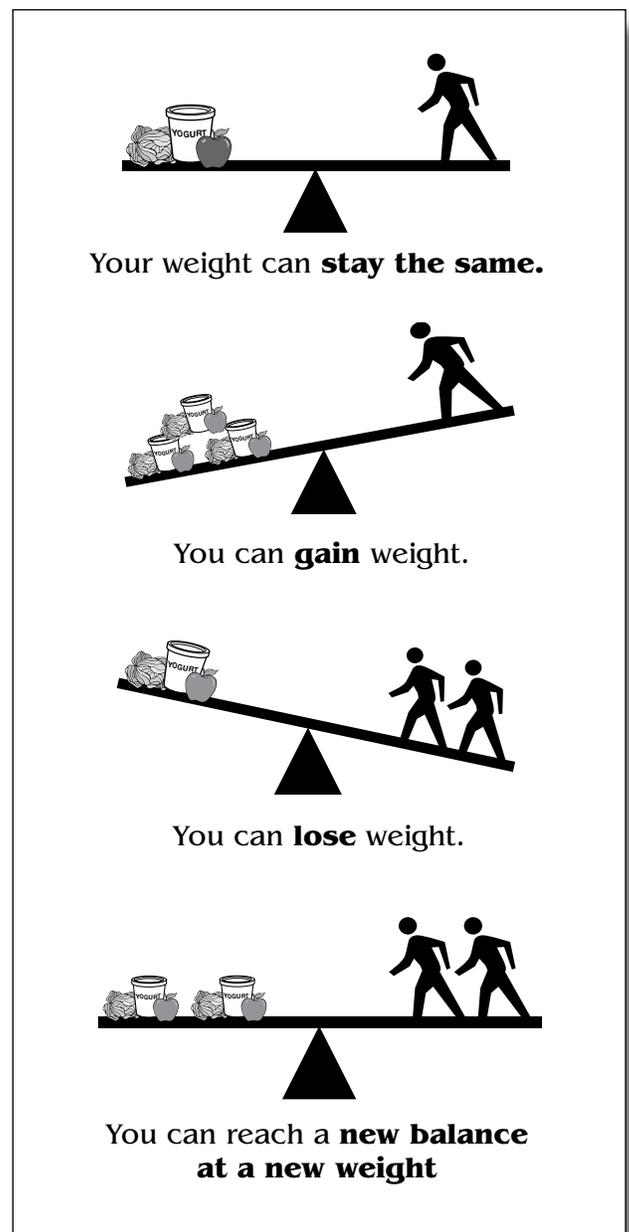
You use some calories just by breathing. You use even more calories when you are physically active. For example, one mile of brisk walking (15-20 minutes) burns about 100 calories.

Your weight is the balance between the calories (energy) you:

**Take in by eating, and
Use up by being active**

Remember:

- ❖ To lose weight, use more energy (by being more active) than you take in with the foods you eat.
- ❖ Slow, steady weight loss (1 or 2 pounds a week) is the best way to lose body fat.
- ❖ Make the changes part of your lifestyle...and you will keep the weight off.



Cutting 500 calories a day is as simple as 1, 2, 3!

1. Drink water at lunchtime instead of a 12-oz can of soda. – 140 calories
2. Eat a medium apple (81 calories) for dessert instead of a fudge nut brownie (340 calories). – 259 calories
3. Take a 15-20 minute brisk walk after dinner. – 100 calories

Total: – 499 calories

To lose:

1 pound per week

1 1/2 pounds per week

2 pounds per week

Tip the balance this much:

3,500 calories per week (or **500 each day** for 7 days)

5,250 calories per week (or **750 each day** for 7 days)

7,000 calories per week (or **1,000 each day** for 7 days)

See *Healthy Eating*, page B-1 for information on making healthy food choices.

Setting Goals

If you want to lose weight or control your weight, set the right goals and think SMART! Your goals should be:

1. **Specific:** Think about what activity you will do, and when or how you will do it. Setting a goal to “be more active” sounds good, but it is not specific.
2. **Measurable:** How will you know when you reach your goal? Instead of just planning to lose weight, decide how many pounds you would like to lose, and by when.
3. **Achievable:** Pick a goal that you know you can reach—don’t try to lose 20 pounds in one week. Remember, slow and steady wins the race!
4. **Realistic:** Don’t make your goal too hard. Is it realistic to decide to “walk for 60 minutes, seven days a week”? What happens if you have to work late or it rains? “Walk for 60 minutes, five days a week” may be more realistic for your situation.
5. **Time-bound:** Pick a time frame: Do you want to meet your goal next week or in three months? Setting a time limit will help you take action.



Write down your goal

Think about the goals you want to set. Do you want to **lose weight** or **stay at the same weight**? It might be helpful to fill out a weight loss or weight maintenance goal statement like the example below.

SMART weight loss goal:

My goal is to lose 4-5 pounds (*specific, measurable, achievable*) in 1 month (*time-bound*) by cutting 500 calories a day (*achievable*). I will cut 500 calories by drinking 4 cups of water instead of the 3 regular sodas that I have every day (*specific, realistic*). I will also do 60 minutes of brisk walking every day (*specific*).

SMART weight maintenance goal (for a 5'5" woman):

My goal is to maintain my weight at 140 pounds (*specific, measurable, achievable*). I will do this by checking my weight once a week (*time-bound*), eating at least 7 servings of vegetables and fruits each day (*specific, realistic*), and by doing 60 minutes of brisk walking on most days (*specific, realistic*).

Write down your own SMART weight loss or weight maintenance goal below. Keep it Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound.

My goal is: _____



Track your progress

It's good to keep track of how you're doing, but don't get hung up on numbers—the most important thing is to make some progress, even if it is just a little.

Watch your measurements.

Using a ribbon, start at your belly button and wrap the ribbon around your waist until one end meets the other, then mark it with a marker or dark pen. Repeat over time. As the marks on the ribbon get closer together, you will be able to see how you're doing.



If you are trying to *lose weight*, weigh yourself—but not too often.

Don't weigh yourself more than **once a week**. Weighing yourself every day is not helpful because:

- 1) Your weight will not change much from day to day, and
- 2) Weighing yourself a lot can make you feel more pressure.

If you are trying to *maintain your weight*, weigh yourself more often.

Weighing yourself more often can give you the information that you need to stay on track. It's easier to get back on track after 2 pounds of weight gain than after 5 pounds. The numbers on the scale can remind you to ask yourself these questions:

- ❖ **Are my portions right for me?** (Maybe you are eating more than you think when you snack between meals.)
- ❖ **Am I eating mostly healthy foods?** (Maybe you are eating too many salty foods and your body is holding on to more water.)
- ❖ **Do I need to step it up a notch?** (Maybe you need to go for longer walks or walk at a faster pace now that you are in better shape.)

Stick to your eating plan and physical activity goals. The results you want will come with time.

The Keys to Success

There are six keys to successfully losing weight and maintaining a healthy weight.

1. Know your food habits.

- ❖ Be aware of **what** you are eating.
 - Keep a food diary. Write down everything you eat or drink.
 - Read food labels. Know what you're putting into your body!
- ❖ Be aware of **how much** you are eating.
 - Being full (no longer hungry) is not the same as being stuffed (eating more than you need). Eat slowly. Ask yourself, "If I stopped eating right now, would I still feel hungry?" If your answer is NO, **stop eating**. You can eat the leftovers later!
 - Don't eat while you are driving, talking on the phone, watching TV, or reading. When you are doing other things, it's easy to overeat.

2. Take charge of what you eat.

- ❖ **Plan** ahead.
 - Know what situations and places make you overeat or eat unhealthy foods and try problem-solving skills. For example:
 - Put fruit on your desk, not candy.
 - If you crave doughnuts when you walk past the store, change your route.
 - Plan meals and shop at the beginning of the week so you're less tempted to eat out.
 - Shop from a list so you don't buy foods you don't need.
 - Stock your kitchen with healthy foods, and keep healthy snacks in your car or purse.
 - Have ingredients for quick meals on hand so that you can eat well even when you don't have a lot of time to cook.
 - Make your lunch the night before.
- ❖ Measure **portions**.
 - Put snack foods into small, single-serving ziplock bags.
 - Measure grains like brown rice and whole wheat pasta with measuring cups.
- ❖ Eat in the **kitchen or dining room**.
 - Eat only when you're hungry, not out of habit.
 - Don't eat in front of the TV!
- ❖ Don't go for **seconds**—serve your plate from the stove so you won't be tempted to reach for more.
- ❖ Eat out **less often**—save yourself extra pounds and save \$ too! When you do eat out, use the tips in *Eating "smart" at restaurants*, next page.



Eating “smart” at restaurants

Eating out can be fun, but if you’re trying to lose or maintain your weight, it can also cause problems. Use these tips:

- ❖ Avoid all-you-can eat restaurants. If you go, choose reasonable amounts of healthy foods.
- ❖ Don’t order super-sizes. Order smaller portions, or put half of what you order in a to-go box. Don’t be fooled—many items sold as a single portion or a “regular” size are actually 2 or more servings!
- ❖ Begin with a salad or broth-based soup—it will help fill you up with fewer calories. But remember: Cream soups have more calories, and a salad is only as healthy as the toppings on it. A serving of salad dressing is about 1-2 tablespoons.



3. Eat healthier foods.

- ❖ Make **small changes**.
 - Use your food diary to figure out what foods you can cut out and what foods you can replace with healthier options.
 - Make your own salad dressing with olive oil and vinegar or lemon juice.
 - Eat sharp cheeses—you get more flavor with smaller amounts.
 - Stay away from fried foods at fast food places and other restaurants—if you like fried foods, make your own at home with a small amount of vegetable oil.
 - Eat a small handful of nuts instead of snack chips, and have fresh fruit for dessert.
- ❖ Make **water** your beverage of choice.
 - Drink water or unsweetened tea instead of drinks with added sugars.
 - Instead of fruit juice, have fresh fruit.
 - Drink alcohol in moderation—wine and beer have calories, too! Try light beer instead of regular.
- ❖ Eat 5 or more servings of **vegetables** and about 4 servings of **fruit** a day.

Chew on this:

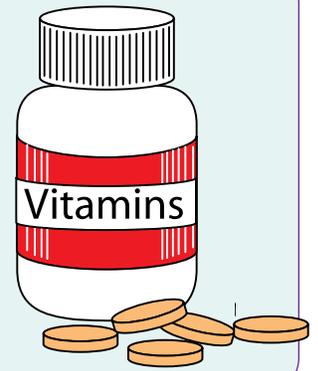
How many pounds would you gain by “supersizing” 3 times a week for 1 year at an average fast food restaurant?

Answer: 15 pounds!

Do I need to take vitamins?

Eating healthy and balanced foods is the best way to get the vitamins and minerals you need. However, you might want to take a multivitamin if you:

- ❖ are over 65
- ❖ are a postmenopausal woman
- ❖ are on a very low-calorie diet
- ❖ are on a low-carbohydrate diet
- ❖ eat a special diet
- ❖ cannot absorb nutrients well
- ❖ smoke
- ❖ drink a lot of alcohol



4. Do regular physical activity.

- ❖ Be aware of **how active** you are.
 - Write down minutes of daily physical activity.
- ❖ Do 60 minutes of physical activity **most days**.
 - Find an activity you enjoy. Try brisk walking or dancing to your favorite songs at home!
 - Increase your activity over time—work up to 60–90 minutes a day to keep weight off.
- ❖ Use a **pedometer**.
 - Wear a pedometer for a whole day and record how many steps you take. The next day, take a few more steps. Each day take more steps than the day before.
 - If you can, work your way up to 10,000 steps a day (between 4 and 5 miles).



5. Get support and learn to deal with stress.

- ❖ Build a **circle of support**.
 - Get support from people you know well who also want to lose or maintain weight.
 - Meet with your support group to talk about your weight loss goals and how you can help each other.
- ❖ **Manage stress** and negative thinking.
 - Stress can lead to emotional eating and weight gain. Learning to deal with stress and negative feelings can help you lose weight and keep it off.
- ❖ When you are stressed out, don't smoke, drink alcohol, or eat more than usual. You'll only feel worse.

6. Plan for slips and lapses.

- ❖ Take it **one day at a time**.
 - Everyone has good days and bad days—don't give up!
 - Don't get upset about "blowing" your diet. If you start eating a lot of unhealthy foods again, remind yourself why you want to lose weight. You are worth the effort!

Success Stories

Most eating plans will help you lose weight in a short period of time (usually 15-25 weeks). But keeping the weight off (or maintaining your current weight) is a lifelong effort. The National Weight Control Registry (NWCR) talks to people who have lost **at least 30 pounds** and kept the weight off **for a year or more**. Here are the secrets to their success:

Eating Plan:

- ❖ Low-calorie and low in saturated and trans fats
- ❖ Breakfast every day
- ❖ Three meals and two snacks per day

Physical Activity:

- ❖ Very little TV watching
- ❖ At least 60 minutes of activity each day
- ❖ Favorite physical activities:
 - Walking
 - Cycling
 - Weight lifting
 - Aerobics
 - Running
 - Stair climbing

Eating Out:

- ❖ Less than once a week at fast food restaurants
- ❖ About 2-3 times a week at non-fast food restaurants

Self-weighing:

- ❖ At least once a week

Your past doesn't have to be your future!

Most NWCR members had tried and failed to lose weight before, and almost half were overweight as a child or had family members who were obese.

You can feel better!

You will feel better when you lose weight and keep it off. Set aside time each day to do activities that you enjoy.

It's better to maintain than to gain!

Whatever your weight is, you can stay healthier by not gaining any more.



The “Skinny” on Diets and Weight Loss

Losing weight is hard for many people. Here are some questions and answers that can help you lose weight safely and keep it off.

Which diets are the best?

Today’s popular diets have many names but they basically all work the same way: by cutting calories. **Balanced** diets tell you how many calories to eat each day but let you eat most foods. **Reduced-fat** or **low-carbohydrate** diets have you cut calories either by eating fewer fats (especially saturated and trans fats) or fewer carbohydrates.

Balanced diets

These diets have you keep track of calories by reading labels on all foods and eating a moderate amount of fat. They:

Pros:

- ❖ Can help you lose weight and stay at a healthy weight.
- ❖ Make sure that you get important nutrients.
- ❖ May lower your “bad” cholesterol (LDL), raise “good” cholesterol (HDL) and lower your triglyceride levels.

Cons:

- ❖ Do **not** lead to dramatic weight loss during the first week(s), so people who want a big “jump start” may be disappointed.

Reduced-fat diets

These diets replace high-fat foods (fried foods, butter, high-fat cheese) with lower-fat versions (baked foods, imitation butter flavor, low-fat cheese). They:

Pros:

- ❖ Do not put many limits on your food choices.
- ❖ Lower your risk of heart disease because eating less saturated and trans fats helps lower cholesterol levels.

Cons:

- ❖ Do **not** lead to dramatic weight loss during the first week(s), so people who want a big “jump start” may be disappointed.
- ❖ May not work any better than higher fat diets. Higher fat diets can work just as well for weight loss; the key is to burn more calories (through physical activity) than your body takes in with the foods you eat.

Low-carbohydrate diets

These diets replace high-carbohydrate foods (breads, potatoes, fruit) with foods that are high in protein and fat (meat, nuts, eggs, cheese). They:

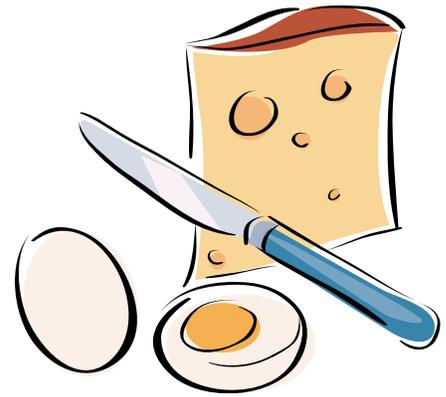
Pros:

- ❖ Help fill you up and cut your appetite so that you eat less and lose weight quickly.
- ❖ May raise your “good” cholesterol (HDL) and lower your triglyceride levels.
- ❖ May yield greater weight loss over 3 to 6 months.

Cons:

- ❖ Put a lot of limits on your food choices.
- ❖ Are missing some foods, so you may not get enough fiber and may need a daily multivitamin.
- ❖ Are difficult to stay on for more than 3 to 6 months.

The bottom line is that any diet (if followed correctly) can help you lose weight in the short term. But losing weight is easier than keeping the weight off. To stay at a healthy weight, you need to make changes in what you eat and how active you are, changes that can **last for a lifetime**. And that’s what *A New Leaf* is all about!



Can I take diet pills to lose weight?

Diet pills cut your appetite or make your body burn calories faster. But **think twice** before you take diet pills—the pills may help you lose weight but they can cause high blood pressure, water loss, poor food absorption, or stroke. You also have to keep taking the pills to keep the weight off, which is expensive and unsafe.

What about taking herbal weight-loss supplements?

We don’t know very much about whether herbal supplements can help people lose weight. Some weight loss supplements have bad side effects. This is especially true in people who have health problems or who are taking prescription or over-the-counter medicines. It is probably smart to stay clear of herbal supplements until we learn more about them.

Don’t be fooled!

If a diet or weight loss plan sounds “too good to be true,” it probably is. The only safe and healthy way to lose weight is to eat less (fewer calories) and move more (more physical activity).

What if I have always been heavy, or if I never get to a healthy weight for my height?

Your lifestyle (what you eat and how active you are) affects your body shape and your weight, but so do your genes. If your starting weight is about 200 pounds, you will get health benefits from losing as little as 10-20 pounds. No matter what your weight is, it helps to eat well and be active!



Thoughts, Feelings, And Weight: Break the Cycle!

Why do people overeat?

To lose weight, it helps to know why people overeat. For many people, food is a way to comfort themselves when they're having a hard time. Read Janet's story. Can you identify with her?

Janet's busy day

Janet has been trying to lose weight for 3 weeks and has been doing very well. She has been staying away from cookies and chips and eating more fruits and vegetables instead. But today, she had a big project due at work. The project kept her so busy that she:

- ❖ Didn't eat lunch.
- ❖ Felt stressed and anxious when her boss was critical.
- ❖ Came home tired, upset, and hungry.
- ❖ Went right to the kitchen.
- ❖ Saw cookies on the counter and ate some.
- ❖ Said to herself, "This diet is too hard and I have no willpower. I might as well forget it."
- ❖ Ate more cookies and felt worse.



What went wrong?

Janet got stuck in a negative cycle. She was tired, hungry, and upset. After eating the first few cookies, she:

- ❖ Got mad at herself for using the cookies to feel better.
- ❖ Blamed the diet for being "too hard" and blamed herself for lacking willpower.
- ❖ Ate more cookies and felt worse.

How could Janet use problem-solving skills?

- 1. Understand the problem:** Janet's first step is to understand that she ate the cookies because she was frustrated, hungry, and kept cookies in an easy-to-reach place.
- 2. List options:** Janet's options include packing lunch the night before, keeping cookies in a hard-to-reach place (or not buying them), and putting fruit on the counter instead.
- 3. Pick an option:** All of the options listed in #2 sound like good options!
- 4. Plan for roadblocks:** If Janet doesn't have time to take a lunch break, she could eat her packed lunch at her desk.
- 5. Try an option and continue to problem-solve.**

To understand what makes YOU eat unhealthy foods, see the problem-solving worksheet on the next page. Also see *Got Problems?*, page J-5.

Problem-solving Worksheet

Think about your own life and the way you eat. You can use the same problem-solving skills that Janet used to stop negative eating cycles (see *Negative Thoughts*, page F-17 and *Got Problems?*, page J-5).

1. Understanding: Many things can make you overeat or eat poorly:

- Feeling stressed at work.
- Fighting with your spouse or a friend.
- Dealing with a sick friend or family member.
- Feeling sad.

What makes you eat unhealthy foods?

2. Listing: What are your options? How can you avoid these problems? Or how can you make them easier to deal with so that you don't eat unhealthy "comfort" foods?

3. Choosing: Which option(s) would be easiest for you to do?

4. Planning: What roadblocks might come up? What could you do to deal with them?

5. Acting: When will you try the option(s) you selected?



Negative Thoughts

Everyone has negative thoughts. But negative thinking can make you feel bad, so that you may overeat or be less active. Overeating and inactivity can lead to more negative thinking and weight gain, creating a vicious cycle of self-defeat.



What are common types of negative thinking?

All or nothing

- ❖ Foods are either “good” or “bad.”
- ❖ You feel like either a complete success or a total failure.
- ❖ You are either “on” or “off” your weight loss program.

Excuses

- ❖ You blame something or someone for your problems.
- ❖ You “can’t help” not sticking to your healthy lifestyle goals.

Shoulds

- ❖ You expect yourself (and others) to be perfect and then feel disappointed, angry, or resentful when you (or they) fall short.

Not as good as

- ❖ You compare yourself to others.
- ❖ You feel bad because you don’t “measure up.”

Giving up

- ❖ You feel defeated.

How to change negative thoughts into positive thoughts

If you start down the path of negative thinking, take these steps:

1. Say “I’m doing it to myself.”
2. Imagine shouting “STOP!” to yourself. Picture a huge stop sign.
3. Ask yourself, “Is this really true?”
4. Talk back with a positive thought (see box, next page).

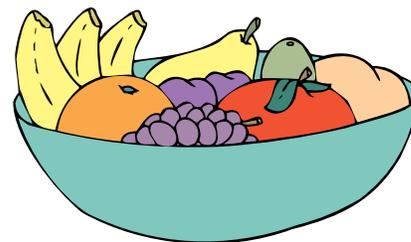
Instead of these negative thoughts...	Try thinking positive thoughts...
"I can never eat dessert again." (All or nothing)	"I can eat a little dessert and less of something else, or walk for 30 more minutes."
"I ate those chips. I'll never lose weight!" (All or nothing)	"One slip-up isn't the end of the world. I can get back on track."
"It's too cold to take a walk." (Excuses)	"I can try going for a walk and stop if I get too cold."
"I should have eaten less." (Should)	"It was my choice. Next time I can decide not to eat as much."
"Mary lost two pounds this week and I only lost one." (Not as good as)	"It's not a race. Mary and I can both lose weight and even help each other out."
"I'll never get it right." (Giving up)	"I'll try something different next time. It will get easier."

Janet's Experience

Janet got into the cycle of negative thinking—she made **excuses**, and felt like **giving up**:

- ❖ "This diet is too hard." (Excuses)
- ❖ "I have no willpower." (Giving up)

Sticking to a healthy eating plan and being busy are challenging, but losing weight and being healthy are very important to Janet. Problem-solving, positive thinking, and stress management could help Janet handle a busy day differently.



Janet's improved day

- ❖ Janet packed lunch the night before.
- ❖ When her boss was critical, Janet took a 10-minute break to calm down. After her break, Janet was able to think more positively: "I am a good worker. I know that I'm doing my best, so I will not take my boss's comments too personally."
- ❖ When Janet came home, she was tired and ready for a snack, but not upset.
- ❖ She went to the kitchen and saw a bowl of fruit on the counter, so she ate an apple.
- ❖ Janet thought: "I made it through a tough day of work and stuck to my goals for eating healthy snacks. I can do it!"
- ❖ Janet rewarded herself by taking a relaxing hot bath.

To figure out how YOU can turn negative thoughts into positive thoughts, and manage your stress, see the worksheet on the next page.

Positive Thinking and Stress Management Worksheet



Think about the kinds of negative thoughts you have. Do you see things as all or nothing? Do you make excuses or give up? Do you use “shoulds” or compare yourself to others?

It can take practice to learn how to problem-solve, plan ahead, change negative thoughts to positive thoughts, and manage your stress. But you CAN break the cycle! Just like Janet, you can learn to deal with stress, stop overeating, and meet your weight loss or weight maintenance goals (see *Negative Thoughts*, page F-17, and *How Can I Deal with Stress?*, page J-1).

What are some of your negative thoughts about losing weight or avoiding weight gain?

How can you change them to positive thoughts?

Remind yourself why losing weight (or maintaining your weight) and getting healthier are important to you.

Write down some successes that make you proud. (For example: Being a good parent, making the commitment to lose weight and get healthier, eating a salad instead of a burger for lunch.)

Getting Physically Active

If you're trying to lose or maintain your weight, the closer you can get to 60 minutes or more of physical activity a day, the better. It is easier to be physically active when you are having fun too! What types of activities do you enjoy? How can you make them a part of your day?

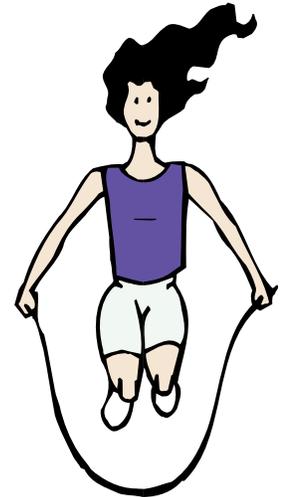
Below are some **everyday** activities and **exercise** activities that you can do to add physical activity to your day. Pick a few that you like. Try to work them into your daily routine. If you can talk but not sing while you are doing the activity, you are doing it "briskly" enough.

Everyday activity

Walking
Gardening
Washing windows or floors
Stair-walking
Pushing a stroller
Raking leaves
Washing and waxing a car
Shoveling snow

Exercise activity

Brisk walking
Dancing fast (socially or alone)
Water aerobics
Swimming laps
Jumping rope
Running
Playing volleyball



Refer to *Keeping Active*, page D-1, for more physical activity ideas!

