



Patient Resources

Steps to Achieving and Maintaining a Healthy Weight

There are a lot of fad diets, weight-loss programs, and pills that promise quick and easy weight loss—and they can be very tempting, but also very harmful to your health, not to mention ineffective. Achieving and maintaining a healthy weight requires long-term changes to lifestyle and health habits.

Making the decision to lose weight, change your lifestyle, and become healthier is a big step. We encourage you to follow the steps below and fill in the worksheet that follows to ensure your success.

Step 1: Commit

You have made the decision to adopt a healthier lifestyle, now it's time to commit to that decision. Individuals often find it helpful to create a contract to serve as a reminder and motivator of their commitment. This contract may include the amount of weight you want to lose, the date you'd like to lose the weight by, the nutritional changes you'll make to establish healthy eating habits, a plan to get regular physical activity, as well as the reasons why you want to lose weight: do you want to lower your risk of a health condition or disease? Do you want to feel more comfortable in your clothing? Do you want to have more energy to play with your children? Posting these reasons in a visible place may also be helpful, serving as a daily reminder and motivator to stay on the path towards healthy change.

Step 2: Assess your Starting Point

Begin by talking with your health care provider. He or she can evaluate your height, weight, and explore other health factors that you may need to consider. Schedule follow-up appointments to monitor changes in your weight and other related health conditions.

Next, begin a food diary; jot down everything that you eat and drink over the course of 3 days to help you become more aware of what, when and why you are eating. Including the mood that you are in will help you determine if there is a pattern of mindless and/or emotional eating.

As you begin to consider making lifestyle changes, identify potential obstacles. For example, does your work schedule make it difficult to get enough physical activity? Do your coworkers tend to bring in high-calorie, high-sugar foods, such as doughnuts, to the workplace to share with everyone? Will your friends and loved ones be supportive? Take the time to identify the barriers and solutions, or actions that you will take to stay on track.

Step 3: Create S.M.A.R.T Goals

There are three types of goals that you will create: long-term, short-term and S.M.A.R.T goals. Long-term goals are desired outcomes that you wish to accomplish over the course of one year. For example, your long-term goal may be that you would like to lose 40 pounds in the next year. Short-term goals are a more specific breakdown of your long-term goal that you wish to accomplish over the course of a few months. For example, your short-term goal may be that you would like to lose 10 pounds in three months (10 pounds every 3 months = a total of 40 pounds in 12 months). With that said, you can guess that S.M.A.R.T goals are even *more* specific than your short-term goals, and are accomplished over the course of one to three weeks. Use the attached worksheet to create your goals!

Step 4: Identify your Resources

Consider all the people and places that will be positive, supportive resources for you: is there a person that will be your champion and consistently support your efforts? Is there an area near your workplace where you can take a walk at lunchtime? Do you have other coworkers that might be interested in walking with you?

After identifying supportive individuals, talk to them about your goals and let them know that you would like them to be there to celebrate your successes, as well as to help keep you on track if things become tough.

Step 5: Monitor your Progress

Be sure to monitor your progress and celebrate the goals that you accomplish with non-food rewards such as a bouquet of flowers, a sport outing with your friends, or a night of pampering. Recognize when you are meeting your goals and be proud of your progress!

Evaluate your goals often; you may find that you need to tweak parts of your goal and that's okay! If you find yourself consistently achieving a goal, add an additional goal to help you continue your path to a healthier lifestyle.

My Wellness Goals

My long-term goal is to: _____

At the end of 3 months I would like to: _____

S.M.A.R.T Goal-Writing

Specific

- Who is involved: _____
- Where I will do this: _____
- When I will do this: _____
- How I will do this: _____

Therefore, my *specific* goal is to: _____

Measurable: I will track my progress by: _____

Achievable: Circle- Do you have the skills, knowledge and ability to achieve your
goal? Yes No

If no, rewrite: _____

Timely: I will reach my goal by the following date: _____

Barriers, Solutions, and Rewards

My potential barriers are: _____

I will work around these barriers by: _____

My healthy reward will be: _____

Contract

I, _____ (name), pledge to take the steps above to reach my S.M.A.R.T goal(s).

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____