

## **12 Secrets to Success in Weight Loss and Fitness**

A sound strategy is necessary to significantly change your body and your life; requiring focus, discipline, and fortitude. Follow these basic guidelines for optimal results with weight loss as well as muscle building or toning.

### **1. Be committed!**

The difference between a dream and making it reality is simple: commitment. You must actively pursue what you truly want. A solid decision leads to commitment; commitment leads to success. And we must keep re-committing at intervals along the way.

### **2. Have SMART goals: Specific, Measurable, Appropriate, Realistic, and Time-oriented.**

Tracking progress and making changes is much easier when you know exactly what you want to accomplish and by when. Write down your long and short-term goals. Long-term goals are what you want to accomplish by the end of your program, one to four months. Short-term goals are weekly, bi-weekly or monthly checkpoints for evaluating progress.

Your long-term goals may be to lose 20 pounds of fat while becoming more toned and increasing your level of energy. Your short-term goals could be to eat and exercise according to plan, keep records, weigh every other week, and have your body composition assessed once a month.

### **3. Eat five to six small meals/snacks a day.**

According to nutrition research, exercisers who cut calories and eat three meals a day or less may be training their bodies to slow down metabolism. Instead, researchers advise active people to eat about every three hours to keep calorie burning high and maintain energy levels throughout the day.

### **4. Eat some protein and complex carbohydrate with every meal or snack.**

Protein is helpful for weight loss and fitness for a few reasons. 1) It requires more energy by the body to digest and metabolize. 2) It is digested more slowly than carbohydrates, therefore it prolongs satiety. 3) It provides the amino acids needed for building muscle tissue. Whole grains, fruits, and vegetables on the other hand are very important for providing all the vitamins, minerals, and antioxidant compounds our bodies need for optimal health.

## **5. Choose appropriate portions.**

One of the driving factors in our nation's obesity epidemic is the mushrooming portion sizes of both food and beverages. Portion size is critical to weight management.

Try using the palm of your hand for a portion of protein and your fist for a portion of starchy food. An appropriate portion of avocado or nuts (healthy fats) would be 2-4 tablespoons.

## **6. Plan meals and snacks ahead of time.**

You'll need to invest in a small cooler and ice packs if your workplace doesn't have refrigeration. It's crucial to incorporate pre-preparation of daily food needs into your schedule. I have numerous strategies and much experience in this area so will probably be able to offer some useful suggestions with any problems you foresee or encounter.

## **7. Keep good records.**

Download and print the Progress Reports. These will help you to track your nutrition, exercise, and/or stress management protocol. Accurate records are indispensable for staying on track, revealing where modifications are needed, and overcoming hindrances to progress. You will need to email copies of these to me prior to each coaching session so that I can properly assess your progress and make recommendations.

## **8. Don't weigh yourself too frequently.**

The bathroom scale can fool you into thinking that you are making little to no progress. Your body weight can fluctuate throughout the day due to fluids and foods. You are shooting for real change in your overall body composition and health, and an increase in muscle can reflect no weight change even if fat is being lost. A body composition assessment is the best way to track your progress.

## **9. Expect plateaus.**

Over a period of a few months, you may experience a time where progress appears to slow down or even stop. This is expected. Keep in mind that you are replacing fat weight with muscle. Women especially may notice greater changes after week seven. Again, the best way to determine your progress is through body fat assessment and how you look in your clothes.

## **10. Plan to overcome obstacles.**

Consider issues that have interfered with health goals in the past and make plans for circumventing them. Make priorities in the areas of exercise time and food preparation. Make whatever changes you require to reduce temptations and maximize your chances of making healthy choices.

## **11. Find your emotional reason for staying on track.**

People who successfully change their body size and shape usually have an emotionally-charged reason that drives them. Some want a great body as a means to be successful in finding a relationship. Some desire greater self esteem or improved health.

Strong emotions can inspire people to persist through all obstacles in transforming their bodies. Consider your own emotional reasons and use them to stay committed to your effort.

## **12. Strive for consistency, not perfection.**

You can be sure there will be the occasional meal or snack that's not on the recommended food list. When you get off track in this way, don't allow it to slow you down. Enjoy the divergence, recommit to your goal, and get back on track with your next meal.