

## 9 Keys for Achieving Your Ideal Weight

### 1) **Be Realistic!**

Every day, we are bombarded by images in the media of skinny models and actresses, and many women believe they must resemble those ideals in order to be attractive. In reality, only a very small percentage of women can achieve such levels of thinness without extreme deprivation and obsession. Plus, the models and actresses themselves don't really look like what we see. They benefit from airbrushing, Photoshop, creative camera angles, personal trainers, make-up artists and hairstylists, not to mention plastic surgery!

Be realistic about weight and shape goals that are achievable for both your body type and your lifestyle. Take into consideration factors such as your age, body frame, activity level and work schedule when determining your ideal weight. Set goal that are feasible for you without sacrificing other areas of your life!

### 2) **Be Kind To Yourself**

While it is common for people to berate themselves for gaining weight, beating yourself up does *not* facilitate change. On the contrary, self-criticism can actually sabotage your success and prevent you from reaching your goals. While it is okay to want to change your weight and shape, the best results are achieved when you begin from a place of self-acceptance. Acknowledge what is great about your body, yourself and your life. Approaching life and your goals from a space of gratitude will put you in a much better frame of mind for reaching your weight-loss objectives.

### 3) **Visualize and Believe**

Get in touch with **WHY** you want to lose weight. How will you feel when you reach your ideal weight? How will your life be different? Developing a clear vision for how you will feel and what your life will look like after you lose the weight will help to propel you forward toward your goals. Once you have created your vision, however, it is critical that you *believe* that you can and will achieve it! It is often helpful to write a narrative about your vision and read it daily, in order to increase your confidence and keep your vision in the forefront of your mind at all times.

### 4) **Stop Dieting!**

How many times have you dieted, only to regain the lost weight - plus more - later? The truth is that diets don't work! 95% of dieters regain the weight they lose, and the remaining 5% only keep the weight off through obsession and deprivation. What an abysmal statistic, yet the diet industry is an over \$40 billion a year business in the US alone!

Get off the diet rollercoaster! All diets are based on the idea of deprivation and do not take into account that people are individuals and, as such, have different needs. There is no quick fix! The only way to achieve lasting weight loss is through lifestyle change. It may take longer, but you will be happier while you lose the weight, and the weight will stay off!

### 5) **Get In Touch With Your Body**

Many of us have been on so many diets that we have lost touch with our own bodies! We were all born with an innate ability to moderate our food intake. Think of a baby... If its mother tries to feed it when it's not hungry, it will turn its head, cry, or reject the food in some other way. Somewhere along the line, many of us have learned to eat for reasons other than physical hunger and to continue eating long past satiety. The good news, however, is that we can relearn the skills with which we were born. Tune in to your body and eat only when you are physically hungry. And when you have had enough, stop eating. Don't wait until you are stuffed to push the food away. You will feel better and you will gradually lose weight until you reach your genetically predisposed ideal weight.

## 6) **Eliminate Judgments!**

Let go of the notion that there are good and bad foods. The truth is that you can eat anything you want and still lose weight, as long as you eat only between hunger and satisfaction. Once you stop “outlawing” certain foods, the need to overeat them will vanish, as you’ll then know you can have these foods whenever you crave them. People ask me how I can bake cookies so often and not get fat. Well, it helps to know that whenever I want a cookie, I can have one (and that doesn’t mean I am being “bad,” either).

## 7) **Increase Your Awareness**

How many times have you sat in a movie theater and eaten an entire bucket of popcorn without even noticing? How often do you eat in front of the television and clean your plate without even tasting the food? It’s easy to lose sight of what you are putting in your mouth when you pair eating with other activities. Try **just eating** and notice the difference in your experience. Eating with awareness allows you to become more in touch with your body’s hunger and satiation signals. Allow yourself the luxury of really tasting your food and you’ll likely notice that you enjoy the food more and eat less overall.

## 8) **Find A Form of Exercise You Enjoy - and Do It!**

Don’t just engage in the popular fitness craze of the moment, or join a gym just because it seems like the thing to do. There are so many forms of physical activity out there that it’s hard to imagine you won’t be able to find at least one thing you enjoy. If you have trouble coming up with an enjoyable form of exercise, think back to your childhood... What did you love to do as a kid? Try it again and see if the passion is still there. Consider the following factors:

- Do you like to exercise alone or with others?
- Do you like to exercise indoors or outdoors?
- Do mornings, afternoons, or evenings work best for you?

Once you have identified one or more activities you’d like to try (or try again), clear some time for them. Schedule your exercise and aim to work out at least three times each week. Make appointments with yourself that you will honor just as you honor your business appointments and doctors’ visits. You’ll be glad you did!

## 9) **Deal With Your Emotions Directly**

Many of us eat for emotional reasons. Instead of dealing with our feelings, we bury them under food. This only serves to keep us from getting what we really want in life. Believe it or not, our emotional eating urge is a gift. It signals to us that there is an unmet need within us that needs to be fulfilled. The next time you feel like eating when you aren’t physically hungry, stop for a moment and check in with yourself. Ask yourself what it is that you’re **REALLY** hungry for. Is it companionship, love, self-expression, some free time, a vacation, or some other need outside of food? Once you identify the need (it may take some practice), try to come up with a baby step that you can take in the moment to address that need - and then take that step. As you do this over time, you will find that your desire to eat when you aren’t physically hungry will lessen. Plus, you will be getting more of what you really want in your life!

Here’s to achieving your ideal weight and having complete peace & freedom with food and your body!