Be a Successful “Loser”

with these Top 10 Weight-Loss Habits

The great news: You’ve lost weight—perhaps a lot of it! The other great news: You can keep it off with a little focus and motivation. In this session, you’ll learn the most helpful tips from folks like National Weight Control Registry (NWCR) participants. The NWCR has catalogued thousands of tips from 10,000-plus men and women who have, on average, lost a whopping 66 pounds and kept it off for an average of 5½ years.
The Top 10 Weight-Loss Habits

We’ve combined their insight with other weight maintenance wisdom from other successful “losers” around the country and zeroed in on their top 10 habits. Read on so you can adopt their savvy skills for yourself. (Thanks to Real Appeal, you have a great head start in joining this illustrious crew!)

1. Nip ‘Em in the Bud
   Even “successful losers” can gain back a pound or two. But what’s the main difference between people who were able to “re-lose” the weight and those who weren’t? The amount of weight regained. The smaller the gain, the easier to recover—that’s why it’s so important to step on the scale regularly and spring into action as soon as the number starts creeping up.

To reverse your weight gain, search out the source of the extra pounds. Maybe you’ve gotten a little lax with “treat” portions, or you’ve fallen off the exercise wagon. Could be that a major obstacle cropped up—a sudden illness in the family, or more business travel. A bit of backsliding is not a personal failing, simply a problem to be solved! Pinpoint the source, devise solutions, and your scale will start heading back in the right direction.

2. Keep On Moving
   Sure, exercise is helpful for weight loss—but it’s critical to maintenance. That’s been shown over and over in research studies. Make sure to get it in any way you can! Stick to a routine to “automate” your workout, so it would feel odd to miss it. Better to do a short workout—even just ten minutes—than skip it all together. And if you continue to challenge yourself, your body will get progressively leaner, even if your weight stays stable. You’ll feel more and more confident in tank tops and shorts while you also keep off those pounds.

3. Stay Social, Stay Successful
   Build a support system outside of Real Appeal that includes friends who’ve lost weight or are otherwise health conscious. Or just make it a priority to spend time with people who make you feel good about yourself. Social network research has found healthy habits can become “viral.” Studies suggest your weight can be influenced by as much as about 40 to 50 percent by those close to you. Plus, losing weight and working out is always more fun with a friend. (And definitely consider hiring (or bartering for) childcare, housecleaning, or lawn care if you find yourself too busy to work out or prepare healthy meals.)

Remember, we are here for you! You can always schedule a one-on-one with your coach for extra support. The two of you can brainstorm solutions to any weight-loss challenges that arise.

4. Rein in the “Portion Creep”
   After a while, all of us can get a little lax with portion size. Fortunately, you own the ultimate portion reality check: your Perfect Portion Plate. Use it faithfully for one week to reset your mind’s eye to recognize winning portion sizes. If you find restaurant meals are killing your portion control—maybe you’re polishing off big servings instead of splitting or bringing some home—take another look at “Eat Out and Still Lose Weight!” and “Restaurant Rescue 911” for useful restaurant tips that maximize enjoyment without sacrificing results.

5. Track, Track, and Track Some More
   Have you started to flake out on food tracking? Renew your interest by looking at tracking in a different way. Instead of a chore to be endured, you might see it as a moment of mindfulness, a ritual that helps you check in with yourself. Or you can geek out and look at tracking as a scientific experiment—you’re collecting data and noticing how your body responds to certain foods. But a big reason why tracking works is there’s not much room to slide when you see that extra dessert listed in black and white, or you notice you walked fewer minutes this week than last. Careful logging of food and exercise gives you great information about yourself, keeps you accountable, and can give you a soothing sense of control and order—all that, and it’s been scientifically proven to be one of the most helpful ways to keep off the weight.
   Track on!

Real Appeal Reminder:
Revisit the “Four Simple Steps to Solve Your Weight-Loss Problems” session for extra help.

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6 Rise and Shine... and Eat!
Eating breakfast every day was a strong predictor of weight maintenance success in the NWCR. Research shows when you eat more of your calories in the first half of the day versus the latter half, you can better control your weight.

Feel too time-pressed in the morning to make a meal?
Whip up a Real Appeal shake (recipes online or starting on page 151 of the Real Foods Guide). Load the blender the night before and stick it in the fridge—then take it out in the a.m., flip the switch, and voila! Breakfast in less than one minute. Check out many other quick breakfasts you can make in 5 minutes or less in your Real Foods guide.

7 Feel Your Feelings, Don’t Eat Them
You might have tamed your emotional eating enough to lose weight, but a new stressor in your life—such as a job loss, divorce or financial issue—triggered a new “outbreak.” Your three-pronged plan of attack:

1. Log food in your RealAppeal.com tracker, and use the “notes” section of the site to jot down situations and feelings around the time of eating (for example: “bored and restless,” “lonely/sad,” or “grrr...mad at my husband”). Capturing this emotional “data” will help you pinpoint emotional eating triggers.
2. Look back at Session 5 and start practicing its techniques, such as distraction and “riding the wave.”
3. Find ways to combat stress—take a walk with your dog, do a few yoga poses, sink into a bath with Epsom salts, play a round of video games with your kid. Don’t stop at one method—use as many as you can comfortably fit into your day or week. The lower your stress level, the less likely you’ll be to succumb to emotional eating.

NWCR participants who were most in control of emotional eating were 60% more likely to maintain their weight loss over a year’s time.

8 Be a Label Geek (Become a Label-Reading Pro)
You pick up a loaf of whole wheat bread and—yikes!—110 calories per slice! You check out another brand. Phew—only 70 calories per slice. Congrats! You just saved yourself 80 calories (40 calories per slice) on your next sandwich!

Research has found label readers consume 164 fewer calories daily and have diets that are lower in sugar, saturated fat and sodium, and higher in fiber. In a national survey run by Penn State researchers, successful maintainers were 71 percent more likely to read nutrition labels than people who weren’t able to maintain their weight loss.

9 Don’t Go Hungry
Researchers in Rhode Island found that maintainers who reported feeling more hungry over the 18 months of a study were more likely to gain back weight. If your stomach’s rumbling more often than you’d like, go back to Session 4 for a refresher on tricks to combat hunger, such as creating a balanced plate (protein’s especially good at combating hunger), or starting meals a little hungry (a “2” on the hunger scale) but not too hungry (a “1”).

If feeling too hungry is your stressor, think about how you can handle stress in other ways, such as taking a walk, doing some yoga, or playing a round of video games with your kid.

10 Earn Your 2-Year Badge
In the NWCR, people who maintained their weight loss for at least two years were more likely to be successful over the long haul. Think of these years as your weight loss “apprenticeship” to a lifelong healthy weight. A couple years of practice will allow all those healthy habits to become truly second nature.
Commitment
Contract

I really want to maintain my hard-earned weight loss!
To keep off the weight I’ll:

- Practice the habits of highly successful “losers” outlined in this session.

- If I start gaining weight, and can’t easily reverse the loss, I’ll schedule an appointment with my coach to come up with solutions.

- Meanwhile, I’ll continue my other healthy habits to the best of my ability.

My signature: ______________________________

I will keep off the weight!