Get the Scale Moving Again... in the Right Direction!

This session will not only help maximize your motivation, but it will also enable you to troubleshoot any factors that might be causing your weight loss to stall.
Plateaus happen, and it’s important to keep up your motivation when they strike. In fact, sticking to your Real Appeal plan is the key to pushing right past that plateau, so you can watch the numbers on the scale start dropping once again. Wondering why, despite all your hard work, the scale won’t budge? Here’s a quick primer on plateaus.

It can be intensely frustrating when the scale gets stuck on a certain number. Taking a close, honest look at the possible causes can help you find a solution and gives you back control so you can take positive action. Here are a few explanations why that scale gets stuck.

1. **You’re lighter.** Of course, slimming down is part of your goal, but it has an unexpected side effect: You end up burning fewer calories. That’s right, as you lose weight, your metabolic rate, the rate at which you burn calories, decreases. This is natural—without as much weight to support, you don’t have to expend as many calories doing everyday things, like walking or going up the stairs or during formal exercise. That means you’ll have to either cut more calories from your diet or increase your calorie burn by adding more activity to your day.

2. **You may have lost some muscle.** When you lose weight, you lose both fat and lean muscle tissue. This can cause your metabolism to take a hit, as muscle burns more calories than fat. While everyone loses some muscle when they slim down, you can prevent major losses by strength training. The workouts in the Real Moves fitness program can help you build more lean muscle. If you haven’t checked them out already, now just might be the time to do so.

3. **You’ve relaxed a bit.** In the beginning of your Real Appeal journey, you were likely extra diligent about following the plan to the letter. But as the weight comes off, sometimes our attention to details can diminish. Food records slip (“I’ll log my meals tomorrow”), workouts get skipped (“I don’t have time today”), treats begin to become more frequent (“Dessert and wine aren’t that big of a deal”). Don’t beat yourself up—it happens!

Instead, identify where you might be slipping a bit and commit to get right back on track.

Compare last week’s log to previous ones when you were losing weight. Ask yourself the questions on the next page.
What has changed about my diet?

Am I eating the same types and amounts of food?
☐ Yes  ☐ No

Do I skip writing down meals and/or snacks in my food records? Every day?
☐ Yes  ☐ No

Do I have the ingredients in my fridge/pantry right now to put together a healthy meal from my plan?
☐ Yes  ☐ No

Have I used the words “I’m too busy” to describe why I didn’t grocery shop or make a healthy food choice? How many times in the last two weeks?
☐ Yes  ☐ No

Did I get to the grocery store at least once in the last seven days?
☐ Yes  ☐ No

What has changed about my exercise habits?

Am I exercising at the same level as when I was losing? Do I need to challenge myself more in terms of intensity?
☐ Yes  ☐ No

Have I put off working out because I don’t have time? How many times a week has this happened?

Have I gotten bored with my workouts? Do I need to “switch it up”?
☐ Yes  ☐ No

Plateau Buster Quiz

If you can pinpoint a change between when you were losing and now, dig a little deeper and ask “why?” For instance, “Why am I eating half the number of veggies I was two months ago?” When you answer the “why,” you will most likely uncover a solution. For example: “I'm eating half the number of veggies I was two months ago because I don't have prepped veggies in the fridge that I can just grab and use.”

The solution: Buy pre-prepped veggies (like baby carrots, pre-washed greens, microwave-in-the-bag broccoli) or spend 15 minutes on the weekend washing and slicing veggies and store them in re-sealable bags for easy use.

Usually, the fix is a lot simpler than you think—it’s just a matter of taking a few minutes to nail down the specifics. Once you have that covered, you can implement those small changes into your plan and watch the numbers on the scale start dropping again. You might even schedule a one-on-one session with your coach to help you get back on track.
How to Get Back into the Weight Loss Groove

Remember the classic 80s song “Eye of the Tiger,” which talks about “rising up to the challenge of a rival”? Well, you just might have to challenge yourself a bit so you can push past what might be holding you back from the body of your dreams and your goal weight.

The good news is one or more of the following plateau-busting strategies (techniques you’ve likely used before as part of this Real Appeal program) can help get your weight loss going again. Once you’ve identified what’s keeping you down, you can take action to get back on track. And, just like Rocky, you will come out on top, and even better (and lighter) than before!

1 Get stronger.
   Cardio gets all the credit for calorie burn but resistance or strength training also helps increase your metabolic rate (the rate at which you burn calories). Doesn’t matter how you do it: resistance bands, free weights or weight machines—they’ll all add muscle. If you’ve not yet started strength training, now’s the time. (See the Real Moves Fitness Guide for more on strength training.) If you’re already doing so, you can make your routine more challenging by doing one or more of the following:
   - Increase the weight or move up to a thicker resistance band.
   - Add more reps. Instead of doing the move 10 times, for instance, do it 12 times.

   You know you’re at the right level when you “train to fatigue,” which means you simply cannot lift the weight or stretch the band one more time without sacrificing proper form!

2 Continue to plan ahead.
   Have you slacked off a bit with your meal planning? If so, take some time to do it again. It’s fine if you’ll be dining out a couple of those days—just make sure you plan that into your calendar and balance it out with lots of healthy meals and snacks from home in between.

3 Revisit your definition of treats.
   Treats can start out well-defined in terms of amount and frequency, but they can easily take a turn into a gray area. For instance, maybe you had been sticking to one small treat each day but have recently found yourself dipping into the office candy stash; plus you’ve started nibbling on chocolate after dinner as well as enjoying a more-than-occasional glass of wine. But, in your mind, you’re considering the office sweet to be your afternoon snack and the chocolate is a very small piece, so really, it’s just wine that is your treat, right? Any of this sound familiar? Review your food tracker and notice where you’re having treats, what they are, how much you’re having and how often they show up. That way, you can identify any problematic patterns and make better decisions for your waistline. If dining out is your downfall, flip to the next session. If sweets or other junk foods are sabotaging your efforts, review session 9 again.

4 Do a weekly grocery shopping run!
   If you’ve been skipping your weekly trip to the market or aren’t getting everything you need to make your Real Appeal meals, make a personal promise to get grocery shopping again (flip back to Session 6 for a refresher on shopping). Remember, it’s much easier to throw together a nutritious meal or good-for-you snack when all the essential ingredients are in your kitchen. The Staples Shopping List in Appendix D of the Real Foods Nutrition Guide will keep your kitchen well stocked.
5 Double-down on food tracking.
We’ve said it once and we’ll say it again: You need to log to lose! If you’ve stopped tracking your food daily—or you’re not being as detailed—it’s time to get back to logging every morsel you put in your mouth and every sip you slurp down. This one simple change will increase your odds by almost 100 percent of winning the weight-loss game. And don’t just leave it at that; review your records at the end of each day, or at the end of each week with your Real Appeal coach to see what worked and what didn’t.

7 Lose the “spirit”… temporarily.
People are often surprised by how big an effect removing alcohol can have on their weight. Alcohol contributes nothing in terms of nutrition and it can lower your inhibitions around food (those tater tots smothered in cheese might seem like a good idea after a couple drinks). In addition, alcohol can affect your sleeping, leaving you feeling too tired for a morning workout. Try it for a week or two to see if that helps jump-start your weight loss.

8 Kick your workouts up a notch.
You can do this by adding minutes or by increasing your intensity. And remember, activity is the gift that keeps on giving because not only do you burn calories during your workout, but you continue to burn calories at an increased rate for hours after you’ve left the gym. The more intense your workout, the longer and more intense your after-burn.

9 Ride it out.
It’s no fun feeling like you’re powerless over your plateau, but continuing your healthy eating and exercise routine is far from doing nothing. In fact, sometimes just staying the course is exactly what you need—it’s possible that your body needs some time to adjust to its new weight and eventually, you will begin dropping weight again. If you’ve tried everything and the scale still doesn’t budge, remind yourself that staying on track for a few weeks makes much more sense than trying something more drastic, like a crash diet or abandoning your Real Appeal plan. Stay connected with your Real Appeal coach and support group for additional inspiration. After a few weeks, when the scale is moving back down again, you’ll thank yourself.

10 Check your social calendar.
Your friends have a lot of influence over your eating and exercise choices. For instance, gym dates with your best pal followed by a home-cooked dinner will more often than not help you reach your weight-loss and health goals. On the other hand, a buddy who always insists on meeting for happy hour drinks or over the endless bread basket at your local chain restaurant is likely not helping much. This doesn’t mean you have to forgo friendships—rather, you’ll need to assess who you’re spending most of your time with and how that’s affecting your workouts and diet.

11 Try a new exercise.
Are you simply punching the exercise time clock and working out on autopilot? Trying a new class or machine at the gym or taking a new route on your walk or hike can give you a motivation boost to increase your intensity, and therefore, your calorie burn, a little more.

12 Recommit.
You’ve made goals for yourself, but you’re falling short. Did you make your goals too grand? Did an unexpected life event derail your best efforts? It might be time to reassess the goals you made and renew your personal promise of losing weight and getting healthy. Take a look at your Goals & Motivation page online or at the back of Volume One guide as well as past Commitment Contracts to help reignite your passion for the program—and recommit to yourself. Take care of YOU—it’s one of the best investments you can make. A brand new body and life will make it all worth it in the end.
Staying Motivated

Throughout your Real Appeal journey, you may have taken some time to explore what motivated you to join the program. Was it your family that prompted the change? Were you sick and tired of being sick and tired? Were you missing out on too many important life events because of your weight?

Whatever your reasons were, it’s time to revisit this list because it’s possible that after three months of following the plan, you may need to choose new motivators. For instance, if you set a few short-term goals for yourself—say, to stick to a regular workout schedule—you may have already achieved this goal. Congrats! Now it’s time to set another new goal for yourself. For instance, you can aim to increase your total workout minutes or up the intensity of each workout.

Maybe it’s a long-term goal that needs to be adjusted. For example, perhaps you’ve done so well that you’ve surpassed your original weight-loss goal. Or, maybe your original weight-loss goal was too lofty. Looking at how far you’ve come and where you are now can help you rethink what a realistic, healthy goal is, and set a new one.

Flip to the Commitment Contract to update your list of your personal short-term and long-term motivators.

Set your GOAL

Believe you can. You are almost there.

Think about. Why you started.

Trust yourself. You can do this.

Take care of your body. It’s the only place you have to live in.
Commitment Contract

I’ll maintain my motivation so I can push past plateaus.

I will not let plateaus throw me off track when they strike. Instead,

☐ I will identify possible causes of my plateau by reviewing my food and activity trackers.

☐ I will choose strategies for pushing past my plateau to get back “into the weight-loss groove.”

☐ I will review my current goals and either reset or recommit to them for long-term success.

☐ It’s time for my monthly check in! I will take my Week 12 photo, track my weight, BMI, and assess my progress using the Real Snapshot overview online.

My signature: ___________________________________________