

Stay on Top of Your Weight Loss

You've been doing your best to eat healthy and exercise. You've even lost a few pounds. But now the number on the scale just won't budge. It's not unusual for the needle to get stuck on a weight-loss plan. Learn what might be causing your plateau, and how to fight through to the next level. Here are the common pitfalls. Don't get discouraged if this describes your situation – read on to find solutions and get results.

1. Eating more than you burn off

Exercise is not a free ticket to eat everything in sight. Even if you work out, choose healthy foods and sensible servings. Avoid overloading on energy bars—Read labels and choose wisely. Some bars can be as bad for you as candy bars, and may lack fiber and other nutrients. You don't need extra food or sports drinks during exercise unless you work out for two hours or more.

2. Not eating enough

On the other hand, you do need enough calories to prevent your body from entering starvation mode. Eat a healthy snack before and after your workout. And be sure to include carbohydrates in your diet—they fuel an active lifestyle.

3. Dieting alone

Not physically active? Get started. It's tough to keep dropping pounds just by eating less. What's more, physical activity has a laundry list of health benefits beyond smaller jeans—work out and you'll sleep better, feel better mentally and physically, and have a lower risk of dying.

4. The same old routine

Already exercising? Add additional cardio workouts or bump up your intensity. You may need 60 to 90 minutes of moderate activity per day to continue losing weight. Try a new activity to keep yourself motivated. And watch your form—for example, don't lean on the handlebars of the stair climber.

5. Unrealistic goals

Not everyone is meant to be a size 2. Is your goal more than 5 to 10 percent lower than your original weight? You may be aiming too low. Focus on strategies to maintain your new, healthy body instead.

Sources

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QUICK TIP

Once you've lost some weight, redo your math. You'll need fewer daily calories when you're smaller. Burn 500 more calories than you eat every day to lose a pound per week.