

Keys to Successful Weight Management

With data collected over 11 years, here is what the National Weight Control Registry has learned about how people have effectively lost weight and kept it off:

Learn about “you” daily to keep the weight off

Most participants in the NWCR continuously monitor their eating habits. Many keep a daily food record to hold themselves accountable to their goals. They continuously learn about how to manage their own individual “high risk” situations such as eating when stressed or “cleaning the plate” out of habit rather than hunger.

Exercise is still required in Phase 2 of weight loss

We all know exercise is important for weight loss and health, but NWCR participants have taken exercise to new heights! On average, NWCR enrollees incorporate 60-90 minutes of moderate to high intensity exercise daily! The most popular exercise among NWCR participants is walking—on average 5-6 miles daily. These participants have demonstrated that you simply can’t eliminate exercise from a successful weight loss program.

Stay away from fad diets to avoid regaining your weight

While many NWCR enrollees tried fad diets in the past, the majority say that a low fat, high carbohydrate, moderate protein diet is what got them where they are today. Now they focus more on choosing foods that are nutrient dense and healthy.

Get an attitude adjustment to dieting and weight loss

Most NWCR participants had to change their thinking about dieting and weight loss. Some felt weight loss was impossible because “it’s in their genes” to be fat. Others had nearly given up because they had “failed” so many diets in the past. The key difference is that these same people finally gave up the “doom and gloom” attitude and faced this concept head on: A healthy lifestyle is a lifelong commitment and must be taken slowly, day by day.

Keeping the weight off: adopt and stick to your routine

It takes a long time to develop healthy habits, but once those habits are developed, stick to them! Over half of NWCR participants stick to their diet, lifestyle and exercise routine daily - even on holidays and in restaurants. In addition, most participants frequent restaurants no more than two or three times per week because of the difficulty of sticking to their lifestyle routine while dining out.

Hold yourself accountable to ensure you stick with the new routine

Many participants report that weighing yourself regularly, having commitments to others to exercise, or being accountable to a group is important. These extra “monitoring devices” help them to correct undesirable practices before they get too out of hand.

The lessons passed on by the participants in the NWCR are really nothing new. However, they provide valuable reinforcement nonetheless. Hard work, persistence, dedication, patience, and a daily commitment to health – not thinness – provide the keys to lasting weight loss and fitness. Start practicing some of their tips today and maybe one day you can be a NWCR participant yourself!