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When Weight Loss Efforts Come to a Halt

Weight loss can be extremely challenging, and it never seems to happen as quickly as most of us would like. According to the CDC, nearly half⁴ the U.S. population is trying to lose weight at any given time.

Most experts agree that a healthy rate⁵ of weight loss is one to two pounds per week. The trouble is, around the six-month mark, weight loss plateaus are common. When we fail to see positive results despite putting in a lot of effort, it can be demotivating. Setbacks often lead to feelings of frustration, and a lack of progress can lead us back to old, familiar behaviors that are misaligned with our goals.

Understanding how weight loss works can help you reframe your goals and expectations, so you can make earlier adjustments to your approach at key points along the way.

When your weight loss efforts come to a halt, focus on these areas to continue making progress toward your goals.

Exercise

The general recommendation for physical activity is about 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each week. However, if you are maintaining a previous weight loss, research⁶ has shown that you will need to bump that up to at least 300 minutes each week.

Nutrition

Eating a nutrient-rich diet that is high in fiber can help ensure you meet your nutritional needs without feeling hungry between meals. If you are working toward weight loss, choose minimally processed foods that are low in sugar, and watch your alcohol intake.

Sleep

Studies⁷ have linked insufficient sleep (less than 7 hours daily) to weight gain. Lack of sleep is believed to influence food cravings that can lead to overconsuming calories over the course of the day. Getting enough high-quality sleep is key if weight loss is among your goals.

Commitment

Staying committed to your goals is essential in order to reach them. While we know a lot about the physiological changes that occur with weight loss, it can be mysterious and unpredictable at times. Give yourself grace when you experience setbacks, and stay connected to the reasons behind your goals.



Having realistic expectations is essential when it comes to any goal, and weight loss is no exception.

4. https://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/losing_weight/index.html

5. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db313.htm>

6. <https://mccc.edu/pdf/dan103/1%20Diet%20and%20exercise%20for%20weight%20loss.pdf>

7. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5714285/>