



long-term weight-loss secrets

Losing weight may seem easy when compared to weight-loss maintenance. In the past, few individuals were thought to successfully *keep* weight off. But a recent study suggests that up to 25 percent of people who intentionally lose at least 10 percent of their initial weight, keep it off for five years or more.

weight loss vs keeping it off

Despite using different methods to initially lose weight, the National Weight Control Registry discovered that individuals who are successful in keeping weight off in the long run actually use similar behavioral strategies.

In an ongoing study of more than ten years, the U.S. Registry is considering the lifestyle and characteristics of people who have lost a minimum of 30 pounds—and kept it off for at least one year.

The magic bullet: changing your lifestyle permanently.

strategies to keep weight off

1. Eat breakfast daily. A high proportion of weight-loss maintainers give their metabolism a kick-start with breakfast; only 4 percent never eat breakfast.

2. Follow a low-fat diet and watch your calorie intake. Less than 1 percent of maintainers follow a low-carb-high-protein diet; they limit calories by watching their portion sizes and staying away from fatty foods.

3. Be active every day. Weight-loss maintainers accumulate 60 to 90 minutes of physical activity over the day (burning off around 400 calories); their average step count is 11,000 per day.

4. Limit TV viewing. Sixty-two percent watch ten or fewer hours per week thereby limiting their sedentary time; current recommendations for weight loss are to limit TV viewing to one hour per day.

5. Monitor yourself regularly. Maintainers keep a food diary to track their intake and remain aware of everything they put in their mouth; they also weigh themselves regularly.

6. Limit eating out occasions. This minimizes exposure to larger portion sizes and richer foods.

7. Be consistent in your effort. Those most consistent with their eating, including weekends and vacations, do the best; they are 1.5 times more likely to maintain their weight within five pounds over the year whereas cheaters gain the most weight. The good news is weight loss maintenance gets easier in two to five years.

Nutritionist Sue Radd is the award-winning author of *The Breakfast Book* and co-author of *Eat To Live*, internationally acclaimed for showing how savvy eating can combat cancer and heart disease and improve well-being. See the latest at <http://www.sueradd.com>.