

Top 10 Stick-to-It Tips

When you want to give up your diet, give these ideas a try instead

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WebMD Weight Loss Clinic

It's an inevitable part of any weight loss program: From time to time, you'll fall off the wagon. The key to getting back on, experts say, is to acquire the skills and self-knowledge that will enable you to recover after a relapse.

Here are 10 tips to help you get back on track.

1. Have a vision of success. "The mind is such a strong tool. Use it to achieve what you want," says Katherine Tallmadge, MA, RD, author of *Diet Simple*. For example, she suggests, visualize yourself dancing at an upcoming celebration in a fabulous black dress. Then, apply that vision every day to help you stay motivated.

2. Remind yourself what's at stake. When successful dieter Herb Ketteler is tempted to abandon his healthy eating and exercise plan, he tells himself that his health is worth the extra effort. "It's not healthy to keep gaining and losing tremendous amounts of weight," says Ketteler. "This has to be forever."

3. Control your environment. Successful losers don't rely on willpower, Tallmadge says. "Have healthy foods in the refrigerator so you're less likely to stop and grab something greasy on the way home from work." Even if your family isn't dieting, you can still keep tempting foods out of your kitchen, Tallmadge says: "If the family wants desserts, they can go to the ice cream shop for one serving."

4. Don't let yourself get too hungry. Tallmadge says the biggest cause of overeating is undereating. "People go too long without eating, then pig out when they're ravenously hungry," she says. "Including planned snacks in your routine is a great way to prevent binges."

5. Know what makes you vulnerable to overeating. "After midnight, I fall apart," Ketteler confesses. How does he avoid late-

night temptation? "I go to bed." For another person, temptation might come in the late afternoon, at the office vending machine, or when at a party or social event. The key is to know where your problem areas are and have a plan for dealing with them.

6. Beware restaurant overeating. At restaurants, rich foods and supersized portions can sway even the most determined dieter. Especially if you eat out often, look at it as a chance to practice good portion control. "There isn't a law that says you have to order an entrée every time you eat out," says Tallmadge. Pay attention to your appetite, and order a dinner salad or appetizer instead of a main dish. Or take half home in a doggie bag.

7. Plan indulgences. Rigid diets don't work, says Tallmadge, who has a weight-loss counseling practice in Washington, D.C. "I teach people how to slip and bounce back. Include treats each week without feeling guilty. Have a brownie every Friday."

8. Forgive yourself. Dieter Mary Mihaly says she never refers to indulgences as slips. "When I spent two weeks in Morocco, I enjoyed the culture and cuisine. It wasn't a slip. When I indulge over the holidays, I call it enjoying the holidays."

9. Have a cheering section. Having to account to someone else gives you a reason to hang in there when you can't muster determination from within. It doesn't matter where the support comes from -- a spouse, friend, co-worker, online "buddy," or whoever.

10. Remember that you have to keep working at it. "Two-thirds of our population is overweight, which means it's not natural to be slim and fit," says Tallmadge. "We don't walk two miles to work and back and forage for food every day, or live at a spa. It's easy to see thin people and think how lucky they are, but if they're over 30 or even 20, they're working at it."

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