

# Study: Stress management may contribute to weight loss

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(Medical Xpress)—Many people know it's hard to lose weight and keep it off. A researcher in the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment recently completed a study comparing the effectiveness of two new weight loss and maintenance intervention programs.

Kelly Webber, associate professor in the UK Department of Dietetics and Human Nutrition compared the effectiveness of an intuitive eating-based intervention to a [stress management](#)-based intervention, which was developed at the University of California, San Francisco.

"With [weight loss](#) we know that if you count calories and exercise you will lose weight, however a large percentage of people tend to regain that weight," Webber said. "I wanted to explore a couple of new avenues for producing lasting weight loss."

The intuitive eating intervention required people to regularly pay attention to their bodies and their hunger and fullness signals, or eat only when hungry and until they are full.

The stress management intervention helped people learn skills to better deal with stress.

The small pilot study included 26 participants from the Lexington area. As part of the study, Webber divided participants into two groups. The groups met either with Webber or a certified trainer in the stress

management intervention for 75 minutes twice a week for seven weeks.

Webber found that participants in the stress management intervention lost as much as 17 pounds during the time period and, on average, saw a significant decrease in [blood pressure](#). On average, participants in the intuitive eating intervention did not lose a significant amount of weight or have a decline in blood pressure. The weight loss results held true in a 14-week follow-up.

"So many people in my weight loss studies, myself included, say 'I'm a stress eater or I'm an emotional eater,' and this stress management based intervention seems to be getting at the root of the problem," Webber said.

Webber plans to conduct a longer study looking at stress management techniques for weight loss and maintenance starting in February.

"It's the very beginning of my exploration of this, but it's very encouraging," she said.

Provided by University of Kentucky

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