

Say no to yo-yo dieting

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(HealthDay)—New to weight loss or tired of yo-yo dieting? Learning "stability skills" first may lead to greater long-term weight loss success.

Many dieters regain up to 50 percent of the [weight](#) they lose within a year because they abandon the healthy lifestyle changes they made to lose the weight.

According to research done at Stanford University, the answer may be to learn "forever skills" first—skills you'll practice for life.

Researchers tested their concept by starting one group of women on an 8-week maintenance plan before any dieting began. The women learned how to be more active and eat healthy, with correct portion sizes and without feeling deprived.

They also were encouraged to approach dieting with more of a relaxed attitude. But they did learn how to deal with diet disruptions and even went through a simulated vacation during which they used new skills to stay within the prescribed calorie range in the face of high-fat and high-calorie meals.

Here are some stability skills to master:

- Weigh yourself every day.
- Practice mindful eating—awareness of what you're consuming.
- Eat in moderation.
- Make small cumulative changes over time.
- Reward yourself with non-food reinforcement.

Beyond education, the Stanford program left participants feeling confident they'd be able to maintain results after [weight loss](#). The benefits were visible at a one-year follow up: The women who first learned about maintenance and then dieted regained about 20 percent of their lost weight, far less than the 43 percent weight regain experienced by the [women](#) in the group who dieted first.

If you want to lose weight, it might pay to start with [maintenance](#) skills and develop a mindset more in tune with keeping lost weight off.

More information: The National Women's Health Resource Center has [5 tips to start practicing](#) right away.

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