

Research reveals self-monitoring behaviors and tracking tools key to long-term weight loss success

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New research from CSIRO, Australia's national science agency, has revealed that regular self-monitoring behaviors and tracking tools are the

secret to losing weight—and keeping it off.

The study initially mapped the total weight loss of 6602 CSIRO Total Wellbeing Diet members that had completed the 12-week program. It found 64% lost a clinically significant amount (>5 kilograms) of weight at one year, with a sustained average weight loss of 10.6kg, or 11.9% of their starting body weight.

The most successful of this group lost an average of 22.3kg, equivalent to 21.7% of their starting body weight.

To better understand the behaviors resulting in this success, CSIRO scientists conducted a further study to compare the usage patterns of various CSIRO Total Wellbeing Diet platform features. This second stage analysis revealed the perceived importance of tracking, self-monitoring and ongoing education to individuals.

Study participants who achieved weight loss exceeding 10% of their starting body weight used all of the CSIRO Total Wellbeing Diet's tools—weigh-ins, food diary, menu plan, exercise plan, program content, forum and food search—50% more than those who lost less than 5% over the same time period.

CSIRO research scientist Dr. Gilly Hendrie said using tools and support frameworks to educate around [diet](#) and nutrition was critical for ongoing societal health and lifestyle improvements, especially given that 67% of Australians are currently overweight or obese.

"There are no quick fixes when it comes to sustainable weight loss and a healthy lifestyle, and this study helps us to show that weight loss comes from a range of regular actions and positive behaviors," Dr. Hendrie said.

"It's repeatedly using Total Wellbeing Diet tools, while developing positive habits, that help people to come back to, and maintain, a healthy lifestyle. We're really happy to have more research that reinforces the critical role that lifestyle and behavior change plays in long term weight loss and management," she said.

Other key findings of the study included:

- It was most common (14.6% of study participants) for people to lose weight during the first six months of a weight loss journey and then enter a maintenance phase for the remainder of the year
- In spite of the maintenance phase, 54% of 738 participants surveyed who had lost 14kg or more had been able to continue weight loss after a plateau
- Most people reported that they were still monitoring their weight on a weekly basis (44%), or at least weekly (daily + weekly, 64%)
- Members who lost more than 10% of their body weight tended to view menu plans 70% more
- After the first 12 weeks, usage of the food diary was 2.5 to 3 times higher over the remainder of the year in members who lost 10% or more of their starting body weight.

CSIRO Total Wellbeing Diet member, Terry from Queensland, reinforced the importance of having ongoing access to the food and exercise tracker, menu plans and Facebook support group, crediting them to helping him maintain his 100kg [weight loss](#) for two years and nine months.

"The tools have created habits that are within me and now just part of my lifestyle," Terry said.

"Every weekend, I'm using the food tracker to create my own meal plan

before spending time in the kitchen to pre-prepare the meals for the busy work week ahead. With a little bit of preparation and accountability, eating well is really easy. There's less room to move off track as you know you already have a nutritious meal ready for you. There's less decision fatigue.

"It's also important to acknowledge that even though this is ideal, some weeks this doesn't happen. Last year, I let things slide a bit over the Christmas break. Rather than beat myself up, I just decided to simply refocus and reset by going back to basics—logging my weight and tracking my food intake. I was also kind to myself, something I picked up from others in the CSIRO Total Wellbeing Diet Facebook group.

"These days, I remind myself of how far I've come, reframing a setback as just part of the process, and an opportunity to reassess, refine and move forward." he said.

More information: Find out more about the [CSIRO Total Wellbeing Diet](#).

Provided by CSIRO

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