

Seven techniques to avoid weight regain, approved by experts

July 27 2023, by Henrietta Graham and Claire Madigan



Credit: AI-generated image ([disclaimer](#))

Losing weight is challenging. But as anyone who has ever successfully lost weight knows, it's avoiding weight re-gain that's the real challenge.

This is true no matter what method you follow to lose weight. For example, studies show that people who follow very low calorie diets

(between 800-1,200 calories per day) regain [between 26% and 121%](#) of their lost weight five years after treatment. People who follow behavioral weight management programs (such as WW, formerly Weight Watchers) regain [between 30-35%](#) of their lost weight after one year.

Even people who use weight loss medications, such as Wegovy, are shown to have regained [about two-thirds](#) of the weight they lost one year after stopping the drug.

There are many reasons why we regain the weight we lose. First, maintaining weight loss is [less rewarding](#) than seeing the number on the scale decrease while you're losing weight. This makes it hard to maintain motivation and continue looking after your weight.

Second, it's often difficult to maintain the lifestyle changes we made in order to lose weight—especially if these [changes are unrealistic](#) and hard to stick with in the long-term (such as very low-calorie diets or cutting out whole food groups).

Third, weight loss can trigger [increased production of hunger hormones](#)—and can even [slow your metabolism](#). These changes can make it difficult to resist overeating and can contribute to weight regain over time.

But while weight regain may be a [common experience](#), that doesn't mean there aren't many evidence-backed things you can still do to prevent it in the long run:

1. Be flexible

It's important to understand that maintaining a healthy weight will require lifelong management—so having rigid expectations and thinking you'll always adhere perfectly to your [lifestyle changes](#) is [unrealistic](#).

Don't feel guilty when you have a slip-up. Instead, make plans to get back on track as soon as possible. For example, if you think you may have overeaten on the weekend account for this by adding a couple extra walks into your routine the next week.

Doing this can prevent an ["all or nothing"](#) approach to weight management—whereby you feel guilty when you don't achieve your goals and so instead abandon your efforts.

2. Plan for disruptions

Recognize that [there will be disruptions](#) to your weight management efforts—such as holidays, weddings and birthday parties.

Plan ways to [navigate these disruptions](#) successfully. For example, losing a few extra pounds ahead of time may adjust for extra weight that may be gained during these occasions.

Or, if you're going to a barbecue, bring along a healthier option (such as vegetable skewers) so you have a lower calorie option to choose. Doing this will help you enjoy special occasions with less worry.

3. Be proud of your achievements

Our weight [naturally fluctuates over time](#)—and so being proud of yourself when you achieve your goals, regardless of the number on the scale, is important.

Research also shows that people who focus more on how they can achieve their goals—rather than the outcome—are more likely to [stick to behaviors](#) important for maintaining weight loss. This might be because they're less likely to be affected by setbacks (such as regaining some

weight).

4. Make habits

[Creating habits](#) can help maintain weight loss. This is because habits are thought to be less affected by [fluctuations in motivation](#).

This means that even when we can't be bothered, the habits we implemented to help us lose weight will be easier to stick with when trying to maintain weight loss. You could also create some new habits after losing weight—such as going for a walk after dinner or taking the stairs when possible.

5. Get active

A study which looked at people who successfully maintained their weight loss found that [physical activity](#) was the most important factor for keeping weight off. This is because [physical activity](#) can offset some of the [calories we eat](#).

The best physical activity for maintaining weight loss is the one you enjoy doing most. This is because you're more likely to stick with it in the long-term if you enjoy it. But research suggests you should try to get [at least 250 minutes](#) of exercise each week to maintain weight loss.

6. Weigh yourself regularly

[Weight fluctuates](#) by as much as 1kg-2kg throughout the week. By weighing yourself regularly, you can develop a [personalized weight range](#) of your highest and lowest average weight. This will help you to keep track of your weight, and understand whether you need to make any changes to your diet and exercise habits in order to maintain your weight

loss.

Research shows that people who use [personalized weight ranges](#) are better able to prevent large weight regain because they're able to adjust their behaviors when necessary.

7. Eat breakfast—and focus on fiber

Although the [overall evidence](#) on the importance of breakfast in weight management is mixed, one study found that almost [97% of people](#) who kept their weight off reported having breakfast each day.

[Another study](#) also found that people who ate plenty of vegetables and high fiber foods—[such as wholemeal breads, brown rice and oats](#)—each day were more likely to avoid weight regain. Eating these types of foods means you feel fuller and are more likely to eat less.

Maintaining [weight loss](#) can be hard, but that doesn't mean it's impossible. And even if you're only able to maintain a small amount of the [weight](#) you lost, remember it can still be [very beneficial to your health](#).

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<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-07-techniques-weight-regain-experts.html>

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