

TIPS FOR LOSING “Holiday Weight”



by Betsy Ryland, PhD

It is the start of a new year and the holidays are over and are now a good memory. You have put off for as long as you can the inevitable “New Year” ritual of stepping on the scales.

The odds are when you see the numbers pop up on the scale you are going to say to yourself, “what was I thinking when I ate that?” or, “when I gave up exercise...”

Yep, you are just like the average person who gains between six and 10 pounds during the holidays. You are also just like the average person who is slacked-jawed at the task ahead of shedding pounds and getting back on a healthy track. You ask yourself, “where is the motivation when I need it?”

Pandora’s Box – Hope

Let me tell you a story about an important key to motivation. It is the story of Pandora’s Box. Curious Pandora was handed a box and told NOT to open it. Pandora couldn’t stop herself from peeking inside it. Of course, one peek did hurt and swoosh – she released into the world a horde of evils.

Pandora quickly slammed the box closed. As we know, she was too late. All kinds and sorts of the human ugliness had escaped. But, did you know she saved one thing at the bottom of the box? The one thing she caught at the deep bottom of the box was – hope. Remaining in Pandora’s Box is the bright hope for new beginnings.

Hope is a key ingredient to motivation. Hope is the belief that making changes will result in a positive difference in our health. Hope is the knowledge that small changes maintained throughout long periods of time result in a healthier you. Even the loss of one pound of body weight, reduces the walking pressure on your knees and ankles by four pounds. Your joints are going to feel the relief of one lost pound!



WHERE TO BEGIN

Check out these suggestions to begin 2011 with motivation:

The Oomph Factor – Small Changes

Oomph is energy! Oomph is the “get up and go” we all need to accomplish our goals. Oomph is generated by success. The biggest mistake we make is by going too big with our changes and we lose our oomph.

Making simple changes adds oomph and guarantees your success. Success builds more success. Small successful steps give you the energy to take more difficult steps with all the oomph you need. Look over what you eat and cut just 100 calories out of your daily intake. Cut out these 100 calories every day for a year. By the end of the year, you will be approximately 10 pounds lighter.

Go for Goals

Give yourself the benefit of a road map. Make your healthy small steps as clear and easy to follow. Fill in the blanks for your daily routine just as if you were following a road map:

Starting point: _____
and Destination: _____.

*Example: Starting Point - not enough fiber in my diet
Destination - more fiber in my diet*

Driving directions:

Now write out seven steps to take you from your starting point to your destination.

1. Find out how much fiber I need a day.
2. Identify fiber rich foods.

Only five more steps to go...

Your trip time: _____

Your trip time: one week

How long are you going to take to reach this goal? Remember, small steps.

Manually adjust your route:

What's realistic for you? Perhaps the first week's destination is focused on gathering information and getting ready for change. A destination and route adjustment is in order.

Add in some road marks:

If you reached the end of _____ you have gone too far.

If you put fiber-less processed foods in your grocery cart, you have gone too far.

Travel the perimeter of the grocery store for fresh, healthy fiber-rich foods.

Journaling

Keeping a food journal is a leading success secret for maintaining healthy weight. Accountability helps you stay on track. Your journal can be as simple as index cards you use to jot down what you eat and then slip the cards easily into your pocket. Or, your journal can be as elaborate as a scrap book with pictures and inspirations. Whatever method you use, you need to record for five days a week what you eat, how much you eat (portions) and nutritional content.

Recording your exercise routine in your journal adds another dimension to seeing what you are actually accomplishing. Throughout time you'll be rewarded by the patterns and information you gain about your habits. As a result, you'll be able to make just the right adjustments to your nutritional balance and daily activities to make the biggest differences in your health.

Count Your Non-scale Victories

In your journal, give yourself credit for your non-scale victories. Non-scale victories are the healthy habits you follow. Give yourself credit for all the victories away from the scales, such as using your pedometer, cutting out sugar drinks and starting a journal. It is healthy habits that take you to your goal and every single healthy habit matters. Let me give you an example and you tell me which example will lead you to health.

Example 1: You got off the scale and groaned about the 10 pounds you gained throughout the holidays. You say to yourself, "I was such a pig. I knew better. I just let it all go. I've got to lose 10 pounds."

Example 2: You have just gotten off the same scale and you groaned about the same 10 pounds you gained from the holidays. You say to yourself, "I guess I blew it. I'll toss the leftover cookies and ice cream. I'll pick up some fruit and fiber at the grocery store today."

I rest my case. Despite what you might think, beating yourself up does not burn calories. Pat yourself on the back for behaviors that lead you toward health. Healthy habits are victories to be celebrated.

Pleasure is One of Life's Treasures

We keep doing the things that bring us pleasure. The challenge is giving ourselves permission to find, create and enjoy the pleasure in our lives. It's a time thing, isn't it? We should take the time to smell the roses, watch a sunset, watch children laugh and giggle in the park and eat dinner at the table and not in the car.

Give yourself permission to treasure hunt. Hunt to see the pleasure in every day. Reserve a time for dinner, even if you are by yourself. Decorate the table with a theme of the month. Make dining a special event. In your quest for fiber, have a fiber-rich food tasting for yourself, family and friends. There are some very unusual fruits running around in the grocery store waiting for you to taste. Waste not a moment to track down some ugly fruit - kiwi, and not to be forgotten, passion fruit, give your taste buds a treat.

Looking toward 2011

As you greet 2011, make a promise to yourself to celebrate the hope of new beginnings. Small healthy habit changes are a new beginning and make a big difference. Remind yourself that like in Pandora's Box – hope endures.

About the Author:

Betsy Ryland, PhD, is a psychologist and a gastric banding veteran. She loves helping individuals every day create their lifestyle for enduring health and weight maintenance. The heart of a healthy change is designing a value-driven lifestyle for self and family. Check out her professional programs, titled "Enliten Medical Weight Loss" and "Obesity2Balance."



ABOUT THE OBESITY ACTION COALITION (OAC)

The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) is a National non-profit organization dedicated to giving a voice to individuals affected by obesity and helping them along their journey toward better health. Our core focuses are to elevate the conversation of weight and its impact on health, improve access to obesity care, provide science-based education on obesity and its treatments, and fight to eliminate weight bias and discrimination.



VIBRANT COMMUNITY



NATIONAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS



ANNUAL CONVENTION



ADVOCACY



PUBLIC EDUCATION

LEARN, CONNECT, ENGAGE

The OAC knows that the journey with weight can be challenging but we also know that great things happen when we learn, connect and engage. That is why the OAC Community exists. Our Community is designed to provide quality education, ongoing support programs, an opportunity to connect, and a place to take action on important issues.

Through the OAC Community, you can get access to:

- Weight & Health Education • Community Blogs
 - Community Discussion Forum
 - Ongoing Support • Meaningful Connections
- AND MUCH MORE**



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