

Get Up. Get Down. Get Control.

Weight management programs teach participants how to manage their daily calorie balance with something you wear on your arm.

By Bobby Kurian

It is estimated that 50 million Americans attempt to lose weight each year, but only 5 percent are successful at keeping the weight off. With the incidence rate of obesity and overweight more than 65 percent, clearly health practitioners need to develop a better approach to this challenging issue.

Common approaches to weight-loss are usually some combination of the following: diet, exercise, supplements, medication, behavioral modification, professional supervision and surgery. But, there is a new trend in weight-loss on the rise that stresses monitoring your daily calorie balance through personal health monitors.

The goal of this new breed of products is to help you reduce calories consumed and increase calories expended so you can more effectively and safely lose weight and keep it off.

Many hospitals and practices around the country are creating evidence-based weight management programs that incorporate nutrition and exercise counseling, with wearable body monitoring products. There are many on the market.

Participants in our weight-loss program, wear one such body monitoring device called the SenseWear® armband. This device measures calories burned, duration of physical activity and number of steps while also including a display and Web site to quickly see daily results and track nutrition.

We've found that with help of these kinds of devices, participants can more easily budget how many calories they can eat for the day in order to achieve their weight-loss goal. In fact, they are turning out to be a great educational tool by helping our participants manage their daily calorie deficit long after our program has finished.

I want to share with you a great success story. Gail McDaniel enrolled in our weight management program in November 2007 and has lost 47 lbs to date. Her story isn't just about the weight-loss, but about how she did it. It's about what she learned and how the education she received, along with the utilization of a body monitoring device and combined with her determination, became the foundation for a completely new lifestyle.

About the Author:

Bobby Kurian is the Director of Business Development at Baptist Health of South Florida. Mr. Kurian is the former General Manager of Sarasota Memorial Health Plex in Sarasota, Fla. Sarasota Memorial Health Plex is the weight-loss program referred to by Mr. Kurian in this article.

A Day in the Life: Gail McDaniel

By Gail McDaniel

The first thing that was asked of me when getting involved with my weight management program was to make a commitment. I took that request seriously, and made a commitment to participate fully and give this program a chance.

The result was, and continues to be, a synergistic blend of my own determination and the outstanding resources made available to me that finally taught me how to change my lifestyle to create a better life. This program, in every sense, has truly been a life-changing experience.

The program that I was involved with is run by an excellent and well educated staff. Their patience and commitment to my success was profound, which helped to quell my initial skepticism about having to wear a device on my arm.

Using My Body-Monitoring Device

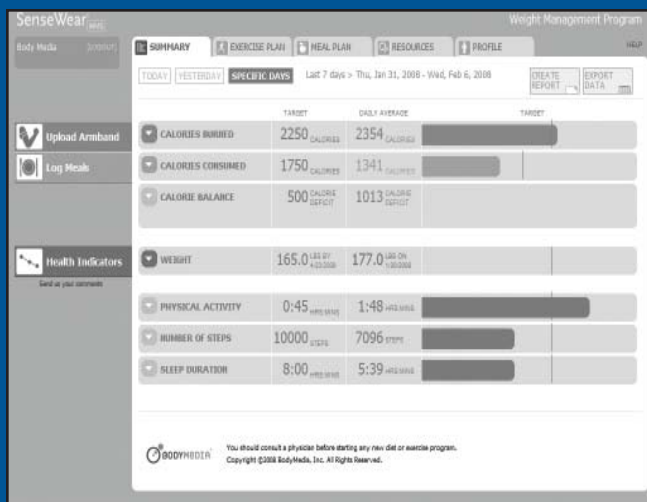
From the beginning, I used SenseWear® WMS (a body-monitoring device). I spent the first week learning how to wear the armband, upload the information to the Web site, use the display device to count my calorie burn during specific activities, change the battery and use the Web site to log my meals and track my calorie balance. At first it seemed overwhelming, but in reality it was all very easy to use.

I soon realized that every night I could check my daily progress and see my calories burned minus my calories consumed, which gave me my daily calorie deficit. It became a numbers game that I loved to play. My goal was to maintain a daily calorie deficit of 1,000 - which would result in a two pound per week weight-loss.

My Results

My body responded beautifully to this combination, and I saw a steady two pound per week weight-loss (with occasional five pound drops that my dietitian explained as water weight). My steady weight-loss was motivating; but the way I started feeling was even more motivating.

When I began the program, I had high blood pressure, “bad knees” due to arthritis and virtually no stamina. I would start huffing and puffing just walking across a parking lot. Within a month, I started



The metabolic device used by Gail features an online component where users track their progress on their own Web profile. Here is an example of a Web shot from a profile.

noticing cardio benefits. I realized I wasn't huffing and puffing anymore, except during workouts on the cardio equipment. And within two months, I stopped needing medication for my arthritis. The stiffness was gone. In fact, there are absolutely no signs that I even have arthritis.

Exercise is excellent medicine. For the first time in years, I can see myself doing any activity, instead of thinking, “Oh, I'm not in shape to do that.” It's an amazing feeling to live life with no limitations and to know that physically I can do anything I want to do. Some things, like mountain climbing, might require a little extra training, but anything is doable! Now that's truly life-changing!

Changing My Behavior and Lifestyle

My first job was to arrange my daily schedule so that I could plan a workout at least five days a week. That was a commitment I made to myself – one which I have maintained to this day. The program allowed me to work with a personal trainer once a week. Those workouts were always challenging, since the trainer wanted to make me aware that I could do so much more than I thought I could.

But on the days when I worked out alone, I had my body monitoring device to keep me company. It provided me with the feedback I needed. I made it a personal habit to try to push myself just a little bit more every day, even if I only kept up that pace for 30 more seconds, or tried to burn just 50 more calories, or take those extra 1,000 steps. I did it. That was the important thing, because I was continually proving to myself that I was capable of more than I realized.

My second job was relearning how to eat. Through weekly meetings with the dietitian and frequent interactions with the other members of my program, I learned how to balance carbs, proteins and fats.



The Web site portion of SenseWear® WMS was a great tool for me and my dietitian to track what I was eating and plan my food for the day. Combined, they taught me so much. I learned that I actually could eat all the foods I love, in reasonable quantities of course, and still lose weight. If I wanted a cinnamon bun for breakfast, no problem.

By using a body monitoring device, I was able to learn how to simply find some extra time during the day to burn up those extra calories.

Fitting in “Workouts”

Wearing a body monitoring device also helped for those days that I just couldn't fit in that planned workout. Unforeseen circumstances arise, and all too easily get in the way of being healthy. Before, I would have said “Oh, well. There's always tomorrow.” But you quickly learn that with a thing on your arm that watches your every move, all your activity counts.

You don't have to get on the treadmill and sweat to burn calories. So, every hour while at work, I got up from my desk and simply walked around the block. My device enabled me to measure the number of calories I burned and the number of steps I took on these breaks.

I learned that I walked around 1,000 steps and burned about 100 calories during those 10 minute walks. I learned that four walks around the block came to about 400 calories, about the same I would have burned during one of my planned workouts. I was learning how to make lifestyle choices to reach my goals.

Keeping the Weight off

I wore the armband 24/7, only removing it when I took showers. I wore it all day and uploaded the data every night. It was my trusted companion throughout the eight-week program, during which I lost 22 pounds. But the weight-loss didn't stop there. Since I stopped wearing the armband, I have lost another 25 pounds.

The education that I received during this journey is lifelong. I continue to workout daily and make informed food choices in order to maintain a daily calorie deficit, the way I was taught. I still need to lose another 40 – 50 pounds, but I have no doubt that the weight will continue to come off and six months from now, I will be where I want to be – vibrant, slim, happy and enjoying life!

Gail McDaniel participated in the weight management program at Sarasota Memorial Health Plex in Sarasota, Fla. During the program, Gail used a body-monitoring device called SenseWear®. To learn more about body-monitoring devices, please see the “OAC News” section of the OAC Web site and click on the link for “Past Articles.” To learn more about the device used by Gail, please visit www.sensewear.com.



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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info@obesityaction.org

(800) 717-3117 | (813) 872-7835 | Fax: (813) 873-7838



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