

HOW TO MAINTAIN YOUR WEIGHT

Excerpt from Weight Maintenance - U.S. Edition by Vince Antonetti, PhD
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Most people can lose weight on almost any diet, but the crucial question is whether the weight loss can be maintained. The real challenge is not getting people to lose weight but helping them keep it off. Few, if any, of the popular weight control programs have been successful at maintaining weight over the long term. There are two key issues in weight maintenance:

1. Preventing the regaining of lost weight, i.e., helping people keep off weight they've lost.
2. Preventing "normal-weight" people from gaining weight as they age.

In fact both of these troublesome issues can be approached and solved using virtually the same weight control techniques. But first one must understand why they have gained or regained weight.

Why You Gain Weight When You Stop Dieting

After any diet, your lower body weight requires fewer calories to function. In other words, your lower body weight results in a slower metabolism. Within five years, most dieters regain every pound they have lost. Why? In most cases it's because after losing weight most people eventually revert to their pre-diet eating and exercising habits, and this inevitably leads to their regaining the weight they lost – and often more.

The fact is the less you weigh, the less you need to eat to maintain your lower weight. (Learn how much less you need to

eat in **WEIGHT MAINTENANCE – U.S. Edition** by Vince Antonetti, PhD., published by NoPaperPress.) Understand that without some lifestyle modifications, if you are like the average adult you will regain every pound you have lost. It's a fact that 95 percent of dieters, that's 95 out of 100 people, gain all the weight they lost back and often more!

Characteristics of People Who Regained Lost Weight

A study published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, surveyed approximately 1,300 adults from the 1999 to 2002 who were overweight or obese and had lost at least 10 percent of their maximum weight. The study authors found some common factors associated with those who regained their weight:

- They spent four hours or more per day in front of a television set or computer.
- They lost a great deal of weight (at least 20 percent of their maximum weight) in a short time.
- They started to regain weight soon after they stopped dieting.

Most of the above make sense. Too much TV or computer time usually means these people are undoubtedly sedentary and less likely to get lots of exercise.

Losing weight too fast, either by a fad or extreme diet, can leave people feeling deprived and often triggers binges that go on until the lost weight is regained.

It takes time to establish a new lifestyle that supports weight maintenance. People who have lost weight and then quickly gained it back have not had the time to acquire all the skills needed to maintain their lower weight.

Characteristics of People Who Maintained Lost Weight

The National Weight Control Registry studied people who had lost at least 30 pounds and kept it off for more than a year.

What they found was that although people lost weight differently, they kept it off similarly. Here are some common traits of the successful maintainers:

- **Most eat a low-fat diet - but not a hugely restrictive one.**
- **All successful maintainers monitor their portion sizes.**
- **Nearly four in five eat breakfast every day.**
- **Most are physically active, with walking their most common form of activity and they walk for nearly an hour every day. (Note that these people probably aren't spending four or more hours watching TV or in front of a computer.)**
- **Weight maintainers actually find pleasure in their healthier lifestyle and the freedom from constant dieting.**

Why You Gain Weight With Age

A study, published in a 2005 issue of the Annals of Internal Medicine, that followed 4,000 people for three decades suggests that in the long term, 90 percent of men and 70 percent of women will become overweight (with a BMI \geq 25). Interestingly, half of the men and women in the study, who had made it well into adulthood without a weight problem, ultimately also became overweight and a third became obese (with a BMI \geq 30).

Why does this happen? When you reach your mid to late twenties, you slowly start to lose muscle and add fat as part of the natural aging process. As you age your muscle mass slowly deteriorates and is replaced by fat. But muscle is active tissue and requires lots of energy (calories) for growth and repair; whereas, fat is basically inactive and uses very few calories.

So as you age and you lose muscle mass your metabolism gradually slows. In fact your metabolism decreases about 10 percent every decade. If you are like the average adult, the result of your slowing metabolism is that you will gain 1½ to 2 pounds every year. To offset this, you need to cut back on

calories, or exercise more, or both, or the excess calories will add up and so will your weight!

The point being that you can never become complacent. You must continually watch your weight because we are all at risk of becoming overweight.

For much more on maintaining your weight and an easy to follow, detailed weight maintenance plan be sure to read:

**WEIGHT MAINTENANCE – U.S. Edition by Vince Antonetti, PhD
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