

Let's Get Started

Make-over your mind-set

During this programme you'll begin to make over your mind-set and as a result, you'll gain the skills you need to make over your body. You'll learn how to motivate yourself and how to feel good about eating differently. You'll develop a consistent sense of control that will continue to grow the longer you practice the techniques in this program. And you'll learn how to use your new skills for a lifetime, so you'll be able to maintain your weight loss.

This programme is designed to help you solve the problems that have made dieting difficult for you in the past.

If you follow all the steps in this programme you'll discover the following things:

- Your cravings will diminish
- You won't panic when you're a little hungry
- You'll automatically plan what you're going to eat each day
- You'll consistently follow your plan, even on special occasions
- You'll feel good about turning down food instead of feeling deprived
- You'll be proud of yourself

And of course you'll be able to enjoy other benefits too:

- You'll be slimmer!
- You'll feel better about yourself
- You'll be more confident
- You'll have more energy
- You'll feel better physically

Get ready: Lay the groundwork

This week you'll start to use Cognitive Therapy techniques to prepare your mind and environment for dieting. This preparation will pay off when you successfully meet your first major challenge – and every challenge thereafter.

Don't be tempted to skip any part of this programme as it is designed to ensure you learn every skill you will need to lose your excess weight and keep it off for life. Some of the tasks may seem juvenile but I promise you that they do work, and let's face it, what you have been trying up until now hasn't! So what have you got to lose?

Things you will need during the programme

- Index cards
- Sticky notes
- Notebook

Record the advantages of losing weight

Today you'll make your first **Response Card**, an essential tool that will help you change your mind-set and overcome the sabotaging thinking that interferes with losing weight. Response Cards are index cards that contain important written messages to help you counter your sabotaging thoughts. They also help you to motivate yourself every day so that you can stick to your diet, apply good eating habits, deal with hunger and cravings, resist emotional eating and get right back on board when you make mistakes.

You'll read these cards daily as you lose weight – and periodically for the rest of your life. They are an **essential** part of this programme.

The card you create today might be the most important one of all. On it, you'll list all the reasons you've decided to lose weight. Right now, I'd like you to think of all the advantages of losing weight and write them down while they're clear in your mind. I want you to read this Advantages Response Card every day.

Now that you know what you're supposed to do, are you thinking? **Why, write the reasons down? I'll always remember why I want to lose weight.** It might be hard to believe that you could ever forget these reasons. But, believe me, it's easy to forget when there's tempting food around. There'll be plenty of times when your resolve will falter and you'll have sabotaging thoughts, such as:

- *Is dieting really worth it?*
- *Resisting this food is too hard?*
- *I don't think I really want to do this!*

This type of thinking can persuade you to stray from your diet so you need to learn how to combat these kinds of sabotaging thoughts in a strong, forceful way. If you read your **Advantages Response Card** every day, the reasons will be firm in your mind and you'll be able to remember why you want to lose weight at the very moment your sabotaging thoughts are desperately trying to convince you that it's okay to eat something you know you shouldn't. You'll be able to tell yourself *"as much as I want to eat (this food) and enjoy a moment or two of pleasure, losing weight is much more important to me"*.

You'll start making Response Cards from today, because reading them is an essential strategy for lasting weight loss. Creating your first card should take you less than 10 minutes and it will take less than a minute to read it each day.



First Response Card

Record the benefits of losing weight – write them on index cards and keep them with you, somewhere you will see it every day (e.g. your wallet).

Why do you want to lose weight? (refer to the attached worksheet *"Reasons I want to lose weight"* and choose the most important ones)

Consider how your weight loss will impact the following?

- Friendship, family, career, relationships and social life
- Your energy, level and participation in hobbies
- Your body, health, self-image and mental outlook

Use your advantages response card:

- ✓ Daily at scheduled times
- ✓ Whenever you find yourself struggling with craving, temptations or sabotaging thoughts
- ✓ Every time you open your wallet, particularly if you are about to impulse buy food that is not on your plan!

Face Reality

Be honest, have you skipped ahead without creating your Advantages Response Card? Please don't fool yourself that you can skip this step. If you want to lose weight permanently, you have to change the way you think about eating, dieting and yourself.

If your doctor gave you an antibiotic to get rid of a bad infection, would you take only half of the pill? Of course not. Likewise don't take shortcuts with this program. It is most effective in its entirety.

Your Advantages Response Card is the first of many Response Cards you'll create to answer back to sabotaging thoughts. At the end of each day you'll create Response Cards to help carry out that day's task.

What are you thinking?

You might still be having sabotaging thoughts about creating or reading your Advantages Response Card. If so these responses may help.

Sabotaging Thought: I don't feel like going to the trouble of getting index cards and writing down advantages right now. I'll do it later

Helpful Response: To lose weight, I'm going to have to train myself to do what I need to do, not what I feel like doing at the moment. If I put off this task, I might end up never doing it.

Sabotaging Thought: This won't work for me.

Helpful Response: I don't have a crystal ball, so I don't know whether or not it'll work. The one thing I know for sure is that I didn't do this in the past and I haven't achieved lasting weight loss yet. I may as well just do it. What do I have to lose?

Reasons I Want to Lose Weight Chart

Check off all of the advantages that apply to you. Use the four additional blank spaces at the bottom to fill in others that are more specific to your life. Then, at the right of each advantage, rate how important each is to you: somewhat important, important, or very important.

Advantages to Losing Weight	How Important This Advantage Is to Me
<input type="checkbox"/> I'll look better.
<input type="checkbox"/> I'll be more attractive to others.
<input type="checkbox"/> I'll be able to wear a smaller size.
<input type="checkbox"/> I'll be able to wear more stylish clothes.
<input type="checkbox"/> I'll be happier when I look in the mirror.
<input type="checkbox"/> I'll get joy out of shopping for clothes.
<input type="checkbox"/> I won't feel so self-conscious.
<input type="checkbox"/> I'll get more compliments.
<input type="checkbox"/> I'll be in better health.
<input type="checkbox"/> I'll be able to exercise without discomfort or embarrassment.
<input type="checkbox"/> I'll live longer.
<input type="checkbox"/> I'll feel better physically.
<input type="checkbox"/> I'll have more energy.
<input type="checkbox"/> I'll be more physically fit.
<input type="checkbox"/> I'll enjoy sexual intimacy more.
<input type="checkbox"/> I'll like myself more.
<input type="checkbox"/> I'll feel more in control.
<input type="checkbox"/> I'll feel as if I've accomplished something important.
<input type="checkbox"/> I'll have more confidence.
<input type="checkbox"/> I'll increase my self-esteem.
<input type="checkbox"/> I'll be less self-critical.
<input type="checkbox"/> I'll feel more outgoing.
<input type="checkbox"/> I'll do more things (like go to the beach).
<input type="checkbox"/> I won't have to listen to my family comment about what I'm eating.
<input type="checkbox"/> I'll be able to be more assertive.
<input type="checkbox"/> I won't mind eating in front of others.
<input type="checkbox"/> I won't have anyone bugging me about my weight.
<input type="checkbox"/>