

## Make a New To-Do List

You have now learned the skills you need to continue losing weight and to keep it off. You just have to keep practicing these skills, over and over and over – especially after you have reached your goal weight. In fact, you will use some of the techniques for your entire life. Doing so is the key to continued success. The reason you regained weight in the past is that you did not have these strategies. Now, you do.

Here are lists of techniques that you have learned, along with a guide for how often you should use them. I hope you have already found that you are doing some of these things automatically and that they have made dieting easier.

### Do these activities daily:

- Eat a healthy diet with limited calories.
- Think about what you are eating before you actually put it in your mouth.
- Sit down whenever you eat and then eat slowly and mindfully.
- Eat only to mild fullness.
- Monitor your eating throughout the day.
- Give yourself credit.
- Do spontaneous exercise.
- Respond to sabotaging thoughts.

### Do these activities between once a day and once a week:

- Weigh yourself once a week and report changes to your weight loss coach.
- Do planned exercise at least three times a week.
- Continue to make sure that you have enough time and energy to devote to dieting.
- Read your Advantages Response Card as needed.
- Use anti-craving techniques.
- Use the Seven Question Technique when you are upset.
- Prepare yourself psychologically for special-occasion eating.
- Do problem solving to reduce stress.
- Take steps to enrich your life.

**Do these activities as often as needed** (once a day, once a week, or less often, but certainly whenever you are in danger of straying from your diet):

## Plan and monitor what you eat.

Ideally, if you keep up one practice from this program for the rest of your life, this would be it. But if you find this task too burdensome, you can experiment with planning and monitoring in your head rather than writing down your food plan. Try it for a couple of days. If you do well, continue. But the moment you hit a rough patch – whenever you find yourself eating too much – start writing down what you plan to eat and monitor in writing what you actually do eat every day.

### **DON'T GIVE YOURSELF A CHOICE ABOUT THIS.**

You can also experiment with having a general plan about what you are going to eat and then decide before each meal what you are actually going to eat. For example, you might plan to have about a certain number of calories (or a certain portion size) of whatever protein, carbohydrates, and fat you want. But the moment you find yourself eating too much or not eating healthfully, go back to planning in advance.

### **DON'T GIVE YOURSELF A CHOICE ABOUT THIS.**

My experience has been that many people decide to stop writing down their food plans prematurely. They overestimate their ability to keep their eating in line without using this discipline. So do not be surprised if you find that you have stopped too soon. Don't get self-critical. Just go back to using this strategy when you need to.

## Read your Response Cards.

You have been reading some of your cards for weeks now. These responses are probably firmly in your mind. You can experiment with reading them on an as-needed basis. The moment you start to struggle though, start reading them daily.

### **DON'T GIVE YOURSELF A CHOICE ABOUT THIS.**

## What are you thinking?

Here are some sabotaging thoughts you might have. Use them to create your own response cards.

**Sabotaging Thought:** It is too much trouble to keep doing all these things.

**Helpful Response:** Losing weight is very important to me. It does take effort to do these things, but the payoff is tremendous.

**Sabotaging Thought:** I know what I am supposed to do. I don't need to keep filling out the to-do list.

**Helpful Response:** What is the big deal? Better safe than sorry. I may as well assume I do need the list to motivate me and remind me what to do.

## Practice, Practice, Practice.

Congratulations! You have learned the Cognitive Therapy skills you need to think like a slim person. The longer you use these new thinking skills, the more automatic they will become. Dieting will continue to get easier and easier. Do you remember the differences in thinking between naturally slim people and people who struggle with dieting? Your thinking has fundamentally changed in the past weeks. If you ever find yourself slipping back to your old way of thinking, review "Reminders to Think Slim" on the next page.

Remember that you will hit rough patches from time to time. All dieters occasionally give in to cravings, forget to give themselves credit, or neglect to follow their food plan. All dieters occasionally question whether losing weight is worth the time and effort. Whenever you hit a rough patch, go back to these handouts. Flip through each week of the program, reread the passages you need, and start doing the relevant tasks again.

Also, recognise that rough patches are TEMPORARY. You will soon be glad that you persevered, especially as you are getting compliments, fitting into clothes you could not fit in before, and seeing the number on the scale go down. I promise you that even if it doesn't feel worth it at any given moment, it will soon!

## To Think Slim

**If you think....** I hadn't planned to eat this food, but I am hungry. I have to eat right now!

**Remind yourself ....** Barring a medical problem, I don't need to eat. I just want to eat. But I want all the benefits of weight loss much more than I want the momentary pleasure of eating.

**If you think....** Even though I have finished everything on my plate, I want to keep eating. I like feeling really full.

**Remind yourself ....** Trying to become overly full is a habit that is likely to lead to weight gain. I need to stop when the food I have planned to eat is gone. My hunger will subside within 20 minutes.

**If you think....** It's okay to eat this unplanned food because: everyone else is eating it: It will go to waste: It was free: I'm celebrating: I'm upset: I really want it: I don't care: It won't matter.

**Remind yourself ....**It's not okay to eat this: I'm just trying to fool myself. Every single time I eat something I'm not supposed to, I strengthen my giving-in muscle and weaken my resistance muscle.

**If you think ....** I can't believe the scale has gone up! This is terrible! I will never be able to lose weight.

**Remind yourself....** My weight is supposed to go up sometimes. I should continue with the Program and wait two weeks before assuming there is a problem.

**If you think ....** It's not fair that I can't eat normally and have what everyone else is eating.

**Remind yourself ....** I'm now eating normally for a person who has a goal to lose weight. It would be even more unfair if I let feelings of unfairness keep me from becoming thinner.

**If you think ....** Now that I have lost weight, I can stop being so careful.

**Remind yourself ....** If I want to keep the weight off, I need to use the techniques I have learned for the rest of my life. If I don't continue to maintain my new mindset and eating behaviours, I will invariably gain back weight.