

Seven Steps to Weight Loss Success

by

Sara Southgate BSc., ND, Dip Herb. MURHP



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1. Accept that diets don't work

Otherwise there would only be one diet, and yo-yo dieting would not exist. The problem with most diets is that they are all consuming and over-demanding. Cutting your calorie intake by half is an enormous effort that leaves you feeling deprived and hungry, with food continually on your mind. It is far more productive to work on making small changes to your habits and eating environment to 'trim' your calorie intake, rather than slashing it. Small changes are easier to adopt, whereas big changes are destined to fail, as we well know, often from bitter experience. Changing your eating habits and the way you respond to subtle cues from your surroundings mean you are more in control of why you eat, as well as what you eat. **Life-long change will bring you life-long success without feeling constantly hungry or guilty about food.**

We also need to think about the whole concept of 'loosing' weight – do you really want to 'find' excess weight again, or would you rather shed it once and for all? Thought patterns can be powerful, so start thinking about being slim and energetic rather than being overweight and stuck, and in terms of shedding weight rather than loosing it.

2. Exercise

Exercise needs to become part of the way you live your life.

The bottom line is this: as long as you expend more energy than you eat, you will not gain weight. We

suffer from being a car-centric society, so we need to build activity in to our lives in order for it not to become yet another thing to do. Park a ten minute walk away from the shops; get a dog; take the stairs; buy a pedometer and do your 10,000 steps a day; get out in your lunch hour – a brisk 30 minutes walk will leave you clear-headed, refreshed and energised. Try to alternate what you do – aerobics one week, swimming the next, then cycling – it keeps you interested and active. Find a running club, or a walking one. Almost everyone needs more exercise, so make it fun and get your friends involved: if you can just talk while you're walking, you're walking fast enough. You also need to block out time for exercise you enjoy as a priority. If you think you'll just fit it in to your schedule, it can easily slip off the radar.

Make sure you're focusing on the positives about of exercise – the social aspect and the way it makes you feel – energised and healthy, rather than the actual act of exercising itself.

3. Measure it

Measure your success by measuring yourself. Good places to measure are around the tops of your arms and thighs, around your middle – where your belly button is – and around the hips. Dividing these two figures gives you your hip to waist ratio, which is important because it gives a good indication of your overall health risk of lifestyle-related disease such as heart disease or diabetes. Ideally it should be 0.7 for women and 0.9 for men. You also can weigh yourself, but be aware weight alone can be misleading. When you gain muscle mass your weight may actually increase, because muscle weighs more than fat.

Gaining muscle is the real key to lasting weight loss, because muscle burns calories, so we want to build more muscle to burn off excess fat and calories. Traditional low-fat, high-carbohydrate diets do cause weight reduction, but it is often muscle loss, not fat loss. This does make for impressive scale-based results, but it is also the cause of yo-yo dieting: once you've changed your body composition in favour of fat rather than muscle, you have less muscle to burn fat, so weight gain is much easier and more likely to happen than weight reduction. Altering your body composition in favour of muscle rather than fat is a crucial element of permanent weight loss. See Appendix A at the end of this report for a progress chart.

4. Have a goal in mind

Now that you've weighed yourself, you need to establish a goal weight which will be your target. Given that weight reduction takes time, and you are aiming for 1-2lb, or 0.5-1kg per week, you will be able to work out your timescale from this. So if you have 20 kilos to loose, that will realistically take you 40 weeks, or approximately ten months at a rate of 0.5 kg per week. Faster weight loss is simply unrealistic and not sustainable. You need to think of yourself in twelve or twenty-four months time, rather than twelve weeks. **Permanent weight loss is not something that can or should be rushed.**

A helpful way to keep on track is by having solid 'process goals' in mind. A process goal is a part of the process: something you are doing in order to achieve your target weight. If you focus only on the target weight, it can sometimes seem too far away, and unattainable. If you focus on your commitment to walking briskly for 30 minutes every weekday – realistically achievable in your lunch hour, then you can **measure it, achieve it and feel good about yourself.**

5. Keep a diary

Eating, especially overeating, is not something we're proud of, and we often do it in secret, or attempt to forget that entire packet of biscuits we ate while watching TV last night. Whenever we overeat, we certainly carry the guilt, which is not a nice feeling. Keep a diary of everything that passes your lips – food or drink, and note the situation in which you ate it – were you alone, with a friend (who?), in a restaurant (which one?), did you sit down or eat on the move? Looking back over a week or two you'll be able to see your weak points, or which friends encourage overeating. You'll see where it happens, and therefore know where or indeed who to avoid in food situations.

How do you feel after you've eaten something that isn't good for you? How about after you've overeaten? What are the physical and emotional effects? Do you feel uncomfortably full or even sick? Do you feel pleased with yourself or guilty? Look closely at yourself and be honest. Write it down. **If you're repeatedly overeating, what is it that makes you want to feel that way again and again?** How do you feel when you can fit into your 'slim jeans'? Hang on to those feelings – positive and negative and think about how you want to feel for the rest of your life.

6. Don't be fat-phobic

Over the last twenty years, since we've been sold a fat-free mantra for healthy living, our society has become larger.

The fact of the matter is we do need healthy fats from fish and olive oil – for health and for weight

loss. Fats make up all the cell membranes in our bodies, and our cells can't function properly without them. Fat is also one of the triggers for your satiety response – the feeling of fullness you get after a meal. We are programmed to feel full once our blood fat levels rise to a certain level – so if you're following a strict low-fat programme, you'll be feeling hungry a lot of the time, which is not sustainable.

7. Accept the odd setback

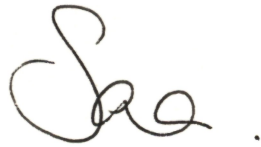
Setbacks are natural, given the type of changes you are making. You are most likely addressing a lifetime of unhealthy eating habits, which your family may still indulge in – excess weight can be genetic, but don't forget families share food preferences and eating habits. **If you have a setback, that's fine, just recommit to your programme and don't give yourself a hard time.** Guilt is an emotion that can cause overeating after all!

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To find out more about weight loss and good health, sign up to Sara's newsletter and blog at www.sarasouthgate.com or contact Sara on 07773 392 449

Sara is holding two, two-step workshops: Lose Weight Without Dieting on Tuesday 16th & 23rd February at 7.30-9pm and Tuesday 9th & 16th March 10.20am-12.00 at Neal's Yard Remedies 106 Regent Street, Leamington Spa CV32 4NR. Call 01926 832 685 to book. Places are limited.

Wishing you good health,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sara', followed by a period.

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Sara Southgate - Biography

Sara Southgate has over 10 year's experience in the field of natural medicine. Prior to relocating to Leamington Spa, she ran a highly respected London-based practice.

Sara is now based in the therapy rooms of organic and natural remedy practitioners Neal's Yard and treats both individual and corporate clients.

Some comments from Sara's patients:

"I feel 100 times better already"! B. Boardman, Weston-under-Weatherly

"I feel privileged to have found such a wonderful naturopath." M. Scarle, Warwickshire



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Appendix A

Measure your Success!

Month	Arm	Waist	Hips	Hip: Waist ratio (1)	Thigh	Body fat percentage	BMI (2)
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12							

- (1) waist measurement divided by hip measurement
- (2) BMI is height divided by weight

It doesn't matter whether you use centimetres or inches, just be consistent with where you take your measurements from. Make sure it is the same place every month and watch the numbers go down slowly and steadily.

These web addresses can help you keep a check of your success in a more precise way:

Body Fat Calculator

<http://www.bmi-calculator.net/body-fat-calculator/> for imperial measurements

<http://www.bmi-calculator.net/body-fat-calculator/metric-body-fat-calculator.php> for metric

Hip: Waist Ratio

<http://www.bmi-calculator.net/waist-to-hip-ratio-calculator/> for imperial measurements

<http://www.bmi-calculator.net/waist-to-hip-ratio-calculator/metric-waist-to-hip-ratio-calculator.php> for metric

Body Mass Index

<http://www.bmi-calculator.net/> for imperial measurements

<http://www.bmi-calculator.net/metric-bmi-calculator.php>

Current weight:

Target weight:

Number of months needed to achieve goal: