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Measuring progress

Many of the people who I see want to lose weight. They often come with a set goal in their mind about how much they should weigh.

Measuring your progress though does not just have to be judged by the number on the scales. If the goal weight is dramatically different to the current weight it can take quite a long time to achieve this magic number on the scales.

If it takes too long to achieve a goal it can mean that it is easier to lose focus or get despondent with the whole process. This feeling of despair may result in you to deciding to throw it all away, despite your progress to date.

Set small goals for yourself if you really think that having a number to aspire to will help motivate you. Keep in mind that you will be making great progress if you are achieving a weight loss of 250 – 500 grams a week. This often doesn't seem dramatic enough for many people, but it is good progress.

It is not just about a number on the scales though. When you start the process it helps if you see the process as a life long process, not just a temporary phase.

To help judge your progress try to remember to reflect on other factors you may want to address at the same time such as overall energy levels, any guilt you may have about eating certain foods, being more organised with food and becoming more aware of how you eat. While some of these may be harder to measure they are still important things to reflect on and to include in your goal setting.

Improving food choices can often mean that your energy levels improve. If you feel more energetic you are less likely to turn to the quick fix options which are often high in fat or sugar. If you feel more energized you are able to maintain an exercise routine. This all helps with weight loss long term.

Allowing yourself to eat and enjoying a wide range of foods can also be an important goal. If you have been on and off diets for a long time you may have a number of foods that you believe you can't or shouldn't eat. Changing your thinking and getting some good information about how to balance your food choices can help to remove feelings of guilt around food. If you don't feel guilty about food but enjoy the choices you make you are more likely to maintain your new eating style.

Setting the goal of becoming more organised with your meals is also beneficial. If you eat regularly you will probably eat fewer calories over the day compared to someone who skips either breakfast or lunch. This will also help not only with your energy levels but it will also help with weight management. Being more organised often leads to feeling more in control of your eating as you are less likely to suddenly find yourself in need of food urgently.

Many people are not aware of when they eat, or they lose track of what they have eaten over the day. If you can develop the skills of becoming a mindful eater you will become aware of what, how and when you eat. This can help you manage your eating in a number of situations. You are then more likely to be in tune with how much you need to eat to feel satisfied – all without counting a single calorie!

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