

Healthy Weight Management

When the government reports that 93 million Americans are “overweight”, it comes as no surprise that our culture is obsessed with losing weight.

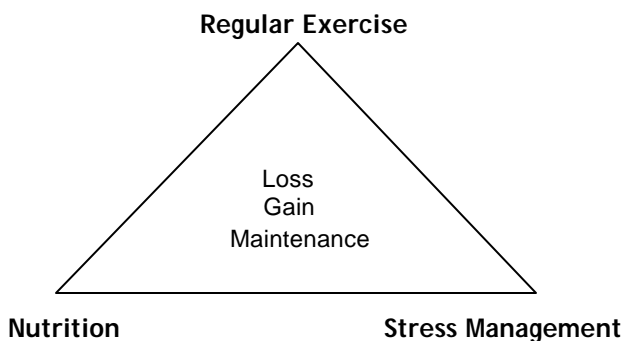
Over 33 billion dollars is spent annually on weight loss related products: fitness equipment, diet aids, special foods, books, magazines, pills/powders/herbs, and weight loss programs. Unfortunately, with all of these “tools” to aid a person in the quest for thinness or fitness, a mere 5% actually succeeds. Success is when weight has been lost and kept off for a year.

Why so much failure? With our resources and knowledge, why do 95% of people who attempt to lose weight fail? The answer is simple; most attempts to lose weight are attempts to do just that—lose weight—and fail to assist a person in “living well for a lifetime.”

This information addresses habits to assist a person in decreasing excess body fat and finding a lifestyle that will fit for a lifetime. The key is following the Healthy Weight Management model.

Components of the Model

The healthy weight management model maintains that changes (weight loss, weight gain, or weight maintenance) can be achieved through exercise, nutrition, and stress management.



Each component contributes to life change.

Exercise Outcomes

*Increases metabolic rate

- *Controls stress
- *Burns calories
- *Improves fitness
- *Increases motivation and self-esteem

Nutrition Benefits

- *Not labeling foods as good or bad
- *Eating a variety of food
- *Cutting back on fat calories
- *Eating enough but not too much

Coping With Stress

- *Controls nervous or eating from boredom
- *Maintains time for exercise
- *Encourages balance in meals

Weight Loss Is a Poor Goal

Body weight is the total mass of bones, fat, organs, lean muscle and water in the body. The scale is a poor measure of fitness. Some people are thin, but not fit. Others may be heavier, but are actually very fit!

When weight loss/gain is used as a goal, there is greater likelihood that once the goal is reached, the behaviors to achieve the goal will stop. For example, a person who loses 30 pounds through walking 45 minutes each day may quit walking because their goal was reached.

More appropriate goals would include exercise frequency and nutritional changes. For example, use a list to shop at the store to cut down on the unhealthy extras that get into the cart. Or decide to exercise at least 4 days a week for 30 minutes each time.

Finally, weight loss is a poor goal because weight is an outcome, not a behavior. We change behaviors, and outcomes follow. People interested in body composition changes need to focus on behaviors (exercise, stress management, nutrition) and set behavioral goals. Eventually, the behavior becomes part of the lifestyle. The new lifestyle will have outcomes—more energy, change in body composition, and greater confidence!

