

Achieving Your Weight Loss Goals Starts with Setting Your Goals

If this is the year you plan to lose weight, congratulations! Losing just 5-7 percent of your weight will help you reduce your risk for diabetes. You will have more energy and feel better.

To start losing weight, try setting goals. The key to reaching your weight loss goals is to create goals that are:

Realistic: Talk to your health care provider and choose an amount to lose that you can achieve. Then decide how many pounds you can lose in the first weeks and month. Usually losing 1-2 pounds per week, or about 5 pounds per month, is realistic.

Specific: Develop a very specific plan of action. First set your long term goal: "I will lose 20 pounds." Then set short-term goals so you can keep track of your progress. Next develop specific steps to reach your short-term goal: "I will lose 5 pounds this month by walking 3 times a week and eating smaller portion sizes."

Measurable: Make sure you can measure your progress often, both your action steps and your progress towards your goal. Keep a food and

exercise journal. Weigh yourself once a week and write down the numbers.

Positive: Make your goals related to values that are important to you. Think to yourself, "I want to be at a healthy weight so I can live long to be with my grandchildren," or "I want to take care of myself so I can be independent and stay active in my community." Always remind yourself why it's important that you lose weight. Think of the benefit to you, your family and your community.

Action Oriented: Write down the exact steps you will take to achieve your weight loss goals. Include what you will do, not just what you won't do.

Losing weight is easier to do if you have support. Ask a family member or friend to join you in setting weight loss goals and making a healthy living plan. Talk and walk with your friends and family members. Make an appointment with health care staff to go over your goals. Attend a weight loss class. There are many people who want to help you achieve your weight loss goal.

Instead of this:	Do this:
I will lose weight.	I will lose 5 pounds this month.
I will exercise more.	I will take a brisk walk for 30 minutes after work Mon. thru Fri.
I will not eat so much fat.	I will buy lean cuts of meat and fat-free dairy products.
I will not eat so many sweets.	I will eat two pieces of fresh fruit and drink water instead of pop.
I will stop eating fast food for lunch.	I will pack my lunch at night and include a fruit and vegetable.
I will improve my eating habits.	I will meet with a dietitian once a month to develop a meal plan for me and my family.



Produced by
IHS Division of Diabetes
Treatment and Prevention,
www.diabetes.ihs.gov