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Stay at a healthy weight

5 tips for success

We usually know why we want to lose weight, or stay at a certain weight. It's the how that gives us some trouble.

Here are five tips that weight-loss experts agree can help you succeed:

1. **Figure out your motivation**. In general, internal factors can lead to more long-term success. These include things like getting healthier or feeling better.

   External motivation — like fitting into new clothes — can work. But the success is often short-lived.

2. **Get support**. Pairing up with someone is helpful. A buddy can encourage you when you need a boost. Some research also suggests that regular contact with a professional — like a doctor or weight-loss counselor — can work in keeping off weight.

3. **Set goals**. Make them realistic and measurable. "Losing weight" sounds indefinite and a little hard. "Losing two pounds a month for a year" seems manageable.

4. **Plan to exercise**. You can lose weight with regular exercise. The key is to exercise long and hard enough so that your body burns more calories each week than those you've eaten.

   And it helps to schedule exercise in advance. This lets you make time in your daily routine — and stick with it.

   When a full workout is impossible, add activity to your day. Use the stairs. Take a quick walk at lunch. You can burn serious calories when you add it all up!

   Before starting an exercise program, please talk with your doctor.

5. **Eat smaller meals**. And eat more frequently. This helps you avoid feeling starved, which can lead to binge eating.

   So keep healthy foods handy. Stash dried fruits and oatmeal packets in a desk drawer. Take bags of cut vegetables or a string cheese for snacks on the go. Aim for about 100 to 150 calories each. And avoid vending machines. A pack of those peanut butter crackers has about 230 calories!

Get more tips like these. Check the Aetna InteliHealth® website at **www.intelihealth.com**.

Source: Aetna InteliHealth. Available at www.intelihealth.com. Accessed January 18, 2011.

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