

Maintaining Your Results



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» So, you've completed a 12 week weight-loss program and are delighted with your results. I'm often asked "what happens next - do I have to be on a diet forever?"

Some form of lifestyle change is very important if you want to maintain your results or continue to improve. Throughout your transformation you will have learnt a lot about looking after your body and have picked up some great habits that will last you a lifetime. Obviously, if you go back to eating as you did before, or become complacent with your exercise program, you will likely end up back where you started – and surprisingly quickly.

You must continue to practice the good habits you have learned throughout your challenge. The good habits that got you into shape, are the same ones that will keep you in shape. Understand you will always need to be aware of what you are putting into your mouth. It's very easy to become complacent.

Continue to plan your days and prepare meals in advance, do not try to 'wing it'. Don't allow yourself to 'drift'; it's easy to drift well off course in a matter of a week or two.

Monitor your measurements (i.e. if your clothes start feeling tight then you need to back off again). If your

measurements start to increase then simply increase cardio a little, remove the extra free meal or cut back portions a little.

Here are some tips on how you can maintain your results but not be a slave to your fitness and diet program. Do not try to do everything at once! Start with one or two, note how you feel and how your body reacts. If all goes well, try another one and remember, moderation is the key:

1. REDUCE FREQUENCY AND DURATION OF CARDIO

After a somewhat gruelling 12 week challenge, the first thing you might like to do is reduce your cardio frequency (number of sessions per week) and/or duration (length of time to perform your cardio sessions). For instance, if you were performing six sessions a week, you can start to reduce it, perhaps to four or five sessions. If you were performing your moderate cardio sessions for 50 or 60 minutes you may like to reduce that to 40 or 45 minutes.

2. INCREASE YOUR FOOD PORTIONS OR ADD AN EXTRA PORTION OVER A COUPLE

OF MEALS

If your protein portions have been 100g, you might try increasing two meals to 125g or 150g. Instead of weighing your portions, you may now be comfortable 'eyeballing' them. You may like to add one extra portion of carbohydrates in the form of a double serve at one of your meals, or make an extra meal.

3. ADD A LITTLE MORE VARIETY TO YOUR DIET

If you've been missing bread or crumpets, yoghurt, cheese, smoked salmon, cream cheese, sun dried tomatoes, dried fruit etc, these things can be added back into your diet in moderation. Do not add everything all at once. Use a diet tracking program to check and educate yourself on the nutritional content of foods and to be sure what you are eating provides similar calories and nutrient content to your previous plan.

4. ADD IN AN EXTRA FREE CHOICE MEAL OR A GLASS OF WINE ONE DAY A WEEK

Try not to overeat then get back to your plan at the very next meal. Don't allow a cheat meal to turn into a cheat day, or cheat week.

5. SWAP THE ORDER OF YOUR MEALS

If you miss having a carbohydrate with your evening meal you can swap the carbohydrate portion of one of your other meals to your dinner meal. If you weight train in the evenings this is much less likely to be stored as fat, as carbohydrates are great for refuelling and recovery.

6. CONTINUE TO EAT PROTEIN WITH EVERY MEAL AND EAT AT LEAST FIVE REGULARLY SPACED MEALS PER DAY

This stabilises your blood sugar (preventing cravings and energy lows), increases satiety and provides your muscles with the nutrients they need to recover and grow, leading to a leaner, more shapely figure. Eating regularly will keep your metabolism high and your body in fat burning mode.

7. IF YOU OVER-EAT ON ANY GIVEN DAY, REDUCE YOUR INTAKE OF CARBOHYDRATES AND OVERALL CALORIES THE FOLLOWING DAY

Still eat at least five meals per day, but reduce the portion sizes and replace carbohydrate, fruit and dairy servings with fibrous vegetables. Ⓞ