

# Fit Facts™

American Council  
on Exercise®

## 6 WAYS TO FINE-TUNE YOUR LIFESTYLE FOR WEIGHT MAINTENANCE

**A**chieving your goal weight is a big accomplishment, but don't rest on your laurels. Maintaining a healthy weight requires a certain amount of daily vigilance and a commitment to good nutrition, regular exercise, self-monitoring, and other self-care practices.

### Research Revelations

The [National Weight Control Registry](#) is a database of over 5,000 people who have lost at least 30 pounds and have kept the weight off for at least one year. Researchers have found that most individuals who were successful in keeping off their weight share several characteristics:

- They eat breakfast daily
- They tend to maintain a low-calorie, low-fat diet
- They weigh themselves at least once a week
- They watch less than 10 hours of TV per week.
- They exercise about 1 hour each day on average.

In addition, a recent [study](#) confirms the longstanding view of experts that strategies for successful weight maintenance are distinctly different than those used for successful weight loss. The survey of 1,165 adults who had maintained a significant weight loss for at least one year revealed the following primary strategies:

Weight Maintenance	Weight Loss
✓ Eating plenty of low-fat protein	✓ Participating in a weight-loss program
✓ Exercising regularly	✓ Limiting sugar
✓ Rewards for staying on track	✓ Eating healthy snacks
✓ Frequent reminders about motivation for keeping the weight off	✓ Not skipping meals

### Stabilize Your Weight, Enjoy Your Life

Try these tips for making weight maintenance a permanent part of your lifestyle:

1. *Weigh weekly.* For many people, a once-a-week weigh-in offers the right amount of accountability. It's normal for body weight

to fluctuate by a couple of pounds from day to day and from morning to night depending on fluid balance, meals eaten, clothes worn, medication, and health status. A weekly weigh-in allows you to track the trends without getting hung up on small fluctuations.

2. *Move as much as possible.* Integrate physical activity into your daily life at every opportunity. Walk during work breaks; reduce sedentary behaviors like TV-watching and Web-surfing. When you sit, fidget, move your feet, shift in your seat, and tap your fingers. Even calories burned with small movements add up throughout the day.
3. *Create a healthy home environment.* Keep a bowl of fresh fruit on your kitchen counter or at eye level in the fridge. Stock your freezer with frozen berries and veggies, and keep fresh seasonal produce in the house. If you purchase less-nutritious treats, buy only small portions. Keep your gym bag near the door and home exercise equipment in plain view.
4. *Learn to cope effectively with stress.* Times of increased stress put you at risk for backsliding to your old behaviors. Practice relaxation techniques, such as progressive relaxation, visualization, and mindfulness. Learn to change your perspective and respond mindfully to stressful situations instead of reacting.
5. *Activate your social life.* Invite a friend to join you for a walk, run, or gym workout. Take your family on a day hike. Go dancing with your spouse or partner. Meet friends for a bike ride. Go bowling after work with colleagues. Integrating physical activity with your social life provides support for your active lifestyle and makes staying active fun and more likely.
6. *Keep a measuring tape handy.* Once a month or so, measure your waistline. If your waist circumference creeps up, pay closer attention to your food choices and increase physical activity.



### Your Personal Weight-Maintenance Plan

There's no one-size-fits-all strategy when it comes to weight maintenance. Some people need large quantities of daily exercise and others can maintain their weight on less physical activity. Some people need to keep a daily food log and others may need it only during times of stress. Pay attention to what does and doesn't work for you and create your own strategies for keeping your weight down. This will help you maintain a healthy body weight.

### Additional Resources

[How to Lose Weight and Keep it Off — Helpguide.org](#)

[The Elusive Weight Maintenance — Obesity Action Coalition](#)

[Weight Loss & Weight Management — American College of Sports Medicine](#)



©2011 American Council on Exercise®

To obtain reprint permission contact the American Council on Exercise®