

Reach Your Weight Loss Goal This Year With These Helpful Tips

DO YOU WANT to lose weight—but find that things at home, at work, or while socializing make it difficult to achieve your goal, or even get started? Many barriers, such as the examples that follow, can be overcome with some planning, says Paula Lozano, MD. "You want to make the desirable behavior your default behavior," she says. Try to make some of these adjustments the next time you find yourself in one of the following situations.

When I meet with family and friends, it's often around food.

BEFORE: Your socializing with friends tends to include meals or fattening treats.

AFTER: Instead of meeting friends for lunch, you suggest going for a walk, or getting together for an afternoon or evening of cards or board games. For a snack, you serve a tray of raw vegetables and a low-fat dip, instead of high-fat crackers and cheese.

My partner wants me to stock the cupboard with high-calorie foods I find hard to resist.

BEFORE: You buy those foods and tell yourself you won't eat them. But when your partner opens a bag of chips you can't resist them, and then you're angry with yourself and your partner.

AFTER: You might say to your partner, "I'm trying to make changes in what I eat and it would help me if we didn't keep high-fat and high-calorie foods in the house." Then negotiate. Maybe your partner will agree to buy single servings of those foods, and eat them out of your sight.

I'm on the road a lot and need quick meals.

BEFORE: You stop at fast food restaurants—often for a burger and fries.

AFTER: You've investigated which fast food chains offer healthy, low-calorie meals, and now make the choice to visit those places, and order accordingly. You also substitute unsweetened iced tea or flavored mineral water for sugary soft drinks.

I get hungry mid-morning and when I get home from work, and need a snack right *now*.

BEFORE: You grab the easiest thing—usually a handful of chips or a candy bar.

AFTER: You plan ahead and stock your cupboard and fridge with single servings of healthy snacks—like nuts, string cheese, or yogurt. A bowl of ripe fruit is on your dining room table.

I want to go for a walk after I get home from work, but I never seem to get out the door.

BEFORE: The clothing and shoes you wear when you're active are scattered inconveniently around the house.

AFTER: Running or walking shoes are by the door; a bag with comfortable clothing is pre-packed and ready to go.

When I watch TV, I find myself craving snacks, even if I'm not hungry. And at parties, I can't resist loading up on snacks. These situations trigger me to eat and overeat.

BEFORE: Your companion when you watch TV is a big bowl of popcorn with butter. At parties, you graze all evening at the buffet table.

AFTER: You think ahead and fill a bowl with a cut-up apple for snacking before you turn on the TV.

When you get to a party, you ask for a large glass of club soda and sip it slowly as you socialize.

When you do hit the buffet table, you stick with vegetables and fruits.

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