



THE SEVEN BIGGEST MISTAKES WE MAKE WHEN TRYING TO LOSE WEIGHT

Many people fall victim to weight loss mistakes that slow down or stop our success. I summarized the most common mistakes for you in this article but before we focus on everything we do wrong I want to highlight two essential pieces that are crucial for your weight loss success. Number one, you must take action. And by action I mean, "do something about it". Bottom line is that by not doing anything or by doing what you've already been doing, nothing changes and progress just doesn't happen.

The second piece is to get support. Taking action and getting support are a winning combination. How many times have you tried to lose weight without getting support? Did you succeed?

When you have the support of a coach, a group of friends or your family the likelihood of succeeding at your goal increases dramatically. Don't go it alone. Share your desire to lose weight with those you are closest to and get the support you need. Hiring a coach or working with someone who will keep you accountable and on track has huge benefits. Not to mention the process feels much more doable and is definitely more enjoyable.

Here's to your health and weight loss goals!

Sincerely,

Heidi

Mistake #1: Starving Yourself

I do not mean "Starving" literally since we hardly ever starve ourselves these days, but how many times have you gone on a low carb, low fat, low calorie diet? While you are still eating food, you may deprive your body of essential nutrients and even calories that it needs to power

through the day. What happens automatically when we don't eat enough or do not get all essential nutrients is that our body goes into starvation mode. In essence this means we hold on to fat just in case it is needed for energy - for the tough times ahead!

We need a certain amount of calories to simply go through the day. If you add in exercise and an active lifestyle in general this demand for energy/calories will increase accordingly. If you don't consume enough calories OR the right type of calories your metabolism will slow down to preserve the fuel it has. That makes losing weight extremely difficult and if you do drop weight it tends to be temporary.

The higher your metabolism - the more calories you burn even in resting mode.

Heidi's Tips:

Best way to speed up your metabolism: *get moving and build muscles!*

Best way to ensure you are getting all essential nutrients: *eat lean protein, fresh vegetables, whole grains, nuts & seeds and fresh fruit!*

Mistake #2: Relying On Willpower

I am starting a diet on Monday morning! I will give up all sweets, alcohol, carbs, and fat! How many times have you made this resolution - either on January 1st, before a big event or before bathing suit season starts?? And how many times did you give up because you couldn't walk by that brownie, bowl of Hersey Kisses or other treats your friends were happily munching on?

If you rely on willpower alone you will hit a dead end really soon. Cravings your body sends you are a signal - like a cry for help. You need to call in your personal CSI team and figure out why you are craving sweet or salty foods. There are many physical reasons for cravings - which is a good thing and an easy fix. Here is an example - if you have been eating too many salty foods during the day you will most likely crave something sweet to balance it out. In this case you can satisfy the physical need for sugar with a piece of fruit. If your craving is emotionally based then this piece of fruit is not really going to do the trick! You need a whole other set of tools and techniques to overcome emotional food issues.

This is one of my favorite areas to work on with my clients. We can put our detective hats on and explore the root causes of cravings, reasons

why we cannot lose weight, figure out low energy, digestive tract issues and so forth.

Heidi's Tips:

Deconstruct your cravings: *Identify and Manage the root causes surrounding your issues with food. Write them down, look for patterns and really listen to your body - TRUST YOUR GUT INSTINCTS!*

Mistake #3: Weighing yourself every day

Unless you are an athlete who needs to make weight (e.g. rowing, wrestling, sprinting, etc) there should not be any reason to weigh yourself every day or worse - multiple times per day. So many clients of mine were obsessed about their weight. The number on your scale can ruin almost everybody's day - it is just a number!

The important factors in your life are your health, your happiness and your energy levels. When you know your body well and you listen to the signals it sends then you know when something is off and needs to be corrected.

Heidi's Tips:

Don't let daily weigh-ins wear you down: *use your clothes as a measure or pick one day per week to weigh in. This way you eliminate the frustration around fluctuating water weight due to sodium levels or hormones.*

Mistake #4: A Calorie is a Calorie

I personally do not count calories, measure or weigh my food as I trust my body's signals and clues to tell me when I have had enough to eat. This sounds scary and almost ridiculous to many people and it does take a while to learn to trust your body. I am not completely against counting calories or points especially when it helps you establish your healthy relationship with food.

The reason counting calories leaves a bad aftertaste for me is that too many diets promote eating 100-calorie pack cookies and snacks and microwavable pre-packaged plastic food. This food contains calories and does give us some energy but we are not getting the essential nutrients we need. NOT ALL CALORIES ARE CREATED EQUAL!

I will give you a simplified example - simple carbs like we find them in plain bagels, crackers, goldfish or pretzels, to name a few have no fiber, no minerals, no nutrients. They absorb really fast in your body. On the other hand whole grains, or nuts contain fiber, protein, healthy fats and other nutrients. Therefore it takes the body longer to break the food into its components and we absorb much slower living us full and satisfied much longer.

In a nutshell - it is not all about the number of calories a food contains, but also about how quickly sugar enters our system and how well our cells are nourished with nutrients.

Heidi's Tips:

Quality over Quantity: Focus on eating more fresh whole foods that have all the nutrients intact so it takes longer for your body to break it down. This will keep you full longer, boost your metabolism and promote stable blood sugar levels.

Mistake # 5: Skipping Breakfast

So many people tell me they feel more hungry at lunch when they eat breakfast so they try to avoid the morning calories by skipping lunch. It should not be news to you when I tell you - BIG MISTAKE!

Just like a car you need fuel to start your engine. It gets your metabolism going, sets your blood sugar levels for the day and gives you the energy you need to power through your day. Of course I am not talking about a muffin and coffee - please read Mistake #4 - a Calorie is a Calorie!

Many studies show that adults and kids who eat a nourishing breakfast are more alert and attentive at work and at school. Studies also show that by skipping breakfast you are more prone to indulge and binge at lunch or dinner.

Heidi's Tips:

Jumpstart your day with a healthy breakfast (If you are always in a hurry try these easy to prepare and highly portable meals): a hardboiled egg and a piece of fruit, a bowl of oatmeal with berries and walnuts on top, a smoothie - you can even put it in your coffee mug and take it with you, whole wheat toast with natural peanut butter and a banana, etc

Mistake #6: Hating Yourself Into Losing Weight

Now we will go into the emotional side of weight loss. Negative Body Image is a big driver for dieting and weight loss. Check if you have a bruised body image. Read the signs below and make a check next to the ones you can relate to:

- You compare yourself to everyone
- You have a tough time taking compliments
- You rarely think you look good
- You skip events because you don't think you look good enough
- You criticize your body regularly
- It takes you forever to pick an outfit

If you can relate to any of these signs then you are potentially hating yourself into losing weight - I know this is a harsh statement but these are all signs of a low body self-image or self-worth.

Hating yourself into losing weight never works. Will you love yourself or your body more once you have thin arms or thighs? Will your personality change and the punishing strategy miraculously switch to a positive outlook? I wish it was that easy - but it never is.

Heidi's Tips:

Begin Loving Your Body Today: *love your body enough to take care of it in healthy ways and this will lead to success. It takes work to establish a good body image. Focus on all the positive things about yourself and write them down. Add a new one every day. Your list can have physical and non physical qualities - are you proud of achievements you've made at work? Do your friends come to you for advice because you are a great listener? Really hone in on all your positive characteristics and compliment yourself for them. The more you focus on the positive the easier it will be to go deeper and really start to appreciate and love the body you're in no matter what the number on the scale says.*

Mistake #7: Negative Self-Talk

This mistake is directly related to mistake number six because most often poor body image goes hand-in-hand with negative self-talk. Let's assume you've just blown your diet by eating an entire bag of popcorn at the movies? Will the conversation in your head go something like

this: "You pig. How could you eat that whole bag by yourself?" or "You have no self-control. You're never going to lose weight."

How do you think these negative thoughts affect you? How often do you really pay attention to those voices in your head?

If you're looking for long-term weight loss success, it is absolutely imperative that you begin working on your own inner dialogue. The best way to start is to become aware. Pay attention and really listen to the harsh words you use on yourself. The next step is to begin switching your thinking.

Heidi's Tips:

Change your Thinking: *Here is a simple yet powerful exercise: Draw a line down the center of a clean sheet of paper. In the left hand column write down the negative thoughts you catch yourself thinking regularly. In the right hand column write the positive counter thought. Here is an example: the negative thought might be, "I'll never lose weight." The positive counter thought might be, "I'm constantly discovering new ways to improve my health."*

When the negative thoughts appear during the day, make yourself aware of them and then lead them on out of your head by using your new positive counter thought. Say them several times so they really sink in.