



10 Reasons You're Not Losing Weight



1. **You don't have enough muscle.**

More muscle = more calories burned. Muscle burns more calories than fat. That's why men burn calories a lot faster than women; they have more muscle.

What to do: Start lifting weights. To build and maintain muscle, alternate between strength exercises (weights) and aerobic activities (walking).

2. **Genetics: The apple doesn't fall far from the tree.**

If both parents are obese, you are much more likely to be obese. Researchers estimate that your genes account for at least 50 - 90% - of your stored body fat.

What to do: You're not doomed. Your weight-loss challenge is just 10-50% greater. Losing just a few pounds can improve your health dramatically.

3. **You're getting older.**

A slow metabolism is a common as we age, especially with sedentary lifestyles. Inactivity means we gradually lose muscle and increase body fat, resulting in less calories burned.

What to do: First, move more. Not just physical activities, like walking, swimming, biking. Getting up and moving around your house/workplace, standing versus sitting, cooking dinner...they burn more calories than just watching TV, emailing your co-worker or driving. Thin people fidget/move more than obese people and burn as much as 350 more calories per day – the equivalent of 2 doughnuts.

4. **Your body can't keep up.**

To survive in the days before supermarkets, your body evolved some complex starvation-coping strategies. Now that food isn't scarce, these processes can work against us. Our bodies make about two dozen hormones – some that stimulate eating and others that decrease the need to eat. This hormonal response can't cope with our sedentary lifestyle and all the junk food we eat, making it harder to maintain ideal body weight.

What to do: You can't fight evolution, so you have to focus extra-hard on those things you can. Be active every day and fill up on low-calorie foods.

5. **The problem is in your medicine cabinet.**

Many meds that treat diabetes, depression and high blood pressure affect weight. Some make you hungrier; others stimulate fat storage.

What to do: Ask your health care provider if a different medication or a lower dose could work. **DO NOT** change your medications without discussing it first.

6. You underestimate your portions and calories.

Most underestimate calories by huge amounts! Women and overweight people miscalculate more than others. Other studies suggest the greatest underestimating occurs when the meals are the largest.

What to do: Eat smaller portions. Use measuring spoons, measuring cups and a food scale to guide you. Read food labels for serving size and calories. See a RD.

7. You eat mindlessly or when distracted.

Do you eat dinner in front of the TV? Do you stop eating when you're full or when the show is over? Such distraction leads to mindless over-eating.

What to do: Always eat from a dish/plate. Sit down and savor the taste as you eat – without distraction. That means that if you're going to grab the crust of your child's grilled cheese sandwich, you have to put it on a plate first.

8. You deprive yourself.

Are you so strict with your diet, you can't remember the last time you ate a donut, candy bar or a slice of pizza? Then - like so many times before - you give in and now you're mad and feel guilty. You'll start your diet over tomorrow – or next week – or never.

What to do: Take the focus away from that list of bad foods and emphasize those that are good for you. If 90% of the time you eat plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins and low-fat dairy, the other 10% doesn't really matter. Enjoy that treat – but just one. If you want another, it will still be there tomorrow. After all, doughnuts or candy bars or pizza won't drop off the face of the earth.

9. You're usually good, but...

You start every day with a healthful breakfast, eat small portions and eat baked chicken, not fried.....unless you're vacationing, dining out, celebrating a birthday/anniversary, etc. Eating consistently day after day will help maintain weight loss. One splurge meal a week can easily undo all the small calorie-saving tricks you employed the whole week before.

What to do: Stop dieting. Make small changes you can live with. Find ways to celebrate that don't involve high-calorie eating or take half of that restaurant meal home to celebrate again tomorrow.

10. You overestimate your calorie burn.

Gym machines often overestimate calories burned. We can easily out-eat our workouts. One hour of weight training burns around 250 calories (22 oz fruit smoothie). An hour of power walking or 30 minutes of jogging burns around 400 calories (large bagel with cream cheese). To burn a medium non-fat latte and a blueberry muffin (600 calories), one needs to walk for 90 minutes at 4 mph.

What to do: Don't reward your good work with food.

U.P. Diabetes Outreach Network
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