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6 Ways to Take the Pain Out of Losing Weight

Is there such a thing as painless weight loss? I wouldn't blame you if your reaction to that idea is, "yeah right!" But that's because we've been brainwashed into thinking that when it comes to losing weight, the only way to succeed is through diet and deprivation. After all, no pain, no gain ... right?

But I want you to see that the idea weight loss should be painful isn't just wrong, it undermines what the real goal is: not only to lose weight, but also to keep it off.

As soon as you make the shift in your mind that your goal is about more than just watching a number on the scale decrease, you realize how crazy it is to make or allow the process to be painful. After all, if something is truly painful, would you want to sustain it for the rest of your life?

Of course not — it's painful! You want to stop doing it as soon as you can. And that's how most people treat dieting ... they want to get off that diet ASAP. But as soon as you stop the diet, your weight comes back, leading to the dreaded "yo-yo diet." If you want to be slim and healthy for life, you have to find a way to make managing your weight pleasant and therefore sustainable. So here are six tips for how you can take the pain out of weight loss for good.



1. Ditch the deadline.

Although most goal setting advice says to impose deadlines, this is a disastrous idea when it comes to losing weight and keeping it off because all that date will do is pile on unnecessary pressure.

Most people who fall behind on their weight loss deadlines either feel discouraged and give up, or turn to more drastic measures to hurry things along. This isn't how you learn how to be slim and healthy for life. A good way to approach deadlines is to think about how long it took you to gain the weight you're trying to lose, and remind yourself that in the grand scheme of things it doesn't matter how long it takes to lose it as long as you DO and it doesn't come back.

2. Make small changes.

Don't feel pressured to change everything all at once. Start slow. Make small changes you know you can live with.

For example, one of the things I suggest clients do is start cutting down food portions by five percent. It's not much, but it gets the ball rolling. And when you're comfortable with that, cut back another five percent. Over time, you'll have made some big changes but they

won't have been painful.

This goes for cutting out "bad" foods as well. Part of what makes dieting miserable is the deprivation you impose around all the foods you love. But instead of cutting out everything, why not start by omitting just one of those "bad" foods? This will be a lot easier to manage than getting rid of all of them in one go.

3. Only make changes you're happy doing for the rest of your life.

I've had clients announce that part of their weight loss program was going to include getting up every morning to run five miles, despite the fact that they hated running. When I asked them to really think about why they'd decided to make that change, their explanations usually came back to an idealized image of what a "healthy lifestyle" involved.

But I'd strongly recommend you don't do things just because they fit an image of what "healthy" is. If you like running, that's great. If you like going to the gym, fantastic. But if you don't, you shouldn't feel and pressure to go. You can lose weight and keep it off doing things that suit you.

4. Go easy on yourself when you slip up

So much diet pain comes from being on a strict regimen and feeling the pressure to stick to it. To many people, one slip up means failure. But it's unrealistic to expect to stick to a new behavior one hundred percent of the time ... it's just not realistic. Instead, cut yourself some slack. It's OK if things don't work out right away, but it is important to learn from your slip ups while forging ahead.

5. Get support

If you think you can lose weight on your own, then I encourage you to go for it. But if you're someone who needs help to achieve your goal, don't struggle on your own. For many people, knowing they can seek advice, support and reassurance from someone else is a valuable tool on a weight loss journey, and takes a lot of the pain out of the process.

6. Forget "no pain, no gain."

Don't buy into the "no pain, no gain" brainwashing. Lifelong success at losing weight is a completely different proposition than short-term dieting, so the way you accomplish it will be different. You don't have to suffer to lose weight and keep it off. In fact, your long-term success is made much more likely if you avoid suffering altogether.

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