

6 Weight-Loss Secrets from a Health Coach

In any profession, there is knowledge that you can learn through books, classes or research, and there is knowledge that you can only see through first-hand experience with clients. That's where real life meets science. In my work, I've discovered six secrets about why people become stalled in their health and weight loss goals, and how to kickstart great habits – and results – immediately.



1. You won't drink enough water unless you track it. We all know that we have to drink water. Experts have been saying this for years. The problem is that it's easier said than done, and it's the first habit people forget about when they fall off track. When my clients gain or maintain weight from week to week, the first thing I ask about is their water

intake. In nearly every case, their water intake is low. The problem is that water is key to eliminating cravings and curbing hunger. I shoot for 6 Smart Life water bottles a day (approximately 120 fl. ounces) and I make sure that I reach my goal every day by marking a dot on my hand or a piece of paper to count each one. Why? Because when I try to guess how many bottles I've had, I always overestimate the number. To keep myself sipping, I add flavor from fruit, fresh herbs or flavored Stevia drops.



2. Hunger is not a muscle we need to strengthen. Many of us think that the only way to truly lose weight is to learn to deal with hunger. The myth is that hunger cues will subside over time. They won't. The truth is that depriving yourself of food stands in the way of weight loss. When you're hungry, your body goes into stress fat storage mode and your metabolism slows down, which prevents you from dropping pounds. What I learned first-hand is that you need to journal what you eat. Using a simple pocket notebook, a diary or your

smart phone, list your meals and snacks to keep yourself honest about what you actually consume and help yourself avoid skipping meals and feeling hungry. Most of my clients don't lose weight until they try this trick.



3. Eating out stops weight loss. Period. “But it’s a healthy restaurant,” all of my clients say. Or, “it’s the same meal I would’ve made at home.” Actually, it’s not. Restaurants have hidden ingredients, larger portions and preservatives that mess up digestion and slow down weight loss. I help my clients reduce the number of times they eat out by showing them that they can make easy, healthy meals at home. On the weeks that my clients cook at home, they lose more weight and save money. When they eat out, they gain or maintain the same weight. The key to this is to pre-make ingredients that you can mix and match for simple healthy and delicious meals. Also, remember that not every meal has to be so sophisticated; it isn’t the last meal you will ever enjoy in this lifetime. Pairing some veggies with a clean protein or whole grain will work

brilliantly on most nights. Eggs are an easy protein to make last minute for any meal, and stocking up on some frozen black bean veggie burgers is also fast, easy, and good for you.



4. Choose your demon (you only get one). When people decide they are “letting go” and cheating on their eating goals, they overdo it and go for everything in a single meal – alcohol, dessert, fatty protein *and* But you don’t need to cheat all the way. Instead of thinking you’ll be either “good” or “bad” during a meal (or an entire day), choose one vice. Maybe enjoy a bit more alcohol because a friend is sharing a special bottle *or* eat the bread because this restaurant is known for its baker. Decide before you go out which “demon” will be worth the splurge and stick to it. The next day is another “smart life” day, but the next course can even be another “smart life” course. When you indulge on everything, your body won’t lose weight for a few days while it’s detoxing everything you splurged on.



5. Healthy food and snacks must be as simple as junk food.

I've learned that if you don't find ways to make your healthy snacks easily, you'll go back to the convenience of what's readily available: junk. I show my clients new products, frozen meals, snacks, and on-the-go items that are both nutritious and easy to make or eat. These aren't always fresh veggies and fruits, but they're organic, they include few ingredients, and they're so much better than processed options. Try organic veggie burgers, organic frozen vegan meals, organic frozen quinoa and brown rice, organic frozen veggies and fruit, fruit bars made from real fruit, gluten-free and organic black bean chips, quinoa chips, lentil chips or chickpeas. True, chips are still packaged snack food, so you don't want to eat them all at once, but if you need something crunchy, eat a few organic gluten-free black bean chips. The idea is to have some healthy foods on hand that are quick and easy to grab when you have cravings.



6. Your mindset can help you break any plateaus. Most of us know what's good to eat and what's not, but it's challenging to stay motivated long enough for our bodies to reach the point where we can't even tolerate bad food. Consistency is crucial. Just when you think you are plateauing is when change is about to happen. When getting healthy, most of my clients lose 6 to 8 pounds immediately, but then hit a plateau where weight no longer drops off consistently. What happens with weight loss is that your body replaces fat in cells with water first. Water weighs more than fat. It's only as water leaves the cells that you see weight loss. That's normal and it's why you're not going to lose weight every day. Accept that plateaus are natural and re-examine what's holding you back. Wait it out, stick with the plan, re-visit your weight loss tips and secrets, and your body will respond. This type of roadblock is also the time you may need a coach, or someone in your corner, who will guide you through the uncomfortable phases and keep you on track and moving toward your goals.