



CENTERSTONE

Wellness Program

The Power of Planning: Six tips to prevent packing on the pounds!

A trip to the beach without an itinerary can be a relaxing getaway – even without a set schedule, you know you’ll have a great time. But if you want to lose weight before your beach trip, not having a plan can cause big trouble. Without a plan, we just give a passing nod to our weight problems or our eating habits. Use the power of planning to achieve your weight loss goals! Consider these six tips to prevent packing on the pounds.

Ditch the diet mentality

If the thought of starting a diet triggers pure panic, then you are not alone! I immediately imagine all the foods that will likely be off limits, and then I become consumed with thinking about them. So, it’s important to choose a weight loss plan with the big picture in mind. Choose a plan that will allow you to develop healthy and nutritious habits achieve your current goals, but also your future goals in one, two or even 10 years from now. Fad diets are alluring, seductive and can bring short term motivation or even some success. But there is no such thing as an overnight success or quick fix diet. A healthy diet doesn’t forbid food, just problem foods in problem quantities.

How to recognize a Fad Diet: fad diets claim you can lose lots of weight super fast; they severely restrict certain foods or promote special or “secret” foods; they claim exercise is not necessary; and they have no long-term scientific back up. Bottom line – if a diet sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

Realize hunger happens

Wouldn’t it be nice if we could count on the clock to determine every planned meal? If you knew when hunger would strike, you could adjust your schedule to be free for those tasty time slots. But, unfortunately, real life can get in the way of even the best plans – a crisis develops, kids demand something or your workload suddenly triples. It is not a good time to be stranded with no sandwich! By realizing that hunger happens (and more than once a day), we can plan accordingly and be certain that we are not caught in starvation mode, which always leads to overeating. There are many healthy snack items that are portable and can be real life savers when hunger happens but your schedule didn’t get that memo. Just as you would be prepared if caring for an infant, be prepared to meet your own needs as well.

Create your kitchen with purpose

You go to all the trouble of preparing a shopping list, clipping your coupons and even toting your recycled bag to the grocery store. Then, you get home and plant everything wherever there is space in the pantry or refrigerator. By the next day you have forgotten what you bought and just grab whatever is in sight when hunger strikes. When you organize your kitchen with purpose, you are intentional in the placement of all your healthy choice food items. Easy access is the answer! One of the best – and easiest – ways to gain control of weight is to keep your kitchen stocked with ready-to-eat foods; cleaned, chopped, proportioned and ready to grab. I don’t know about you, but whatever gets placed in the

crisper drawer is not likely going to see the light of day anytime soon. Often, uneaten produce ends up being tossed out. What a waste! But, if I place those fresh fruits right at eye level, they can't be missed and I am much more likely to make the healthier choice when it is so accessible. Also, to avoid unhealthy foods that entice you, keep junk foods out of your house.

Practice guilt prevention

Practice looking beyond the current moment – that moment of temptation when you and your favorite pie are standing together, alone in your kitchen. Ask yourself how the tempting choice at hand will make you feel in the near future. Every decision comes with a consequence. Every action has an outcome. A month from now we will not be the same as we are today, based upon the various choices we have made. I tell myself that tomorrow is most likely going to happen, and I can influence how I will feel later by the decisions I make now, in the present. This brings perspective and awareness to the power of personal choice and control. If you know you are going to be overcome by guilt, shame and debilitating despair, practice guilt prevention by becoming more conscious in the moment.

Personalize your plan

Everybody is unique, and every *body* is unique. There is no one size fits all exercise plan. It is crucial to consult a physician if you have special needs that limit or restrict movement or activities. For anyone with an illness, injury or disability, special planning or accommodations may be required to choose the best exercise option. If you have a pain that you have delayed getting checked out, don't put it off any longer. The solution may be a simple and inexpensive exercise tool that can be a great aid to getting in shape. If you have diabetes or are hypoglycemic, you know the importance of planning in order to manage your blood glucose. Identify your physical needs as well as limitations when personalizing your health plan.

Beware of paralysis of calorie-counting analysis

Most meal plans for weight loss suggest you track something – fat grams, carbohydrates, ounces or calories. It is easy to become so bogged down in accurately tracking every molecule that enters your mouth, that frustration overrides the effort, and the opportunity to give in to the buffet seems most carefree and delightful. Don't let slip-ups or missed food diary entrees escalate into full blown rebellion and binging. Perfection in keeping up with all you eat – or anything – does not make you powerful. You can be deliberate in your choices and conscious of what you consume, but beware of overanalyzing!

Centerstone (615) 460-HELP (4357)

About Centerstone

Centerstone, a not-for-profit organization, has provided a wide range of mental health and addiction services to people of all ages for more than 50 years. Through more than 60 facilities and 170 partnership locations across Middle Tennessee, Centerstone serves more than 50,000 children, adolescents, adults and seniors each year. Centerstone is accredited by The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). For more information about Centerstone, please call 888-291-4357 or visit www.centerstone.org.

About Susan Gillpatrick, MEd, LPC, CTS

Susan Gillpatrick, Centerstone Crisis Management Specialist, primarily works in the field with clients in critical incident response situations, and in Centerstone's wellness trainings and presentations. She is also responsible for planning and implementing marketing and growth strategies for Centerstone's Crisis Management Strategies.

Ms. Gillpatrick is a Licensed Professional Counselor, Certified Trauma Specialist, Certified Workplace Conflict Mediator, and Mental Health Service Provider in the state of Tennessee and a National Certified Counselor. She is also a member the American Counseling Association, the Association of Traumatic Stress Specialists, the Tennessee Mental Health Counseling Association, and the Middle Tennessee Employee Assistance Professionals Association. She is a frequent presenter at local and national conferences, and has had numerous articles published. She received her Master of Education degree in Human Development Counseling from Peabody College at Vanderbilt University.