



**For the week of  
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**Editor:**

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## What works for weight loss

**I've been trying to lose weight all year (New Year's resolution) but keep getting off track, and I'm losing and gaining the same five pounds over and over again. Any ideas?**

First, don't beat yourself up. At least you're paying attention, and it sounds like you're maintaining instead of gaining weight. Those are good things.

But weight loss cycles can be frustrating, can't they? There always seems to be a special event on the horizon where you "treat" yourself to a heavy meal, complete with dessert, or graze an entire day on high-calorie snacks.

Scientists are taking a close look at what works and what doesn't when it comes to losing weight and keeping it off. Recently, researchers examined strategies of more than 4,000 people enrolled in the National Weight Control Registry (<http://www.nwcr.ws/>), who have lost at least 30 pounds and have kept it off for at least a year. In the July 2005 issue of the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, they revealed techniques that seem to work:

- **Getting plenty of physical activity.** The most successful weight losses came in people who exercised with at least moderate intensity for an average of an hour a day.

- **Adhering to a low-calorie, low-fat diet.** The average calorie intake reported by registry members was 1,381 calories a day, with 24 percent of calories from fat. However, researchers said that such self-reports are usually underestimated, and believe most participants are actually eating closer to 1,800 calories a day.

- **Eating breakfast.** More than three-quarters of registry participants reported eating breakfast every day, usually cereal and fruit. Only 4 percent reported never eating breakfast.

- **Weighing yourself regularly.** Nearly half of the members weigh themselves at least once a day, and nearly a third weigh themselves at least once a week.

- **Maintaining consistent eating patterns.** More successful members of the registry tended to keep their eating patterns consistent, even on weekends and holidays.

- **Catching slips quickly.** Nearly everyone occasionally regains weight they've lost, but more successful "losers" acted quickly to lose a re-gained pound or two before it became a bigger problem.

*Chow Line is a service of Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH 43210-1044, or [filipic.3@osu.edu](mailto:filipic.3@osu.edu).*