

Successful Weight Loss

From [Paige Waehner](#),

Ingredients for Success

You already know how to lose weight...At it's simplest, you need to burn more calories than you eat, right? And exercising and eating healthy is the healthiest way to do that, right? But, successful weight loss doesn't start with your body--it starts with your mind.

As we've all discovered, the mind is a powerful thing--it can take you to success or failure, depending on your attitude. What you think about yourself can make the difference between reaching your goals and quitting before you even get close. So how do you get your mind right to make exercise and healthy eating a part of your life? Below are some key ingredients you can rely on to reach your goals.

Commitment

You already know you have to commit to being healthy, but what does that actually involve? It's more than just shouting from the roof tops "I'M COMMITTED TO BEING HEALTHY!" Being committed means you have to wake up every day and *decide* you're going to make healthy choices.

Being committed is a choice and something you have to reinforce each day. So how do you do that? Use these tips to help you commit to your goals:

- **Plan and Prepare.** The night before, plan your workout for the next day and get all your stuff (gym bag, clothes, etc.) ready to go. Decide what and when you'll eat and get your meals ready. Make it as easy as possible to follow through with your plans.
- **Motivate Yourself.** Remind yourself throughout the day of your workout plans--send yourself a reminder or have a friend call and ask about your workout, so it's always in the front of your mind.
- **Hold Yourself Accountable.** What will happen if you skip that workout? You need to have consequences so that missing your workout isn't an option--maybe you can't watch your favorite TV show until you exercise. On the other side, you can also reward yourself for working out--just make sure you don't reward yourself with food.
- **Remember Your Goals.** As you're getting ready for the day, remember what your goals are. Weight loss? More energy? Whatever it is, that workout is an important step in reaching it. Remind yourself of the big picture--what you do today counts!

Discipline

Such an ugly word, I know, but discipline is a part of successful weight loss and just another way of saying self-control. Think of how you practice self-control in the other parts of your life. Each day you fulfill your obligations to work and family, even when you'd rather just lie in bed and sleep late. That takes discipline. The same can be true of exercise. Of course, it's easy to make yourself go to work because there are consequences if you don't--you won't make as much money or you could lose your job. But if you don't workout, the consequences aren't as immediate, are they? Try these ideas to get more disciplined with exercise:

- **Make Exercise a Habit.** Part of being disciplined is creating a habit. You may not want to brush your teeth every night, but you do it anyway because you always do it right before bed...it's a habit. You can do the same thing with exercise by keeping your workouts on specific days and times each week (if you can). Knowing that every Monday at 6 a.m. will find you at the gym will make it that much easier to show up for your workouts.

- **Know the Consequences.** You already know what happens if you don't brush your teeth--cavities, gum disease, painful dental experiences, etc. But what are the consequences of not exercising? Make a list of all the things that could happen to your body and mind without exercise such as weight gain, increased risk of heart disease, diabetes and cancer, to name a few.
- **Get Some Help.** One sure way to show up for your workout is to have someone waiting for you. One option is a personal trainer--someone who will hold you accountable for your workouts while educating you all at the same time. Another option is to get a workout buddy and have consequences if you don't show up. Having that support will make exercise more enjoyable AND keep you on track.
- **Make a Deal With Yourself.** Don't feel like working out? Promise yourself you'll just do a warm up. If after 10 minutes you still don't want to workout, you can quit and go home. The majority of the time, you'll keep going...trust me.

More on Getting Your Mind and Body on Track

Honesty

Being honest with yourself about what you'll really do is a tough one. Many people fail at weight loss because they set their sights too high, planning so many workouts and diet changes, it's impossible to follow. This is where a little self-awareness comes in and what that means is figuring out what you'll *really* do to reach your goals. Take some time to ask yourself some crucial questions before embarking on another failed journey. Ask yourself:

- **How much time will you *really* spend exercising?** Forget the guidelines and decide what you'll actually do...then plan your workouts accordingly. If you're not going to spend an hour doing cardio, don't set that as a goal--set a goal you can reach!
- **Are you willing to do what it takes to reach your goals?** If you want to lose weight, are you willing to change your eating habits? What if that means spending more time cooking and shopping? Preparing your meals in advance? Saying no those daily lunches out with co-workers? What if it means you have to keep track of what you're eating and work on your bad habits? Decide if you're really willing to commit to doing that *every single day*.
- **Can you accept failure?** A big part of weight loss is falling off the wagon...and it WILL happen.

It happens to all of us! What happens if you flub up one day and give into those pizza cravings? What if you eat that extra piece of pie? Are you willing to accept your slip-up and get back on track or will you just quit at the first mistake? Be honest with yourself about this one because willingness to persevere in these circumstances can mean the difference between success and failure.

Flexibility

Maybe this has happened to you: You start an exercise program--you're working out, eating healthy and feeling great. Then, Something Happens--an injury, an illness, a mean boss heaping more work on you. Whatever it is, it throws you off and before you know it, you've completely stopped working out.

It's important to realize that these kinds of things will happen on a regular basis. Your job is to be prepared and, to do that, you have to be more flexible. You need to be willing to...:

- **Change your workouts when necessary.** If you suddenly have to work late, decide you're still going to exercise...just in a different way. This might mean squeezing in some stair walking or short, brisk walks whenever you can. Decide you'll do something, even if it's just a quick walk.

- **Do shorter workouts.** Many people quit exercise when they don't have time to do a full workout. Remember this: Something is *always* better than nothing. If you only have 10 minutes, use it! It might mean getting up early and lifting weights for 10 minutes before work. Stay committed, but give yourself permission to do what you have time for until things calm down. Try these [10-minute cardio ideas](#) and don't forget [strength training](#) too.
- **Be creative.** Yes, there are guidelines for exercise, but when time is short, stop worrying about the rules and do what you can. This might mean combining cardio and strength workouts, spreading out your workouts throughout the day or making your household chores a workout, if that's all you have time for. I have one client who runs around the ball field while she watches her son play baseball--now that's creative!

Consistency

Consistency is what comes from all that discipline, commitment, honesty and flexibility we've been talking about. Why? Because being consistent with your eating and exercise is the only way to reach your goals. Exercising heavily for 3 weeks and then quitting for a month isn't going to work. Your assignment?

1. Find a program that you can live with for the rest of your life. Do something you enjoy and that fits into your daily schedule.
2. Create, through trial and error, a workout routine that fits with your life, your goals and your needs.
3. Find a way of healthy eating that you can live with for the rest of your life. You already know that diets don't work--at least for the long-term.
4. Give yourself a little leeway to make mistakes and, above all, don't expect perfection. Be ready to screw up from time to time, acknowledge it and then use it to do better.
5. Don't be afraid to experiment. Try different workout activities and times. Try different ways of eating and preparing your food. Find what works for you!

In the end, losing weight requires you to draw on all of your strengths while acknowledging your weaknesses--not an easy thing to do. The good news is, you have many resources to rely on, most of them readily available right there in your own mind. And it helps to have some outside motivation as well. Don't forget to [reward yourself](#) for your successes and don't be afraid to count on yourself...you know what to do.

For more information on this topic contact **Penrith's 'Favourite Personal Trainers'** on the details below.

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