

Weight Loss Plan That Loves Your Bod

(NAPSA)—When it comes to losing weight and keeping it off the science is clear: take the easy way! Make easy changes that you can live with and sustain over the long term.

Reaching a healthy weight is about lifestyle and the everyday, sustainable habits that make up that lifestyle. The numbers on the bathroom scale can be a barometer of your progress, but they should not define it, advises Anne Fletcher, author of *Thin for Life*, a book that details how hundreds of people have lost weight and kept it off for more than a decade.

“It’s important for people to start their efforts by setting a ‘comfortable’ weight goal for themselves,” says Fletcher. “One in which you feel good physically and emotionally; one in which you do not have any medical problems (like high blood pressure) that are caused by your weight; and one where you don’t have to starve or exercise fanatically to get there and stay there.”

Once you have that weight in mind, the next step is to employ the everyday habits that will make a difference. The National Weight Control Registry (NWCR), which, like Fletcher, has tracked people who have lost weight and kept it off, has found they have similar habits.

1) They are on the move. Many experts agree that physical activity is pivotal. In fact, some would argue that you cannot be healthy or reach a healthy weight without it. Studies show that simply taking the stairs instead of the elevator and parking at the far end of the parking lot can significantly increase calories burned. For example, walking up 10 flights of stairs for one work week will expend 250 calories—that’s nearly four pounds lost over the course of one year. This is a change that is easy and can be started *today!*

2) Breakfast is big. Eighty percent of people in the NWCR—those who are most successful at losing weight and keeping it off—eat breakfast every day of the week. Ninety percent have it four or more days a week. And of the study participants who eat breakfast, 60 percent said they “always” or “usually” eat a bowl of cereal. In addition, women who frequently eat cereal also weigh nine



Photo by Jeff Thompson

Anne M. Fletcher, MS, RD, author, *Thin for Life: 10 Keys to Success From People Who Have Lost Weight & Kept It Off* (Houghton Mifflin)

pounds less, on average, than those who do not.

A recent study also shows that you could lose more weight by adding more calcium to your weight loss plan. Getting enough calcium in your diet seems to trigger the body to burn more fat and make it harder for new fat cells to form. It’s smart to get at least the recommended intake of 1,000 mg of calcium per day from low-fat dairy products, calcium-containing plant foods and calcium-fortified foods and cereals like whole-grain Total.

3) Fat is very much a part of the picture. The controversy over whether a high protein diet or a carbohydrate-rich one is better for weight loss has taken the focus off of fat. But, according to both Fletcher’s group and those in the NWCR, fat is very much a piece of the weight loss puzzle. Eating less of it is cited as one of the most important factors in keeping weight down. Part of the reason may be the sheer number of calories in fat compared to that of protein or carbohydrates (ounce for ounce fat has more than twice as much).

A Great Start Toward Total Nutrition—Stay motivated by keeping tabs on how you feel. Once you adopt these everyday habits, write down all the good things that are a result of them, such as more energy, better sleep and a better sense of self.