

Are You Ready to Lose Weight?

“I’m on a diet.”

It could almost be the national slogan. With so many people attempting to lose weight, it’s amazing how little weight is actually lost and kept off. One of the reasons people find themselves dieting over and over again is they start their efforts without asking one important question: “Am I ready?” To help you find the answer, ask yourself a few more questions:

What’s My Motivation?

Think about your reason for wanting to lose weight and decide if it’s enough to support a long range commitment. Are you dieting to get ready for the swimsuit season or because your doctor told you your next heart attack could be fatal? Weight loss that’s permanent is more often the result of long-term health considerations than of short-term goals such as the upcoming class reunion.

Can I Cope With One More Change?

If you’ve just gone through an important change in your life—a divorce, job change, extra stress at work, even a positive change such as a marriage or new baby—consider postponing changes in your diet and exercise habits. Too much change at once can push you into the high-stress zone.

Am I Willing to Be Realistic?

Perhaps the major reason diets fail is the dieter hopes to shed a large amount of weight in a hurry, to get quick results—and a quick end to the diet. If you expect to lose more than one or two pounds a week, you’re setting yourself up for failure. And expecting a diet to be a temporary measure rather than a life-long change in eating and exercise habits is also a surefire way to fail.

Do I Have Time and Energy?

Experts say that exercise is an important component of any weight-loss program. Are you willing to make walking, jogging, swimming or an aerobics class a permanent part of your daily life?

How Will Others React?

A supportive and understanding network of family and friends can help you enormously. Do you expect your family to partake of your new low-fat recipes? Do you want them to cheer you on, nag you when you lapse or just leave you alone? Talk over your plans with your loved ones. What are their expectations and fears? For instance, your spouse may worry that as you lose weight, you’ll become too attractive to others.

Losing weight permanently requires a major life change, not just another diet. Your answers to the above questions can help you decide if now is the time to start.