

Secrets of Successful Dieters - Part I

Secret 1: Control Portions

Less than 20 years ago, a standard cup of coffee with whole milk and sugar measured in at 8 ounces and 45 calories. Today, many java junkies have replaced that cup with a Starbucks 16-ounce Grande Mocha Frappuccino, which weighs in at a whopping 380 calories (www.starbucks.com). To burn all those extra calories, your client would have to walk for at least one hour. Successful weight “losers” control their food portions. In fact, research suggests portion control is the greatest predictor of successful weight loss. Help clients control portions by teaching them to read nutrition labels; carefully measure out servings; eat only a single helping; use smaller serving dishes; and resist the urge to “clean their plates.”



Secret 2: Be Mindful When Eating

Many people turn to food when they are bored or stressed out. Encourage clients to eat when they're hungry and stop when they're full. That means paying attention to everything they eat. Teach clients to ask themselves why they are heading to the fridge or pantry. Are they really motivated by hunger, or are they really just bored, stressed, sad, tired and maybe even full from their last meal or snack! Emotional eating can wreak havoc on a well-planned weight management program.

Secret 3: Exercise Regularly

Fitness is key in losing weight and keeping those pounds off. More than 94% of participants who succeeded in their goals in the National Weight Control Registry increased their rate of physical activity (NWCR 2007). In fact, many who lost weight reported walking for at least 1 hour per day. And for those who kept the weight off, exercise was also crucial. This was evident because the registry participants who dropped out of fitness programs ended putting the pounds back on (NWCR 2007). Remember, as people lose weight, a proportion of each pound comes from muscle; that, in turn, slows down the metabolism and makes it difficult to keep the weight off. Although walking and other cardiovascular exercise is important for burning calories, be sure to recommend a resistance training program to help clients preserve their lean tissue and keep up their metabolic rate.

Secret 4: Check the Scale

While it is not advisable to become obsessive about weight to the nearest 0.01 pound, people who maintain their weight loss do so by keeping periodic tabs on the scale, weighing themselves at least once per week. This way they are able to identify small weight increases in time to take appropriate corrective action (NWCR 2007).

Secret 5: Eat Breakfast

More than 75% of the NWCR participants eat breakfast daily; only 4% never do. And research suggests that breakfast eaters weigh less and suffer from fewer chronic diseases than people who skip breakfast.

Secret 6: Monitor Intake

One of the strongest predictors of successful and maintained lifestyle change is monitoring dietary intake. While it can be tedious to keep a daily food log, research has shown that this practice is a highly effective and proven strategy.

Continued.... See Part II