



# Losing weight

## Getting started - Week 11

A big hurrah for reaching Week 11.  
You're a star!

If you began Couch to 5K in Week 2, you will have completed the plan last week. Well done. To keep going, download our 5K+ running series.

If you've been exercising and eating well but have stopped losing weight, you may have hit a weight loss plateau. Don't worry, it's common. This week we'll tell you what causes your weight loss to stall and explain how to deal with it.

### Laura's diary

#### Week 11



Congrats to all you Couch to 5K graduates.

Doesn't it feel fantastic?

For me, graduating was a real turning point.

It not only totally changed my attitude to exercise but it really boosted my confidence.

For those of you still struggling, redoubling your efforts on the exercise front could be just what you need to get over a weight loss plateau.

Also, try to be rigorous when you're recording calories. If an extra few are slipping through the net, they could be halting your progress.

## Your actions for Week 11

- If you finished Couch to 5K, take your running to the next level with the [5K+ running podcasts](#)
- To inject some fun into your weekly physical activity, why not recruit an exercise buddy?
- Cook a healthier meal for friends in Week 12. It's a chance to share what you've learned, and celebrate what you've achieved

## Did you know?

It's a myth that you can burn body fat from just one area at a time. When you lose weight, the fat loss occurs throughout the body.

You can tone specific areas – such as your abs – but without weight loss, it will still be underneath a layer of fat.



# Week 11

# Weight loss plateau

**You've been eating healthier food and exercising but you've stopped losing weight? It could mean you've hit the dreaded 'weight loss plateau'.**

Before you get too discouraged, you should know that it's normal for weight loss to slow and even stall for a while.

That is because your body has adapted to your current programme, and has learned to cope with the same energy demands while burning fewer calories.

Perhaps it's time to review your current programme and see if you need to shake things up a little.

Here are 10 ways to deal with a weight loss plateau.

## Hang in there

If you're burning more calories than you take in then sooner or later you will continue to lose weight. You may still be losing weight but it's too small to register on the scales yet.

## It's not all about weight

You may have stopped losing weight but it's only temporary. Think about all you've achieved – you've brought your weight under control, you're eating healthier and feeling more energetic.

## Calorie creep

One of the most common reasons for weight loss slowing is that your calorie intake can start to creep up again over time. Check your portion sizes haven't increased and make sure your calorie counting is accurate.

## Start exercising

Regular exercise is one of the best ways of shifting those extra stubborn pounds

that diet alone can't budge. Find something you enjoy and that you can fit into a routine.

## Step it up

Your body adapts quickly to a new exercise programme and learns to produce the same effort while burning fewer calories. You may need to step it up.

## Try something new

Try different activities to work other muscles. Not only will change keep you motivated, new exercises will force your body work harder than it's used to.

## Be strong

Muscles are very good at burning calories. Regular muscle-strengthening activities, including heavy gardening and weightlifting, will give your weight loss a boost.

## Reboot your motivation

If your motivation is flagging, think back to the start of the programme and your reasons for losing weight. Also, ask friends and family for support.

## Do you still need to lose weight?

Check your BMI to see if you're a healthy weight. If so, it shows you're already a different person even without further weight loss.

## See your GP

Your GP can do tests to rule out any conditions that could be causing your weight loss plateau as well as discuss other weight loss advice.

## Diet-friendly dinner party

Entertaining friends at home is a great way to keep control of what's on the menu and avoid temptation.

Try this meal plan:

Starter – Mexican bean and tomato soup (117kcal)

Main – Prawn jambalaya (323kcal)

Dessert – Lemon and raspberry trifle (188kcal)

Grand total = 628kcal

See the [Change4Life Meal Mixer](https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/meal-mixer/) for these recipes and many more at [nhs.uk/c4lrecipefinder](https://www.nhs.uk/c4lrecipefinder/).

## Cooking with oil

Oil is a calorie heavyweight, so watch how much you use when cooking. A tablespoon of vegetable oil contains about 120kcal. Just a few more tablespoons of oil - and that includes healthier oils such as olive oil - can add hundreds of calories to your meal. Always measure cooking oil rather than pouring it from a container: this will help you to use less.

# Ways to get fit for free

The secret to getting fit for free is to use every opportunity to be active.

Armed with a bit of get-up-and-go and good planning, you can be fitter than ever without spending a penny.

## Walking

Research shows that people who fit moderate activity, such as walking, into their daily life burn more calories than those making weekly visits to the gym.

## Cycle to work

Cycling to work is one of the easiest ways of fitting exercise into your day. It also saves you money on travel costs.

## Park games

Park games such as 'It' are ideal for all the family to get active together and burn calories while having fun.

## Skipping

Skipping can be done anywhere at any time. The average person will burn up to 200kcal skipping for 15 minutes.

## Trim trails

Trim trails are made up of simple pieces



of exercise equipment dotted around parks and recreation areas.

## Green Gyms

Work up a sweat digging, planting and path-clearing at one of 95 free Green Gyms around the country run by The Conservation Volunteers.

## Park football

Provided you can work up the bottle to join a group of strangers for a kick about, football is both an excellent way to get fit and to make friends.

## Mall walking

Aimed at people who don't normally walk very much, 'mall walking' is brisk walking through shopping centres.

## Contact your local authority

Your local leisure centre may offer initiatives such as free classes to encourage people to get in shape.

## Calorie burn league table

The more energetic the activity, the more calories you burn. As a guide, here's what someone weighing 70kg would burn in 60 minutes:

- brisk walking (3.5mph): 266kcal
- breaststroke: 700kcal
- badminton: 315kcal
- cycling (12mph): 560kcal
- running (6mph): 700kcal
- park football: 490kcal
- aerobics class: 455kcal
- yoga (hatha): 175kcal

## Chock horror!

How long does it take to burn off the calories in a Snickers bar (319kcal)? You might be surprised:

- Running (6mph): 28min
- Cycling (12-14mph): 35min
- Park football: 39min
- Breaststroke swim: 28min
- Walking (3mph): 84min

These times are based on a person weighing 70kg. Lighter people will take longer to burn off the same number of calories



## Couch to 5K+

Take your running to the next level with podcasts designed for Couch to 5K graduates. Each podcast provides a structured run with music and coaching to develop your technique, speed and stamina.

[nhs.uk/Couchto5K-plus](https://nhs.uk/Couchto5K-plus)