



Losing weight

Getting started - Week 12

Congratulations on reaching Week 12.
You've done it!

Over these past three months you've worked hard to adopt new healthier habits. As you'll have discovered, old habits are hard to break. Whether you've reached your target weight or want to keep going, this week you have something to celebrate.

But this isn't the end, it's just the start of your new healthier lifestyle. You've achieved so much – there's no going back now. Keep going!

Laura's diary

Week 12



If you've got this far and if you've stuck to the guide, congratulations! You should be really proud of what you've achieved.

You've not only taken big steps towards improving your physical health but you will be reaping the rewards of testing your willpower and really achieving something that no one else could give you.

The key is to treat this as the beginning. It's no use going back to old habits. Keep up the good work, keep working on what you find difficult and be proactive in helping yourself progress.

Your actions for Week 12

- You promised yourself a non-food reward if you finished the course. So go on and treat yourself – you deserve it!
- You've learnt a lot – share your success and your tips on the [weight loss forum](#)
- Keep using the food and activity chart for as long as you want to continue losing weight or to maintain your current healthy weight

Did you know?

Studies show that [reducing your time sitting down](#) will help you lose weight. Not only should you do more structured exercise, like running or cycling, you should try to be more active generally.

That means spending less time sitting in front of the TV, using a computer or using the car for short journeys. ✓

Week 12

Your next challenge: keeping the weight off

If you've achieved your target weight over these last 12 weeks, well done, but the journey doesn't end here.

Weight management is a lifelong commitment but you're over the hardest part. The longer you stick to your new lifestyle, the more normal it will feel.

Our advice about how to lose weight in this 12-week guide can also help you to better manage your weight in the long term.

Below are some of the common features among people who have lost weight and have been successful at keeping it off:

Stick to lower-calorie eating

In studies of people who have lost weight and kept it off for at least a year, most continued to eat a diet lower in calories than before their diet.

Keep planning ahead

Maintain your healthier eating habit regardless of changes in your routine, such as eating out, weekends or holidays. By planning ahead, you're less likely to slip up.

Eat breakfast

Research shows that breakfast can help people control their weight. Having breakfast can help you avoid getting too hungry and snacking later on.

Stay active

Studies show that people who've lost

weight and kept it off typically do 60 to 90 minutes of physical activity most days of the week while not overeating.

Keep using the chart

Keep using the food and activity chart and calorie counter to stay in control of your calories and exercise. They will help prevent your calorie count from creeping back up.

Watch your weight

Weigh yourself regularly, for example once a week, to help you stay on track and correct small weight gains before they become serious relapses.

Get support

Get family and friends to support your new healthier lifestyle, whether it's by helping you make healthier food choices or getting active and doing some exercise with you.

Stay consistent

Stick to your eating and activity plan seven days a week. Don't be tempted to ease off at the end of the week or during holidays.

Keep it interesting

Variety is the spice of life, so if you feel yourself slipping back to old ways, mix things up a bit. Buy a new healthy cookbook, sign up for a healthy cooking course or try a new activity.

Set SMART goals

For behaviour change to be long-lasting, a simple goal-setting technique called SMART can help.

When setting goals, like losing weight, try to be SMART about it.

SMART stands for:

- **Specific:** your goal should be precise, 'I will run three times this week', rather than general, 'I will exercise more'
- **Measurable:** your goal should be measurable
- **Achievable:** break down your overall goal into easy mini-goals
- **Relevant:** choose goals that apply to your circumstances
- **Time-specific:** set yourself a time scale for achieving your goal

What should I eat now?

As a guide, the average man needs about 2,500kcal and the average woman needs 2,000kcal a day to maintain their weight. If you've now reached a healthy weight, you may want to increase your calorie intake. But do it by small amounts to avoid putting on weight again and remember to keep active.

More to lose? Here's how

Over these last 12 weeks, we hope you've picked up the skills to help you make healthier food choices and be more active.

If you still need to lose weight, keep using the weekly chart to track your calories and exercise.

You could also use the [BMI calculator](#) to check that the daily calorie target you've been sticking to until now is still appropriate.

Losing weight the healthy way is a gradual process. If you're feeling frustrated at the rate of your progress, believe that even a small amount of weight loss is a success in itself.

It means that you've managed to stop putting on weight and you're starting to change your lifestyle for the better. You're heading in the right direction. So well done and keep going!

Remember you're not alone. To get advice and find out how fellow



12-weekers have done on the plan, you can always visit the weight loss forum.

If you feel the need for some professional advice, your GP, practice nurse or a dietitian can help. They can help assess your diet and activity levels, set goals for change and monitor your progress.

Alternatively, try attending a local weight loss group. In some areas, you may be referred by your GP. You may also be referred to a local active health team, under the supervision of a qualified fitness trainer.

Stick with it

Over the course of the past 12 weeks, we've helped you get into the habit of eating healthier and taking regular activity. Now you need to stick with it.

Changing habits of a lifetime isn't easy and can be quickly undone, so you'll need to remain extra vigilant over the next few weeks to embed those changes.

You'll have ups and downs, lapses, moments of weakness. We all do. But the quicker you get back on track, the smaller the impact of a slip-up will be.

Find a dietitian

Registered dietitians are experts in diet and nutrition. They can provide advice on all aspects of eating and diet. You can find one:

- by contacting your local hospital or GP surgery
- by searching for a freelance dietitian on dietitiansunlimited.co.uk, which is associated with the British Dietetic Association
- through the Health and Care Professions Council - www.hcpc-uk.org.



Weight loss forum

Keep using the weight loss forum to get help, support and motivation to continue losing weight or to help other 12-weekers on their own weight loss journey.

nhsweightloss.healthunlocked.com