



HEALTHFUL BITES:

TIPS FROM SUCCESSFUL WEIGHT LOSS MAINTAINERS

by Vicki Bovee, MS, RD

The National Weight Control Registry (NWCR), founded in 1993 by Drs. James Hill and Rena Wing, is a database of people who have successfully lost more than 30 pounds and have kept it off for at least one year. These successful “losers” are followed annually with questionnaires to determine weight maintenance strategies.

The NWCR tells us that there are close to 4,000 participants. A closer look at them finds:

- They have lost an average of 66 pounds and kept it off for 5.5 years.
- **80% are women** with an average age of 45 years and weighing 145 pounds.
- **20% are men** with an average age of 49 years and weighing 190 pounds.
- Weight losses range from 30 to 300 pounds.
- **45%** of participants have lost weight on their own and the other 55% lost weight with the help of some type of program.
- **98%** report that they changed their diet in order to lose weight.
- **94%** report they increased their physical activity, most report walking as their major type of activity.

Although they have shed pounds with different diets and lifestyle changes, they now have some common habits to keep the pounds in check. Here's a look at what they are doing.



Vicki Bovee, MS, RD, is a registered dietitian/nutritionist with 24 years experience in weight loss and weight management. She is currently the Clinical Dietitian for Western Bariatric Institute in Reno, NV. Vicki works with WLS patients before and after surgery. Together with Chef Dave Fouts they have authored a cookbook **90 Ways to Ditch Your Diet**, cookbooklets, numerous articles, and newsletters. Over the years Vicki has worked with thousands of patients in clinical, research, and business settings to help them manage their weight through lifestyle changes. She is a member of The American Dietetic Association and The Obesity Society.

Top Tips from NWCR Participants

1. Eat a low calorie, low fat diet. Women self report eating about 1,400 calories per day, men about 1,700 calories per day. The participants' fat intake is about 26% of their total calories. That equals about 40 grams of fat per day for women and 50 grams of fat per day for men.

2. Eat fewer meals out. They eat less than one meal per week of fast food and about 2.5 restaurant meals per week. They are preparing more meals at home.

3. Eat breakfast. 78% eat breakfast every day.

4. Practice dietary constraint 7 days a week. They limit their caloric intake on weekends and holidays, not just during the work week.

5. Keep a meal diary. 50% count calories. (You can find a meal diary form on www.chefdave.org. Click on the recipe link)

6. Weigh yourself frequently. 75% weigh themselves at least once a week and 44% weigh daily. It's easier to get on top of a two pound weight gain than it is a five pound or more gain.

7. Limit TV time. 62% watch 10 or fewer hours of TV per week. 36% reported watching less than five hours of TV per week. American adults watch an average of 28 hours of TV per week. These people are no longer couch potatoes. What are they doing with their time now? Read the next tip.

8. Exercise more. 90% have some form of moderate physical activity 60 to 75 minutes a day. They are burning an average of 2,827 calories per week with walking, either outdoors or on a treadmill, being the most frequent activity reported. This calorie burn is about the equivalent of walking 28 miles.

According to Dr. Hill, in order to permanently change weight, there needs to be permanent changes in lifestyle. This group of people has made changes in their eating and physical activity habits that enable them to keep off those lost pounds. These are strategies we can apply to help us manage our weight.

If you are interested in joining this group of weight loss maintainers, you must be at least 18 years old, have lost a minimum of 30 pounds, and have maintained that weight loss for at least one year. To join or read more about NWCR please visit www.nwcr.ws or call 1.800.606.6927. ●