



Nutrition
Emma Stirling
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Fitness
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DipRT



Cooking
Lucy Kelly
Weight Watchers
Senior Food Editor



Motivation
Terence Humphreys
2007 Slimmer of the Year
finalist, NSW/ACT

Ask the panel

Your one-stop shop for any questions about fitness, nutrition, emotions and cooking ...
You ask, we answer!

If you have a question for a panellist, write to:
Ask the panel, PO Box 1961,
North Sydney, NSW 2059.
Include the name of the panellist you wish to address (sorry, no personal replies) and if asking a fitness question, please include your shoe size.

On nutrition

Q I've been losing weight successfully for about six weeks, but have hit a week where I've actually gained a very small amount of weight. I'm really disappointed and wondering what I'm doing wrong?
KC, Randwick, NSW

A Emma Stirling replies: It's important to remember weight loss is never a consistent process. As a person progresses through a weight-loss program it's totally expected their losses will vary from week to week and possibly even plateau for a short period. The safe rate of weight loss at .5 to 1kg per week, is just that, an average rate. Looking at a graph of your total weight-loss journey can help you see this average rate, despite blips along the way.

As you lose weight your body requires fewer total kilojoules or **POINTS** in total per day. On the *Weight Watchers* program Members are encouraged to reassess their requirements by taking the **POINTS** quiz at regular intervals. Plateaus or even small weight gains can also be due to physical reasons that do not accurately reflect your fat loss. Firstly, weighing

conditions can vary, like the differences in heaviness of clothing and the time of day, so aim to keep these consistent. Salt or sodium intake also enhance the body's ability to retain water and many women retain water as a natural part of their monthly cycle. In addition, if you consume a significant number of kilojoules or **POINTS** all in one day, say at a special occasion, you can experience a temporary water-weight gain from the extra volume of food consumed.

Other physical causes of weight gains or plateaus include vigorous physical activity like running or weight training which significantly increase muscle mass. But in many cases weight-loss plateaus occur because of a relaxed adherence to a weight-loss program. Try and assess whether you've been letting extra bites sneak through. Scientific research has shown people have a natural tendency to underestimate their food intake and overestimate their physical activity. Keeping track of your food intake in a diary or journal can help you stay on track.



On fitness



Q Do you have any tips for getting my partner more active? I would love for us to be able to exercise together.
LF, Gladesville, NSW

A Martha Lourey-Bird replies: Exercising with your partner is great as it means quality time spent together that's good for both of you. But as everyone is different, here are a few general tips to consider before getting started:

- ☘ If you are both new to exercise, choose an activity that you both can enjoy and one where you are both at a similar level. It's not about trying to outdo the other, it's about keeping it fun – for both of you.
- ☘ If you are the active one, you will have more success at getting your partner to

On cooking

Q I would like to know the best way to store and prepare leeks. I always have trouble getting all the grit out and what dishes apart from potato and leek soup can I use them in?
RK, Dalkeith, WA

A **Lucy Kelly replies:** You need to wash leeks, and other vegetables such as English spinach, silverbeet and bok choy carefully to remove the grit. First, cut off the root end, including about 3cm of the stalk. Cut the thick, dark green part and trim any damaged leaves. Separate leaves and wash in a sink of cold water. Check all the dirt has been rinsed off and



then lift the vegetables out of the water and drain. Use the white part of the leek and a little of the light green part, slice and use as required. Leeks can be used like onions, as an addition to the stock pot or in pies, tarts, melts, pizzas, jacket potatoes, casseroles, soups, sauces and stir-fries. Leeks make a nice change as they have a milder flavour to onions. Sliced leeks are usually pan-fried in olive oil over a gentle heat until well cooked before using in a recipe. Be careful not to let them burn or they will taste bitter. Otherwise just add raw sliced leeks to the pot for soups and stocks.



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join you if you consider their needs (more than your own) when choosing an activity. And remember to go easy on the unsolicited exercise advice – he's not looking for a personal trainer in you. ✨ If you each have very different ideas about exercise, for example, he prefers weights and you prefer cardio, then compromise and try something like circuit training which combines the two. ✨ Try to match your personalities and interests to your chosen activity. For example, if you love being social together then try a team sport such as mixed touch footy, but if you are in desperate need of some alone time together than maybe rowing or hiking is more suitable. Regardless of you and your partner's lifestyle, generally try and work some more physical activity into your life and change

some of your 'lazy' habits to 'active' ones. Here are some specific tips to try:

1. If you both commute to work at the same time, leave earlier so you can walk some of the way.
2. Do some active chores together each weekend such as gardening, cleaning the house or hand washing the car.
3. Rather than sedentary down time together (reading or movies), try some activities that get you moving (bike riding, power walking, jogging, surfing).
4. Instead of driving to the local shops, cafes and amenities leave the car at home and walk there together.
5. Train for a future fitness goal together such as a fun run or an active holiday (skiing, cycling or hiking trip).
6. Buy a dog and take it for walks together every day.



If your letter to Martha is published, you'll win a fabulously comfy pair of women's sports shoes from Rykå. Don't forget to tell us your shoe size when you write in.

On motivation

Q I've been losing weight steadily but lately my motivation has been lagging. What can I do to boost it?
JD, Sunnybank Hills, QLD

A **Terence Humphrey replies:** Many people are surprised when their motivation for weight loss or exercise begins to fade. They may feel they have failed or that they don't have the "will power" to succeed. That's simply not true – motivation levels fluctuate all the time.

The best way to boost your motivation is to make a few small changes to help you achieve a weight loss in the immediate future. Try not to do everything at once, it's better to focus on doing a few things well.

- ☞ Avoid looking outside yourself for a "carrot" to boost your weight loss. You are much more likely to succeed if you want to lose weight for yourself rather than feel you should or must.
- ☞ Remind yourself why you want to lose weight. What prompted you to start in the first place?
- ☞ Make a list of all the things you could do to achieve a weight loss this week. Cross anything off the list that is not realistic, you couldn't do even if you wanted to, or you aren't prepared to do.
- ☞ Take action straight away – do something that will have you feeling more in control or successful.
- ☞ Start each day the way you want it to go – a healthy, satisfying breakfast and exercise early in the day can help you feel good about yourself and your ability to lose weight.
- ☞ Get some support or tips from other Members in Meetings or online. Chances are some will have been where you are and overcome it.

Lastly, try to avoid worrying about the rest of your weight-loss journey – take it one step at a time. Losing weight is a lot like driving your car in the dark. You can only see a few metres in front of you, but you can drive the entire journey that way.