



QUICK TIP

Thinking of buying your own exercise equipment? Fitness editor Martha Lourey-Bird suggests hiring first to see if you're motivated enough to exercise by yourself at home. Whatever you decide, focus on making exercise a habit first.

ask the

EXPERTS

Life-changing advice direct from our expert magazine team – and six of the country's top slimmers.

SPECIAL

fitness

I'm in my 60s, healthy and am keen to stay that way. I know it's important to keep active, but what sort of exercise is most appropriate for my age group?

Reg Ellis, Queenscliff, New South Wales



Martha
Lourey-Bird
Fitness editor

Exercise has many benefits for people over 60, such as maintaining physical mobility and independence, improving social interaction and quality of life.

It's a matter of use it or lose it, so seniors should be active every day in as many ways as possible. A mixture of both cardio and resistance exercise is necessary for healthy ageing.

Specifically, the American College of

Sports Medicine recommends the following guidelines:

- **Moderately intense aerobic exercise** (still able to converse) 30 mins a day, five days a week, or
- **Vigorously intense aerobic exercise** (unable to converse) 20 mins a day, 3 days a week, and
- **8-10 strength training exercises**, 10-15 repetitions of each exercise 2-3 times per week, and
- If you're at risk of falling or have done so in the past, **perform balance exercises**, and
- Have a **physical activity plan**.

This can be achieved by all sorts of activities including housework and gardening, stair climbing, bicycle riding, swimming laps, golf, line dancing, ballroom dancing, yoga, gym classes, tai chi, aqua classes, lawn bowls and of course walking as much as possible.

If dizziness, heart palpitations, chest pain or severe discomfort occur, stop exercising immediately and see your doctor for a thorough check-up.



If your letter to Martha is published, you'll win a pair of women's sports shoes from Rykä. Don't forget to tell us your shoe size when you write in to Ask the Experts, Locked Bag 2020, Broadway, NSW 2007, Australia. Or, you can email us at editor@weightwatchers.com.au



nutrition

I've been following a discussion on the Weight Watchers message boards recently, about the possible benefits of varying the number of POINTS values you eat each day. The thought seems to be that if you vary your POINTS values, you'll stimulate your metabolism to work more efficiently. I'm currently on 18 POINTS values per day and didn't think it was recommended to eat less than this per day. Can you clarify this for me, please?

Karen Skinner, via email



Emma Stirling
Nutrition editor

You're absolutely right Karen. The Weight Watchers program is scientifically designed to control kilojoules just enough to produce a safe rate of weight loss in each individual, on average 500g to 1kg a week, in line with recommendations by leading health bodies. There's no need to alter your daily **POINTS** allowance and there are many benefits to eating enough while still losing weight.

Eating enough for safe weight loss means following an eating pattern that maximises your physical and cognitive performance, providing your

body with a regular top up of enough nutrients to fuel fitness and prevent unwanted side effects like fatigue, irritability and headaches. So what is the perfect pattern? The key to weight-loss success is not regimented eating frequency; rather, it's learning to listen to your own body signals, managing hunger and staying one step ahead of temptation.

It's important to eat enough to maintain a positive mindset and a healthy social life when you're changing to a healthy lifestyle. Let's face it, it's hard to accept a dinner party invitation if you're restricting or on a diet.

Have confidence in the fact that Weight Watchers has analysed research to arrive at the latest science-backed recommendations.



Some of my favourite Asian recipes ask for food to be steamed. Can I use my faithful stainless steel steamer or do I need a special bamboo one?

Donna Hughes, Kyneton, Victoria



Lucy Kelly
Senior food
editor

Steaming is a great way to cook vegetables and retain the colour, texture, flavour and nutritional content of the food. It's not necessary to use a special bamboo steamer – your faithful stainless steel steamer is perfect for the job. In fact it's worth investing in a good quality stainless steel steamer as it'll last you a lifetime. They're also

good for steaming fish, chicken and wontons.

Steamers are ideal to use when making mash or potato salad because the potatoes do not become waterlogged like they do if boiled. Steam in their skins and for mash push through a potato ricer (like a giant garlic crusher, available from kitchen shops) and then beat with a fork, adding skim milk and butter or I prefer extra virgin olive oil. For potato salad, peel when cool enough to handle. Other foods can be steamed on a plate or piece of baking paper or wrapped in foil, baking paper or banana leaves

such as fish, chicken or prawn wontons.

As a guide, steam vegetables for

3 MINS: asparagus, peas

4 MINS: if asparagus spears are thick or zucchini batons (thick sticks)

5 MINS: broccoli or cauliflower florets, trimmed green beans

6 MINS: carrot sticks, fish fillets

7 MINS: halved Brussels sprouts

10 MINS: small chicken fillet

15 MINS: halved medium potatoes or whole baby (chat) potatoes

If your letter to Lucy is published, you'll win a Sunbeam MX003 Mixmaster®. The only model to have two glass heat-resistant bowls, the MX003 Mixmaster® features a 350 watt, Italian-made motor and 12 speed options. The electronic torque control motor maintains the selected speed regardless of the mixing load, while Sunbeam's famous three-way beating action ensures thorough mixing and optimum baking results.



What exactly happens to the fat in our body when we lose weight? I'm getting smaller – so where does all the fat go?

Natalie Schaffer, via email



Allan Bolton
Men's consultant

First up, fat and carbohydrate are to the body what petrol is to a car – fuel.

When we eat more fuel than our bodies need to cover the biochemical cost of life, better known as metabolism, we store it for later use. We store excess energy as body fat which is made up of billions of fat cells. Although their main function is energy storage, fat cells are important endocrine organs that produce a range of hormones. Lean adults have approximately 35 billion fat cells and an extremely obese adult can have four times that amount. Fat cells contain fat droplets which expand during weight gain and contract with weight loss, while their number remains the same. When billions of individual fat cells shrink, so do we.



QUICK TIP

Feel bloated after eating & don't know why? "Dietary causes can include swallowing excess air, so aim to slow down & talk less while eating," says nutrition editor Emma Stirling. "Also, avoid too many carbonated drinks & chewing gum."

FACT

50% of Australian women over 60 will have a bone fracture due to osteoporosis. Keep your bones strong by upping your calcium levels and doing weight-bearing exercises like walking.



How has losing 60kg benefited your life?

Jenny Webb, Sunshine Coast, Queensland



Allison Taylor
HLA WA
State Finalist

The obvious benefit of losing weight is of course being slimmer. It also means being able to wear trendy clothes, being fitter, more energetic and sleeping better.

However, all of these benefits only skim the surface of the impact being a healthy weight has had on my life. There are other, perhaps more important, effects such as the body's ability to fight disease and increased longevity.

It's been almost a year since I reached Goal and I've experienced a range of emotions. Life at Goal is a new challenge. It's easy to become careless and to slip back into old habits. I've struggled to stay focused and have missed the weekly loss motivation. Reaching Goal is often seen as the ultimate aim. In fact, the word 'Goal' implies an ending. The journey towards this is the time you learn about healthy choices and new habits are formed – and this knowledge helps take you forward. I continue to go to meetings, go back to Fast Start when extra kilos creep on and remind myself why I started the Weight Watchers journey. I'll be successful in the long term if I remember that this is a lifetime commitment, not just a journey to Goal.

motivation



Stacy Ryan
HLA SA
State Finalist

What's your number one tip for weight-loss?

Fran Dawson, via email

No one else can convince you to make a commitment; it has to come from within. Ask yourself if you're ready to lose weight & enrich your life. If you're ready to embrace eating habit & exercise regime changes, prepared for slip-ups & know that you'll bounce back from them, then you're ready to take the step. It really will be the best thing you ever do.

How did you incorporate Weight Watchers into your lifestyle?

Janet Pritchard, Kohimarama, New Zealand



Catherine Jackson
HLA NZ Slimmer
of the Year

I decided early on that my new lifestyle wasn't about restriction, but about choice. There were no bad foods, just food I chose not to eat because I would rather use the **POINTS** values for something else. In the first 20 weeks, I lost 1kg a week and that was enough to spur me on. I used to have a weakness for cheese and crackers and unfortunately still can't completely trust myself around a cheese platter. I've managed to limit my cheese intake to low-fat, feta or ricotta every once in a while.

I now have regular meals and breakfast every day, take my lunch to work and rarely have takeaways or fast food. My tastes have changed, too. I feel much less likely to need sweet or fried food, and if I want to spend my **POINTS** values on that piece of cake, I know it has to be the best cake in the world, otherwise I'd feel like I'd cheated.

WHAT'S CHANGED SINCE YOU WERE NAMED SLIMMER OF THE YEAR?

Gemma Pooley, via email



Bronwyn Robertson
HLA Aus Slimmer
of the Year

Since losing weight so many things in my life have changed. The physical changes are obvious: going from a size 18-20 to an 8. I've always loved shopping but would often come home from a day in the city feeling miserable that I hadn't found a single thing that fit. Now I have to curb my enthusiasm as there are so many lovely things and, for the first time ever, I'm spoiled for choice.

Before joining Weight Watchers I didn't feel comfortable with how I looked and this had a negative impact on how I presented myself. Emotionally, I'm now at peace with my body and comfortable in my skin. This has had a great impact on my relationships and social life. I'm much more positive and have the energy to get out there. As a paramedic, I always felt mentally competent but now finally feel physically up to the job I love. My relationship with my fiancé, Dave, is amazing and this is due to the fact that being happy and healthy makes for happier, healthier relationships.

How did you plan exercise around work and family?

Lesley Dawes, via email



Helen Landas
HLA NSW
State Finalist

With my erratic work schedule and family life, I had to lose most of my weight by working around it. I found it more beneficial to workout at home, without the strain of timing things with a trainer or going to a gym. I could train in my own time and it was nice not to have to pay for it.

You can get great results exercising at home, as long as you know what you're doing. I have a treadmill facing the TV, some dumbbells and a never-say-die attitude. That's all it took. With the number of tools available, it's easy to set up the atmosphere at home. Being self-motivated is not as hard as you think and when you're committed to pursuing a leaner, energised and dynamic fitness level, changes happen much faster.

HOW DID YOU DEAL WITH THE PLATEAUS?

Maria Noy, via email

Your body is going through many changes & a plateau is just one more. Keep going! Shake your food diary up: change your brekkie, add protein, follow the Quick Start plan or do more exercise. Trust me, you'll get there.



Heidi Schwartz
HLA Qld
State Finalist