

# ***Healthy Weight Management***

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When the government reports that 93 million Americans are “overweight,” it comes as no surprise that our culture is obsessed with losing weight.

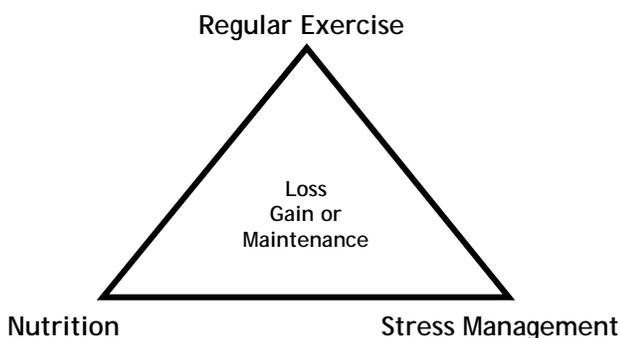
Americans spend over 33 billion dollars annually on weight loss related products: fitness equipment, diet aids, special foods, books, magazines, pills/powders/herbs, and weight loss programs. Unfortunately, with all of these “tools” to aid a person in the quest for thinness or fitness, a mere 5% of “losers” succeed. Success is when weight has been lost and kept off for a year.

Why so much failure? With our resources and knowledge, why do 95% of people who attempt to lose weight fail? The answer is simple; most attempts to lose weight are attempts to do just that—lose weight—and fail to assist a person in “living well for a lifetime.”

This material discusses habits that assist in healthy weight management—losing, gaining, or maintaining weight healthfully.

## ***Components of the Healthy Weight Management Model***

The healthy weight management model maintains that changes (weight loss, weight gain, or weight maintenance) can be achieved through a balance of exercise, nutrition, and stress management.



Each component is action-oriented and, when in balance with the others, contributes to healthy weight management.

### ***Exercise Impact***

- \*Helps control stress
- \*Burns calories
- \*Increases metabolic rate
- \*Improves physique
- \*Increases motivation and self-esteem
- \*Decreases feelings of depression and anxiety

### ***Nutrition Impact***

- \*Reducing intake of fat calories
- \*Eating enough but not too much
- \*Regular eating reduces out-of-control hunger

### ***Stress Management Impact***

- \*Helps alleviate nervousness or boredom that contributes to stress-eating
- \*Helps ensure time is available for exercise
- \*Contributes to focus and commitment to goals

## ***Avoid Weight Related Goals***

First, the scale is a poor measure of fitness. Body weight is the total mass of bones, fat, organs, lean muscle and water in the body. Some people are thin, but not fit. Others may be heavier, but are very fit!

Set “living goals” such as those that encourage lifestyle changes that are designed for well living. Outcome goals, such as weight loss, are often shorter-term and do not support long-term behavior changes.

More appropriate goals include exercise frequency and nutritional changes. For example, use a list to shop at the store to cut down on the unhealthy extras that get into the cart. Or, decide to exercise at least 4 days a week for 30 minutes each time.

Finally, weight loss is a poor goal because weight is an outcome, not a behavior. We change behaviors, and outcomes follow. People interested in body composition changes need to focus on behaviors (exercise, stress management, nutrition) and set behavioral goals. Eventually, the behavior becomes part of the lifestyle. The new lifestyle will have outcomes—more energy, change in body composition, and greater confidence!

