

GET FIT **After 40**



**12 step guide to losing weight
and keeping it off!**

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Feeling like you need to lose some weight? You're not alone.

According to the National Institute of Health and Human Resources, two of every three adults are overweight, and one of every three adults is obese. America is facing a weight problem, and it's costing us.

But you already know this. You know that you'd be happier, more confident and more secure if you lost those extra pounds. You also know that being overweight puts you at risk for health problems and higher health insurance premiums. In fact, if you're like most Americans, you worry about your weight every day.

That's why you're reading this book.

I'm here to tell you that losing weight (and keeping it off) is not that hard.

I know, I know. You feel like losing weight is extremely challenging. However, I'm here to tell you that it is much easier than you think it is. Let me infuse you with some scientifically-supported hope.

Chapter One: Why Most Weight Loss Efforts Fail

People think losing weight is difficult because they do the following sorts of things:

- They go on short term diets, which either are too extreme or only deliver temporary results
- They go on fad diets, which are either ineffective or impossible to stick with for long
- They try to lose weight strictly through diet or exercise instead of combining both efforts
- They try too hard to lose weight too quickly, and they fail because the effort is too much to maintain
- They do things that worked when they were younger, but no longer works for them now because they have matured (and their bodies are more resistant to losing weight)

Weight Loss Efforts That Work for People Over Age 40

You bought this book because you are over 40 and want to lose weight. I'm going to teach you how to lose weight (and keep it off) through a series of simple, small habit changes, all of which are:

- Based on scientifically proven methods
- Doable
- Effective for people who are over 40
- Good for you over all

Now you're in your 40s and are struggling with your weight. Like most other people who are over 40, you're looking for fresh ideas. You want something that won't take over your whole life. You're in search of weight loss plans that actually work.

Fortunately, weight loss is linked to habits, and habits are things we can change.

Chapter Two: The Power of Habit Changes

Let's face it: you are overweight for a reason.

This is the reason you are overweight: you have developed some habits that have caught up to you. Your daily habits

Important Principles to Digest

It's essential that you accept the following principles.

--- Dieting does not work for people over age 40. You can't trick your body anymore, nor is it good for you.

--- This is not going to work overnight. You need to commit to following this plan for the next year. However, everything in this plan is so simple and so easy that you CAN do it.

--- Patience is the magic word. You are not going to lose 20 pounds next week. However, it is reasonable to believe you can lose 20 pounds this year, if you do this right. You have to trust that the build up of tiny habit changes will deliver the results you desire.

--- Pain is your enemy, not your friend. Get rid of that stupid saying "No pain, no gain" – it is the cause of failure. All the habit changes I am going to teach you to do are painless (or minimally painful.) If something hurts, you won't keep doing it, and you won't make the change. These changes are positive, pleasant healthy habit changes that will make you feel better about yourself.

How This Plan Works

Habits make up your daily life. Think about your daily morning routine, for example.

What do you do every morning? Brush your teeth? Take a shower? Blow dry your hair? Eat breakfast? Walk the dog? Make your child's lunch? Start the dishwasher?

You don't really even think about these things anymore, right? That's because your morning routine is made up of habits that you do every day.

To lose weight (and keep it off), you need to form healthy habits that support weight loss and weight maintenance. These habits need to become so engrained that you no longer have to think about them.

That's the goal of this program: to take twelve unhealthy habits you currently have and replace them with twelve healthy habits that will cause you to lose weight, and once you hit your goal weight, help you maintain that weight.

It takes 30 days to establish a habit. That's why you will, each month, look at the lists of habits provided here and choose a healthy habit to focus on. You will also examine your own life and choose an unhealthy habit to eliminate. Then, for that month, you will focus exclusively on removing that bad habit and establishing the healthy habit in its place.

When that month is over and you have successfully mastered that one new healthy habit, you will review the lists of habits again. You will identify one more unhealthy habit to eliminate from your life and one new healthy habit to establish. You'll make a plan for the month and practice that new healthy habit every single day.

By the end of the year, you will have:

- Eliminated 12 unhealthy habits from your life
- Established 12 healthy habits of your choice
- Lost weight
- Feel better about yourself

Patience is the Key

You might notice that I did not say you will have lost all the weight you want to lose by the end of the year.

Why didn't I promise that? Because I don't know how much weight you need to lose. And really, I'm not worried about if you do or do not lose all the weight you need to lose in one year.

Why not? Because it's more important that you establish sustainable healthy habits that you can keep doing for the rest of your life than it is for you to lose that weight **one time**. If you don't establish healthy habits, you will just gain that weight (and more) right back again.

Hopefully you are wise enough to recognize the fact that reaching your goal weight in a year, or two years, or even five years is far more important than reaching your goal weight by June and being back in your old fat clothes by November. Right? Right.

I'm going to teach you how to train yourself to **establish habits** you will continue for **the rest of your life**. These are not tricks to try for a month. They are lifestyle changes that will get you fit and keep you fit.

Chapter Three: How to Use This Book

You will need to spend the first three months of this program establishing the most important habits listed for the months of January, February and March. Then, for the rest of the year, you will choose a bad habit to eliminate and a good habit to establish, and you will add that new habit into your daily routine. In other words,

the first two months of this program are very rigid, but the rest of the year is very flexible.

Once you get to the end of the year, you'll evaluate your progress and just keep going, eliminating bad habits and establishing new healthy habits. Eventually you will have sealed the gaps and will have only good habits.

And you will have ***lost the weight*** you needed to lose. You'll also ***keep it off***, because you'll ***continue to support your new healthy habits***.

Ready to get started? Let's go!

Chapter Four: The First Three Months

The first three months of the year will establish the most important foundational habit changes you must make this year. After you've got these three habits established, the rest of the battle will be all downhill.

Take these first three months seriously and you will set yourself up for long term success.

January: Establish the Habit of Recording Everything You Eat

Studies show that people who write down everything they eat typically consume up to 500 fewer calories each day. No kidding. That's why this one habit is essential to develop.

Make this easy on yourself. Sign up for one of the online services. Some free ones are:

www.loseit.com

www.myfitnesspal.com

Now get the coordinating app for your mobile device, and sync these two devices with each other. Don't know how to sync them? Have someone teach you. Don't skip this step. This is essential.

In addition to all this, buy a booklet of post it notes and stick it in your purse or laptop case for days when you are not near your smart phone or laptop. That way you can record what you eat when you are away.

Now download an app for your mobile device that will help you count calories at restaurants. You need this for those times when you are eating out at evil restaurants that do not post calorie counts for meals.

Have you done everything on this list?

Good!

All excuses for not meeting this goal have now been destroyed. Pow!

You will focus this entire month on establishing this one habit: recording everything you eat every single day.

Now let me warn you about something. You are going to see all kinds of other shiny goals on the online service. You'll set up things like weight loss goals and be encouraged to stay within a certain calorie restriction and all that.

All these things are good, but I do not want you to get distracted by these other goals. Instead, I want you to do the following:

--- Set your weight loss goals to be half a pound a week. No more than that. We're going for slow and steady progress, remember? We want to make this so easy that you CAN'T fail.

--- Don't worry about actually staying within the calorie restrictions yet. Instead, focus on getting in the habit of recording every single thing you ate (and any exercise you performed.)

--- Do not weigh yourself this month. You cannot get distracted by weight loss or gain while we are establishing this essential habit. This habit – recording what you eat – is more important than any weight loss or weight gain this month.

Just record every single thing you eat and drink, every day, for this entire month. That includes late night (or middle of the night) snacks. Get in the habit of checking your records as you get into bed so you don't miss a thing.

Don't worry about exercising any more or less than you usually do. Don't worry about how much or little you eat. JUST GET IN THE HABIT OF RECORDING EVERY BITE.

Got it? Good. This is going to change your life.

February: Check in Daily with a Reliable Workout/Diet Partner

This is the second most important habit for you to establish: Daily check ins with a workout and diet partner.

You need to find someone who will:

- Talk to you every single day about your exercise and diet
- Work out with you at least once in a while
- Be more committed than you are
- Never let you down
- Not push you too hard

It may take you a while to find the right person, but you will be far more likely to succeed if you find a partner who will actually keep you accountable. You will want to share this ebook with them to make sure you are on the same page. You don't want someone who will pressure you to do too much and burn you out, but you also don't want someone who will be too easy on you and let you give up.

Now establish the habit of checking in with this person every single day. Establish a routine. Will you text each other every morning and night? Meet to walk every night after work? Meet at yoga class on Saturday mornings but call each other on other days?

Checking in is just as important as any other piece of a weight loss plan. Without accountability, your hard work will not last. You won't persevere, and you won't change.

Check in with your accountability partner every day this month. Establish your routine of how and when you will check in. Talk through how to encourage each other. Talk about ways you'd enjoy exercising together, about habits you'd like to establish together. Discuss the details of this book together.

Commit to a partnership for a year. Agree upon a way to celebrate at the end of the year. Make it something big, something you'll both enjoy.

Believe it or not, by the end of the month you will have established the two most important habits for weight loss. These two habits will support all the other habit changes you make throughout the year.

March: Commit to Daily Exercise

A lot of people try to control their weight using diet alone, but this is not effective, especially not once you turn 40. After you turn 40, your metabolism slows down. It becomes all the more important to rev up your metabolism each with physical activity. Otherwise your body interprets the decrease in caloric intake as starvation, and your body works harder to slow your metabolism and burn fewer calories.

You will need to commit to daily exercise to lose weight. Exactly what you commit to will depend on your current fitness level, but you will want to exercise for somewhere between 30-60 minutes every day.

Whatever your current exercise level is, I want you to increase your commitment to exercise by 30 minutes (unless you already exercise for 60 minutes a day.) If you don't exercise at all right now, you will need to commit to 30 minutes of exercise every day. If you already exercise for 30 minutes, you will want to commit to 60 minutes every day.

If you already exercise for 60 minutes a day, I want you to bump up the intensity of your exercise for half of your exercise session. That could mean going from walking to walking and running intervals, or to power walking, or to adding weight lifting to your routine.

Why this increase of 30 minutes? Because this will most likely translate to you burning an additional 150-400 calories per day, dependent on your size and the intensity of your exercise.

Now look at your daily schedule and get on the phone with your accountability partner. Choose a time and activity for each day of the week. Schedule your exercise in – preferably for the same time of day each day. If you can't exercise at the same time every day, at least schedule the same classes for the same days each week (like you go to kickboxing class on Tuesday and Thursday nights, but you walk with a neighbor on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings.) You want to establish the habit of exercising every single day.

To protect yourself from injury, I suggest you make two thirds of your exercise activities low or no-impact activities such as walking, biking, swimming or yoga. Make sure you have [DVDs](#) or indoor exercise plans for inclement weather days.

Schedule out an entire month's worth of exercise commitments. Treat these appointments as unbreakable. Report in to your accountability partner after every session.

By the end of this month, you will have established the third most important weight loss habit. You'll keep up these three habits for the rest of the year. Make them the cornerstone of your daily routine. If you can do this, you can handle the rest of the program no problem.

And what will the long term results be? Weight loss that lasts.

Chapter Five: The Rest of the Year

Habit Exchanges for the Rest of the Year (April through December)

Each month you will look through this list of habits. Then you choose a bad habit from your life to eliminate and a good habit to establish. You will then figure out a way to make that new good habit a daily habit – something you do every day, at the same time or in the same situation – so as to establish that new good habit.

Replace These Bad Habits (BHs) With Healthy Habits (HHs) That Promote Weight Loss

The following are common bad habits that you can choose to replace with healthy habits.

BH #1: Skipping Breakfast or Eating a High Carbohydrate Breakfast

Instead replace the BH with one of these HHs:

- Drinking a high protein smoothie
- Eating two eggs on a high fiber English muffin
- Making an egg, veggie and ham scramble
- Eating a high protein, low sugar granola bar
- Enjoy a bowl of old fashioned oatmeal with cinnamon, raisins and nuts
- Try topping scrambled eggs with salsa and seasoned black beans

Habit rule: Do not eat anything that is over 500 calories for breakfast or has more than 20 grams of sugar in it. Go as high fiber and high protein as you can stand.

Absolutely no donuts, sugary cereal, sugary yogurt, sugary granola, pancakes, crepes, waffles, biscuits, scones, muffins or pancakes.

BH #2: Eating High Calorie Lunches at Restaurants or the Work Cafeteria

Instead try one of these HHs:

- Split lunch with a coworker or take half of your lunch home
- Order off the “light menu” – keep the meal to under 550 calories
- Bring lunches from home that you know are healthy and under 550 calories
- Get to know [how many calories are in foods](#)

Habit Rules: Eating out or even in the workplace cafeteria is dangerous; most places serve meals that are entire days’ worth of calories in one meal. If you can’t get an accurate meal calorie count, assume its bad for you and eat half a meal at most.

BH #3: Eating High Calorie/Low Nutrient Fast Food Meals or Snacks

Instead try one of these HHs:

- Pretend fast food restaurants do not exist
- Carry a healthy snack in the car with you at all times
- Tell yourself you never eat fast food; become a food elitist
- If at a fast food restaurant, only order a calorie-free drink and/or a salad with the lowest calorie dressing

Habit rules: You want to stop the positive associations you have with fast food restaurants (convenience, seeing fast food as comfort food, etc.) and instead make eating fast food a bad experience. You can do this by ordering “healthy” fast foods even if you don’t like them; break the reward cycle of eating pleasurable good tasting (but horrible for you) fast food items by making the experience boring and unsatisfying. You might benefit from watching a documentary like *Super Size Me* or reading articles that will gross you out about fast food.

BH #4: Eating Too Much Processed Food

Instead try one of these HHs:

- Opt for “real food” instead of processed foods – choose the real fruit, real vegetables, whole grains or lean meats instead of processed food items
- Fill your grocery cart and pantry with whole foods; refuse to buy processed foods

--- Commit to eating five pieces of fresh fruit or servings of vegetables every day. Count them off as you eat them.

Habit rules: You will need to get in the habit of identifying processed foods and whole foods. This is a matter of [reprogramming yourself](#) to reach for the unprocessed foods and ignore the processed foods, which are inherently less healthy and less filling. If you keep your home full of unprocessed foods you will learn to eat raw whole foods more and to cook more. You will also make better choices when away from home.

BH #5: Drinking Sweetened Drinks

Instead try one of these HHs:

- Replace sugar soda with diet soda (and after that habit change is successful, switch from diet soda to seltzer water)
- Replace cream and/or sugar in your coffee or tea with low fat milk and sugar substitute (Better yet; find a coffee or tea you like unsweetened and make the switch)
- Drink unsweetened iced tea or hot tea instead of a sweetened drink

BH #6: Eating While Watching TV

Instead try one of these HHs:

- Chew gum
- Suck on ice
- Drink tea
- Chew on a toothpick
- Do your nails
- Fold laundry
- Basically find something to do with your hands and/or mouth to break the habit

Habit rules: Snacking while watching TV will sabotage a good day of healthy eating; it's easy to consume half a day's worth of calories while watching TV because you aren't aware of how much you are eating. If you HAVE to munch, eat unseasoned air popped popcorn, baby carrots or celery sticks – no dressing

BH #7: Munching While Working

Instead try one of these HHs:

- Remove unhealthy snacks from your work area.
- Bring a piece of fruit and a Tupperware container of baby carrots to work with you; force yourself to eat both of these before you consider snacking on anything else.
- If you work from home, remove tempting food items from the house. Stick them in your spouse's trunk before he or she leaves for work, or stick them in the freezer or somewhere less accessible.
- Establish a habit of exercising before you let yourself get a snack. Make yourself walk up and down the stairs ten times, or leave your snacks out in the car (parking lot or garage) so you have to walk to go get them.

- Develop the habit of drinking a full glass of water before allowing yourself to snack.
- Try drinking a glass of water with Metamucil mixed in 10 minutes before snacking; you'll feel too full to want to snack.

Habit rules: You want to either lose the habit of snacking altogether or develop a habit of eating food that is low calorie and high fiber while working (which will help you make better food choices later in the day. One trick to help you while establishing this new habit is to wear pants that are slightly too tight around the waist; you'll be too uncomfortable to want to snack. You also may need to ask coworkers to help you say no or to remove temptation.

BH #8: Eating Large Portions

Instead try one of these HHs:

- Invest in new plates and bowls, all of which are small, to make meals look bigger than they are
- [Educate yourself on proper portion sizes](#)
- [Buy plates](#) with designated portion sizes and guidelines right on them – use them
- Fill your plate with veggies (half), lean protein (1/4th), and then whole grains or starches (1/4th)
- Cook smaller amounts – stop making enough to have seconds or leftovers
- Serve your plate at the stove and leave the pans on the stove so you have to get up if you decide to have seconds

Habit rules: You need to adjust your expectations so you know what appropriate portion sizes are. As you adjust to eating smaller portions, your stomach will shrink and you will be more satisfied with the smaller portions. The key is to stop overeating (stop eating as soon as you feel close to full – it takes 20 minutes to really feel full) so you won't ever overeat.

BH #9: Rewarding Yourself with Junk Food/Sweets/Empty Calories

Instead reward yourself with one of these HHs:

- A stick of gum
- A breath mint
- Dab a pleasant essential oil on your wrists and under your nostrils
- Massage a pressure point
- Roll your shoulders; indulge in a good stretch
- Close your eyes and meditate/relax for three minutes
- Drink a flavored unsweetened iced tea or coffee
- Walk outside and soak in the sunshine/cool breeze/beautiful sights
- Get a hug from someone
- Cuddle with a pet; enjoy the sensation of snuggling with a child or loved one

Habit rules: You need to break the habit of eating as a reward. These rewards need to be cheap, easily accessible, satisfying and portable. Brainstorm with your accountability partner when you tackle this habit and come up with a long list of

rewards that work for you – you will need several options on hand at all times to break this habit.

BH #10: Not Exercising When Sick, Traveling, Tired, Poor Weather, Etc.

Instead try one of these HHs:

- Invest in a short rainy day/sick day DVD you commit to doing when you can't exercise hard
- Invest in a [good DVD](#) for inclement weather days and winter
- Post a sticky note on your mirror that says "I commit to ten minutes of exercise today no matter what." Then do it right before bed if you haven't yet, even if you feel awful. You can ***always*** handle ten minutes of exercise.
- Walk the airport while waiting between flights (when traveling for work)
- Take advantage of jet lag when traveling to exercise at odd hours (if you can't sleep)
- Invest in resistance training bands for exercise while traveling

Habit rules: If you skip exercise entirely, you run the risk of falling off the wagon. Instead force yourself to do something, even if it's just five minutes of squats, push ups and sit ups. Make it the rule that you will do something for your body every single day.

BH #12: Never Going Beyond Cardio Training

Instead, try one of these HHs:

- Add a muscle building aspect to your cardio routine, such as lunge-walking and push ups to your walking routine or sit ups and squats to the end of your swimming sessions
- Commit to resistance training during commercials while watching TV at night
- Add a weight lifting class (twice a week) to your weekly routine

Habit rules: Cardio alone is good, but cardio plus resistance training is best. You want to build muscle so your body will burn more calories throughout the day. Add muscle work to your cardio routine after your cardio routine is firmly established.

Chapter Six: Tips for Focusing on Your Habit of the Month

You may have bad habits I did not list here, but you will have an idea of what you need to do from these examples. Brainstorm with your accountability partner as you learn from your eating and exercise journal. Recording your eating and exercise habits will help you figure out where you go wrong each day. Use that information to come up with your own bad habits you want to change. Then talk to your accountability partner and come up with healthy habits to establish in place of the bad habits you eliminate.

In order to remain focused on your habit change, you will want to do the following:

--- Develop a daily schedule that includes your new habit. For example, are you now going to walk the dog every day at 7:00 a.m., before your shower? Write it into your calendar.

--- Think through alternate plans (to overcome obstacles). For example, what will you do on days when it rains and you don't want to walk the dog? Will you invest in a rain slicker and super duper warm clothing, or will you walk on the treadmill or elliptical machine? Do you have a DVD at home that will burn the same number of calories?

--- Announce your monthly habit to your accountability partner. Plan how you check in with results. Will you tweet if you performed your habit or now? Post on an online forum? Text a friend?

--- Post your habit resolution in multiple places. On your bathroom mirror, on the fridge, in your car, on your laptop.

--- Talk to yourself about your new habit. Say things like, "I never eat french fries" or "I always order grilled food, not fried."

--- Don't give up if you blow it one day. You're going to get sick, oversleep, and make mistakes. Instead of giving up, do your goal the next day – plus extra.

--- Reward yourself for making your habit change. Choose something from the rewards list as a positive reinforcement.

Goals and Commitments

When applicable, set both a **goal** habit change and a **commitment** to the habit change. What I mean by this is that your **goal** for the month may be to walk the dog for a half hour every day at 7:00 a.m., but your **commitment** may be to at least walk the dog two houses down the street every day at 7 a.m.

Your commitment should be incredibly easy – so easy, in fact, that you would be embarrassed if you didn't follow through.

Why does this goal versus commitment principle work? Walking the dog for a half hour feel like too much work if you're tired or the weather stinks. However, walking your dog the length of two yards is incredibly easy. Telling your accountability partner that you didn't walk the dog the length of two yards is going to be embarrassing.

Once you've put on all your cold weather or rain gear, gotten the leash out, and actually walked the length of two yards, you'll probably realize that you can handle walking more. This will greatly increase the chances of you meeting your goal that day of walking the dog for a half hour.

When possible, make both goals and commitments for your monthly habit change. Explain both to your accountability partner and ask for help to stick with the goal, but for encouragement even if all you do is honor your commitment. Honoring the commitment will prevent you from falling off the wagon and losing the habit completely.

Conclusion

As you can see, slow but steady habit changes deliver long term results. If you identify your bad habits and replace them with healthy habits, you will lose weight, keep that weight off, and be healthier over all. You can end the cycle of yo-yo dieting and prevent health problems before they even start. You'll also discover your sense of pride and self esteem will improve as you start to view yourself as a healthy person who makes healthy choices.

The end result? A healthier, happier you. That's a goal worth pursuing.