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## **Options for Adjustment and Experimentation**

When you are trying to make a change to your weight management plan, keep an open mind. You can try almost anything you'd like as long as you follow the core guidelines in our "Fundamentals of Weight Loss" handout.

Remember that you are trying to solve a problem while you experiment.

You're looking for foods that taste good.

You're looking for fruits and vegetables that you can eat when grieving.

You're looking for activities that you can do with a sprained ankle.

You're looking for a support system that will give you more accountability.

You are looking for better weight loss, but in order to do that, you have to find a better plan or an easier way to follow a plan you are already confident in.

Here are our top suggestions:

### **Variety – Do things differently.**

Fruits/Veg: Try a new F/V. Try new cooking methods (like baking or grilling). Try new spices, new sauces, mixing 2 or more fruits/vegetables in the same dish (like a salad), pairing your F/V with a protein (like turkey sausage) or a grain (like cereal), mashing your F/V into purees, cooking them into soups/jellies, or making dips (like hummus/guacamole), canned/frozen/jarred or other F/V preparations, etc.

Meal Replacements: Try a new MR. Look in different sections of the grocery store (frozen, canned, pasta, baby food, anywhere that might have a prepared meal). Look in different grocery stores for options that your store won't have (and look online). Try all of the cooking suggestions mentioned above for F/V.

Physical Activity: Try a new activity. Look online. Look for a class. Look for a trainer. Try traditional exercises. Try a sport. Try a dance (solo/class/video). Try something meditative (yoga, stretching, tai chi). Try a hobby (drumming, gardening, bowling).

Goals/Tracking: Track a new goal. Try tracking your weight, clothing size, blood sugars, blood pressure, sleep quality, waist/neck/body measurements, mood/depression, number of responses on a dating website, etc. Anything that would motivate you, and that you think will improve as you lose weight can be a good goal to track.

Record Keeping: Add new details to your records. Track the times you eat. Track full recipes. Track the places you eat, the people you eat with, the protein/sugar/calorie content of your



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food, your mood throughout the day, etc. Anything that has an impact your hunger, cravings, or eating patterns could be useful to track.

**Support:** Get support from a new source. Talk to a different friend/family member, get a gym/diet partner, find a trainer, talk to a doctor/nutritionist, get a coach, see a therapist, look for a new online forum/social media/video channel, etc. Anywhere you can find someone else to give emotional support, accountability, recipes, or ideas is a good place to look.

### **Higher Numbers – Do more.**

**Fruits/Veg:** Eat more F/V. If you are having 5 per day, aim to start eating 6 or 7. Start by looking at the other suggestions on this handout to find ways to make you WANT to eat more. Make them tastier, more portable, easier, faster, etc. Then, look for ways to use your F/V to replace other foods (i.e. try eating fruit at night when you would usually want cake, or veg. when you would normally have pasta). Finally, look for ways to use F/V to portion control other foods (i.e. eat a smaller portion of meatloaf by eating mashed potatoes with it).

**Meal Replacements:** Eat more MR. If you haven't been using shakes, start. If you've been cooking your own meals, try using some prepared entrees. Follow the steps we outline above for the F/V.

**Physical Activity:** Do more MINUTES of PA; just put in more time. Start by looking at the suggestions on this handout to make you WANT to do more activity. Make it more fun, make it easier, or set a routine so it happens automatically. Take your normal activity and do it a little longer (12 minute walk instead of 10). Or, take your normal activity and do it more often (take TWO walks per day). Add another activity to your routine, on top of your normal activity. Anything you can do to end up with a higher total number of minutes at the end of the day.

**Goals/Tracking:** Check on your progress more often. Weigh twice per week, for example. Or add another type of goal in addition to your original goal. Weigh once per week, AND buy a new pair of pants once per month to see if your clothes are getting smaller. The intent here is to check your progress more often to keep your motivation up, or to see if you can catch your mistakes sooner.

**Record Keeping:** Update your records more often. Fill out your records as soon as you eat so you don't miss any details. In addition, keep record of as much detail as possible. In the previous section we suggested different things you could track. Try tracking 2 or more of those additional details.

**Support:** Get multiple sources of support. Try getting one-on-one coaching AND going to a support group, PLUS working with your friend to find new recipes. Look at the above section for suggestions.



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## **Volume – Get the most out of the things you do. (Minimize your work)**

**Fruits/Veg:** Choose F/V that are lower in calories or allow you to eat more. Eat more vegetables than fruits. Look for sweet veg, and veg. at times where you would normally eat fruit (snacks/desserts/breakfast dishes). Emphasize high water content. A couple of specifics are melon, celery, cucumber, and salad. Often, a helpful tip is to focus on the preparation. Find a good dip/dressing/broth.

**Meal Replacements:** Choose MR that are lower in calories and allow you to eat more. Start by looking at meals that are simply lower. Then, think specifically about shakes/smoothies, especially if you can use them to replace a meal (often easiest at breakfast). Just like with F/V, the preparation will make a big difference – a lower calorie entrée may not taste as good to you. If so, you'll need to find some good sauces/spices/F/V to make it a good replacement.

**Physical Activity:** Do activities that burn more calories. These are activities that are more intense, require more energy, and cause your breathing to increase. Walk faster. Ride your bike uphill, or through the sand. Increase your resistance, or move faster. This will usually require you to start with smaller time intervals. Breaking activity up throughout the day, or taking breaks during your activity is totally fine. Jog for 2 minutes, rest, and repeat OR jog for 5 minutes in the morning and 5 more at night.

**Goals/Tracking:** Pick a goal that is the most impactful for you. What will give you the most motivation or accountability if you don't have time to track EVERYTHING. In our experience, the best goal to track is your weight, weekly. If you don't do anything else, at least do that. We also tend to find medical goals, or goals that effect other people to be very motivating.

**Record Keeping:** Keep records in a way that is most impactful for you. What will give you the most motivation or accountability if you don't have time to track EVERYTHING. In our experience, the best records to keep are your total numbers for the goals you've set. If you don't do anything else, at least do that. For example, if you have a goal to eat 5 vegetables per day, you may go through a period where it's difficult to keep records (like a busy time at work). At a minimum, keep a tally of the number of veg you eat. You may not have the calorie count, recipes, or specifics recorded, but you also don't want to give up keeping records, altogether.

**Support:** Get your support/accountability in the most impactful way. If you don't have time or motivation to attend a group, or watch videos, or consult a forum, the best forms of support are usually personalized/ 1-on-1. Having 30 minutes with a coach can be more directly useful than 2 hours spent looking up questions on your own online. Talking to a friend/doctor who knows you directly will give you more personalized advice than you would get by talking with a stranger.



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### **Strategic Timing – Do things at different times.**

Fruits/Veg: Try eating at different times. Does it affect your hunger or temptations? Try eating your normal meals a little earlier/later or try adding an extra meal/snack that you normally wouldn't have. Try moving your breakfast forward by an hour. Try having a snack before you go to the movies. Try having an extra vegetable for lunch. Does it affect your snacking later on? Does it help you control your portion size? Try having a piece of fruit with your late-night snack.

Meal Replacements: Try the same strategies as above, but also specifically think about how your meal replacements pair with other foods. Should I have my shake, and then a banana an hour later, or should I put my banana into my shake directly? If I'm having trouble with portion size on chicken, should I try making an entrée to go along with it? If I drink a shake in the car on the way to the beach, will it help me avoid the temptations that are there?

Physical Activity: Try doing activity at different times and in different intervals. Try doing an hour all at once. Try doing 30 minutes in the morning and 30 minutes at night. Try doing 20 minutes at home, 10 minutes when you get to work, 10 minutes on your lunch break, and 20 minutes in the evening. Doing activity at different times gives different benefits (i.e. at night might help you sleep better, in the morning might help you get it out of the way when the rest of the day is busy). Splitting activity up makes it easier to manage, and more flexible (i.e. if I wake up late, I can't move an hour session to another time during the day, but I can move a 10 minute session to another point).

Goals/Tracking: Keep your records at different times. Try weighing in on Fridays instead of Mondays. Does it motivate you to get through the weekend? Try weighing twice each week. Is there any added benefit? Checking your goals more often or at different times can affect motivation a lot!

Record Keeping: Keep your records at different times. Try writing things down all at once at the end of the day. Try writing things down as soon as you eat them. Try writing down a plan before you eat anything and adjusting your records as you go throughout the day. What gets the best results on the scale?

Support: Get your support on a different schedule. Do you wait until there is a problem to seek out help, or do you consult your support on a regular basis so you can catch problems before they arrive? Do you talk to your coach on Monday to get a good start to the week, on Friday before you go into a challenging weekend, or both? Do you look for new recipes at the end of the month when the website gets updated, or a few weeks before a holiday so you can start to plan?



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## **Environmental Control – Set up your surroundings so it’s easier to make the right choices.**

Fruits/Veg: Remove the foods that encourage you not to eat your veg/fruit, and change your environment to make it easier to make the right choices. Try getting the cookies out of your house. Try keeping a fruit bowl on the counter so you can easily grab a piece. Try washing, peeling and preparing your produce as soon as possible so you don’t have to do it when you are hungry. Keep the sauces and salad dressings you like at work so you always have access to them. Find restaurants, fast food, and convenience stores where you can buy the veg/fruits you like. Take a vegetable tray/soup/side dish to the party so you know you have some options.

Meal Replacements: Use the same strategies as with fruits/veg above, but focus on the MR that support you. If you know you like cookies, keep a chocolate MR bar around in case you need it. If you know you like mac and cheese, find a good mac and cheese MR entrée. If you know you like ice cream, find the ingredients you need to keep around to make the shakes fulfill that craving. Keep the tools you need in EVERY environment. Do you have a blender at work to make shakes? Do you have canned vegetables at your parents’ house in case you go over for dinner? Do you keep meals/snacks in your car in case you are running errands?

Physical Activity: Set your environment up so it’s easy to do activity. Find activities that you can do indoors if the weather is bad. Find activities you can do without getting sweaty, so you can do them at work/in the middle of the day. Find activities you can do with NO equipment. Then, if you need equipment, make sure it’s available (i.e. take a jump rope with you when you travel, keep a change of shoes at work to take a walk). Make sure you also have access to things that motivate you (i.e. music, videos, activities you can do with friends).

Goals/Tracking: Set your environment up so it’s easy to track your goals (and remove excuses). Keep your scale in the kitchen where you’ll see it. Keep your records on your phone so they are always with you. Get someone else to weigh you in for accountability. Do the same things if you are tracking some other goal (i.e. keep your blood sugar monitor available, make sure you have your measuring tape in an easy location).

Record Keeping: Just as in goals/tracking, make it easier. Keep your records in your phone. Keep them on loose leaf paper in your pocket. Keep them on a notepad in your kitchen so every time you eat something you can write it down right away. Keep the records on a dry erase board when you need to write them down quickly. Keep them in the cloud so you can access them from any computer. On top of this, share them with someone else for support and accountability so you don’t “forget” to do them.



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Support: Change your environment to get the support you need. Avoid people and places that provide temptations (i.e. don't go to the movies for a little while, or don't go out to eat with that one friend you can't control yourself around). If you can't remove these things entirely, put control over it (i.e. don't go to the movies, unless your brother will go with you; he'll keep you on track, or don't go out with your high school buddies unless you go to breakfast; that's less tempting for you). Think about how the people in your life can support you. Can your co-workers put away their pizza instead of leaving it out in the lunch room? Could your family pull some vegetables aside for you BEFORE they add in the butter/cheese? Can you get a separate cabinet for the kids to keep their snacks in?

Make sure that you are getting the most out of your support. When you meet with your coach, can you write down some questions and think about what you want to talk about? Can you sit down in a quiet environment and make sure there are no distractions?

This is one of the hardest sections for people to work on, because it requires that you control your surroundings, and ask for help from others (and we don't want to impose on anyone else if we can avoid it). BUT, if you are struggling, this is the area that will have the biggest impact. If you don't have to deal with as many challenges, you will have a much easier time succeeding. I.e. If you don't keep cookies in your house, you don't need recipes to replace them, or willpower to portion control them. They just can't bother you at all.

### **Don't forget!**

The more time, effort, and detail you put into your work, the easier it will be to spot mistakes, or guarantee the results you are looking for. If you REALLY want to be successful, you want A LOT of support, you want to eat A LOT of vegetables, you want to do A LOT of activity, and you want A LOT of detail in your records. HOWEVER, you have to balance what is realistic. If you push too hard and end up needing to take a break or quit when you get burnt out, it won't do any good. **Your main goal is to keep doing these 6 things. No cheats. No days off. Figure out how to make it easier to do these things, or how to make them more effective. Get help if you need more ideas.**