

December Weighing In 2014

Are Rules Ruining Your Success?

Have you ever thought about rules in your life? We all have rules that we have to follow---we stop at a red light, for example. We signal before we make a turn because we have to. We stop for children crossing the road. We even try to get to work on time---all in an attempt to follow the rules. But when we let following the rules become an obsession in our lives, we are headed for trouble. Let me explain. There are rules that we have to follow to get and keep ourselves healthy. We know we should exercise at least 30 minutes a day. This can mean an enjoyable, brisk walk. We know that we should eat correctly; that's what The Weigh Station tries to teach. But some people become obsessed with "the rules" which makes it harder for them to get healthy. They feel they must weigh themselves every day to control their weight. Weighing now begins to rule their lives. They don't understand how to relax and trust their bodies. They stress over every meal, worrying what the scale will say the following day. They don't let themselves enjoy their meals. Instead, they constantly stress about what's in the food that they are ingesting or worry over, "Is it natural?"

As to the "exercise rule," we already said that around 30 minutes a day of some form is recommended. However, I see the obsessed patient who subscribes to the rigid rule of "Eat less, exercise more." This oversimplification is akin to a psychiatrist telling a depressed patient simply to "feel better." However, that doesn't make it downright false either. Exercise is a major part of losing weight particularly fat tissue, and you can't ignore it forever and hope to lose the weight you want to lose. Some patients think, "I'll eat this cupcake and then run for 20 minutes extra on the treadmill. This will offset my failure of eating something sweet." Now, there's no doubt that exercise is the potential enhancer of our hormonal functions with weight loss. It raises our testosterone, our growth hormone, and improves our insulin sensitivity. It can divert the calories that we do eat toward lean muscle and away from body fat. And it can divert the carbohydrates towards refilling muscle glycogen. As long as we don't overdo it, exercise is an important ally in fat burning toward lean muscle mass accumulation.

BUT, many folks make exercise the unbreakable rule of their lives. They become so obsessed with it that when they can't exercise one day, they become stressed; worry and anxiety take over. They can't bear to break "the rule." As they stress, things become worse because they release cortisol and cortisol creates body fat! Chronic stress is the enemy of fat loss! Now the exercise rule is suddenly ruining their success!

How about the "Eat Less to Lose" rule? Some patients focus solely on calorie intake to drop unabated weight. They reason to themselves, "Hey, it helped me lose weight the first time so it should help me again, right?" Unfortunately it doesn't work that way. When you continually eat a smaller volume of even the right food, you're applying chronic stressors to your body. A lack of food intake for a day or two on a regimen of fasting is good for you except when the signal of the lack of food goes to the brain. This happens when the lack of food has gone on for weeks or months. This signals famine to your brain; the enemy is starvation and you'll start up the storage mode. Starvation is the chronic stressor that will impede weight loss and promote fat storage!!

Eating smaller and smaller volumes of food also gives you less of a chance to obtain micronutrients you need for optimally functioning. When all is said and done, a 2000 calorie diet will have more minerals, vital nutrients, and vitamins than a 1000 calorie diet. That's why we ask you all the time if you are eating enough. We don't count calories though because it's not necessary. And we don't count calories because it can become obsessive. And then we've just given you another rule to stress about!

Making The Weigh Station program into a set of rigid rules is just a way of shooting yourself in the foot. It was never meant to be a set of rules; it was meant to be a guideline to healthier eating lifestyle. The Weigh Station intends to make weight loss come about smoothly, but some folks get the idea they can eat just as much as they want and not gain any weight. Though it is certainly harder to gain weight eating what we're asking to eat, it's not impossible. People's satiety mechanisms don't simply stop because they ditched the grains, the sugar, the peanuts, etc. and they reduce their overall carb intake. Sadly, many of our patients falsely assume that since we extol the weight loss benefits of butter, coconut oil, cheese, olive oil, beef, and fish, the quantity of these products is unlimited. While I won't argue that over eating your monstrous salad is better, healthier and causes less adipose tissue growth than overeating a large big Mac, it still is overeating.

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Having said all that, sometimes we do have to lay down a few rules that people just don't like. Rules like weekly visits. Accountability is an important part of this program. Following this rule will help bring about weekly weight loss. Too many times patients make their own rules thinking that they know more about how to make it work than we do. Avoiding accountability is one of those rules we break just before the fall.

We have just finished Thanksgiving--- how did you do? I struggled in a few areas. I am sensitive to carbohydrates and sugars. And I can tell that I picked up a few pounds by the way my clothes felt. So I started back on stage I and I'll stay on stage one for the next three days. See, everybody makes mistakes; but when rules are set up to make you fail then you need to change your way of responding to the rules.

Don't stress over rules; relax and learn to enjoy yourself as we engage in this month's holiday season of Christmas. Say Merry Christmas to people you see in the hallways at work. Say Merry Christmas to the lady across the counter at the grocery store. Try to help as many folks as you can, especially those less fortunate than yourself. One of the best rules in life is to do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Jesus said, "Whatever you sow that shall you also reap". So, in this Christmas month, go out and bless as many folks as you can. Don't beat yourself up when you make a mistake. Do not let the rules you place on yourself ruin your life. Learning to eat healthfully is a lifestyle change that will follow you all the days of your life. Enjoy the holidays with your family and friends... Be very proud of what you've accomplished already! Many of you have lost over 100 pounds. Some of you have lost 20, and 20 pounds is a lot of weight! Take pride in the accomplishment of each pound lost.

Some of you can offset the cost of The Weigh Station for the single mom, or single dad who is struggling with his or her health and appearance. Maybe God has laid it on your heart to be a blessing to them. Or maybe God has laid it on your heart to be a blessing to a family. Whether that's bringing them a meal or fixing their car, try as much as you can to listen to the Spirit of the Lord speaking to your heart to be a blessing. I promise you during this season you cannot out-give God. He has so much to give to you. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Chuck Shaffer MD

Recipe of the Month

Turkey Broth— great base for homemade soups!

Ingredients:

- carcass of cooked turkey (12-13 lb bird), meat and skin removed
- 1 large onion, peeled and quartered
- 3 ribs of celery, cut into thirds
- 6-8 cloves garlic
- 2-3 sprigs fresh rosemary
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon peppercorn
- Cold water
- salt and pepper to taste



DIRECTIONS:

1. Place carcass, onion, celery, garlic, rosemary, vinegar and peppercorn in the base of a slow cooker. Fill with cold water to the top. Cook on low for 24 hours.
2. Let cool and strain stock.
3. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
4. Ladle stock into glass jars, leaving 1-inch headspace to allow for expansion if freezing. Freeze stock and use for any recipe calling for stock or warm up one serving at a time and sip on the warm stock

Tips for a Healthy Holiday:

Shopping: Eat at home before you shop, grab a healthy snack on the way out the door like an apple and nuts to tide you over. If you have to eat while you're out, choose a local sit down place versus fast food when you can. Local restaurants normally have locally sourced foods that are less processed. Choose carefully from the menu, broth based soups and salad with grilled protein are good options. Salmon and chicken along with a sirloin steak are also healthier choices than prime rib or fried foods. Also splitting a meal with a friend is a good way to go since portion sizes are often larger than you need.

Track your intake: In the weeks leading up to Christmas you will have various office parties and celebrations. Track what you are eating and be mindful. You may even want to wear a tight pair of jeans as a reminder. If you do eat something you shouldn't get right back on track - consistency is key to success. You don't have to take drastic measures and go back to stage one, just go back to balanced meals with mostly protein and stage two veggies. A small amount of fruit should also be incorporated to help keep cravings at bay. Make sure to incorporate fat as well, a little drizzle of heavy whipping cream can go a long way on fresh or frozen berries for example.

Bring along healthy choices: When I go to a party I always pick up a veggie tray. I know that there will be plenty of sweet treats, hot chocolate and casseroles to go around. This way I can ensure that I have something to munch on. I also eat before I go so that I'm not tempted by all the yummy food when I get there. Keep in mind that fruit is sometimes a rarity too at parties (unless you count the apple pie-kidding). Feel free to bring some along as well if veggies aren't your thing. Also consider stashing a sparkling water for the party, that way you can forgo the punch and eggnog and still feel like you have something festive to drink.

New Traditions: So much of the holiday season is focused around food. This Christmas try to enjoy your company. Set out smaller plates and try doing more talking and less eating during Christmas. Sometimes baking can be a holiday tradition, consider baking things you won't eat like pieces to a gingerbread house instead- this way you won't be eating what you bake and it will still be fun. Sometime watching Christmas movies can lead to mindless eating. Try playing games while having your favorite movie on in the background; this will keep your hands and mind busy and keep you away from munching mindlessly.