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3 Tips to Help You Meet Weight Loss Goals

A recent MyFitnessPal survey found that fitness trackers are powerful tools in helping people lose weight. They provide essential data relevant to food intake, calories, activity levels, and more – which in turn provides accountability and the inspiration to meet new challenges and be successful. According to Kenny Butler, sports physiotherapist for Back in Action UK, states, “if you use a tracker, you’ve got accountability of what your goals are vs. what you’ve done. It’s amazing what a little peer pressure (even digitally) can accomplish.” Here are the top 3 take-aways from the survey.

Tip 1: Have a specific goal.

Having a specific goal in mind helped respondents stick with healthy habits, which in turn led to weight loss.

“Logging my food helps keep me on track and even plan out my day ahead of time.” -Michelle T.

“I count my calories and track my exercise. I also use it to meal plan and create a shopping list based on the meal plan.” -Jessy G.

And according to the experts, focusing on a single goal is important.

“You are more likely to not adhere to a new program if it involves more than one new goal, so keeping things as simple as possible is a good rule when challenging or ‘unappealing’ tasks (like dieting) are involved,” states Sari Shepphird, PhD.

“One of the main benefits of digital trackers is that it enables people to become ‘outcome based’ in their decision-making,” states Todd Neif, the owner and director of training at South Loop Strength Conditioning in Chicago. “The idea is that, you set a goal, and you track whether you’re progressing towards that goal or not.”

There is also a huge accountability-factor when using an activity tracker. They provide reminders of whether or not you are sticking to your goals, but they also offer valuable information to fitness trainers. “No matter how good or bad you are, your activity, etc., it is still being reported,” states Sari Shepphird, PhD. “This accountability has a positive effect on one’s mindset to always be change positive – something diet or exercise to take place.”

Tip 2: Be aware.

By using a fitness tracker, respondents discovered new information about their calorie-intake, activity levels and sleep patterns to help make positive changes happen.

“I started a journey 7 years ago when I hit 320 lbs. There were no fitness trackers and it was difficult to know what my progress was. Now I have a fitness tracker and I can track my progress and see the results in real time.” -Michelle T.



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[NOTE: Some sentiments contained within "What We're Reading" articles may not strictly conform with Simple Again's nutritional outlook. We read articles containing opposing information all the time and derive our nutritional philosophies from the latest science, the opinions of experts worldwide and our anecdotal experiences in the field. We keep an open mind and a strong affinity for fact-based evidence to help make the world of nutrition "Simple Again" for you.]

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There is also a huge accountability-factor when using an activity tracker. They provide reminders of whether or not you are sticking to your goals, but they also offer valuable information to fitness trainers. "No matter how good or bad you are, your activity, etc., it is still being reported," states Darin Hulslander of DNS Performance & Nutrition. "This accountability has a positive effect on one's mindset and allows the change process in someone's diet or exercise to take place."

Tip 2: Be aware.

By using a fitness tracker, respondents discovered new information about their calorie-intake, activity levels and sleep patterns to help make positive changes happen.

"I started a journey 7 years ago when I hit 320 lbs. Back then, there were no fitness trackers and it was difficult to know what foods counted for without doing it by hand... I wouldn't have had such a drastic transformation in the past year and a half it wasn't for MFP...!" -Aaron P.

"I track my workouts, my sleep, my heart rate... I track my calories and my water. I've lost 37 pounds in 7 months..." -Michelle R.

"It has helped me keep moving which helped me attain my weight loss goal and then to maintain it! About 50 pounds lighter!" -Sharon S.

The fitness and nutrition data also helped some respondents avoid long-term health issues.

"Over the years, I have lost about 50 lb. from my max weight. Nothing has helped me more than the combination of using MFP and my wearables. I always recommend using both to all of my patients and have not only great results with weight loss, but dramatic improvements and usually reversal of diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and high cholesterol." -Ronald P.

"After struggling with serious ppd after the birth of my son with birth defects in December 2013 and being bigger most of my adult life, I had the hardest time pulling my self off the bottom... In October 2014 that all changed. I recommitted myself to myfitnesspal and exercise. I went to zumba, tracked calories burned with a heart rate monitor and ate like a rabbit. Fast forward to today. I went from 309 pounds to 189 today. 66% body fat to 32%. I'm not looking back now..." -Liz M.

Respondents were also inspired and motivated by their tracking data.

"Love trying to meet my step challenge every day and tracking my food intake. It's helping me make better food decisions and portion size control and inspires me to exercise more." -Mary B.

"Fitness trackers allowed me to see small successes I may otherwise have been blind to and motivated me to keep going." -Emily W.

According to Shane Allen, a certified, weight-loss-specialist, personal trainer and sports nutritionist at Personal Trainer Food, the respondents are on track. "Fitness trackers help people meet their pound-shedding goals by making them aware of their activity during the day," he states. "The positive aspects of using a digital tracker to meet pound-shedding goals is self awareness, but more importantly: food tracking."

Tip 3: Compete and create new challenges.

With the accountability aspect of the trackers, respondents found that they became more competitive and used the data to challenge themselves.

"I never knew I was competitive until I started doing the challenges! Now I get my 10k steps almost daily, and it really helps keep me motivated. I love how in syncs with MFP, and together they have helped me lose 140 lbs!" -Karla H.

"My Fitbit helps me challenge myself against my friends and I find I push myself a little harder." -Donna J.

"I'm smarter about food choices and my competitive nature makes me want to outdo my tracker. 3 months, down 20 lbs. Eating more than I ever did before." -Sherry P.

And this competition is a great factor for weight-loss. "Some [trackers] even offer features that allow users to compete with friends and colleagues," states Lori Rosenthal, MS, RD, CDN, a registered dietitian. "A little healthy competition, whether with ourselves or others, can be the motivation needed to stay on track."

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