

Measuring Your Progress

Concentrating too much on the outcome of a weight loss program can often be counter-productive. It leads to disappointment and a sense of failure if this doesn't happen the way you'd like.

Measuring what you do, not what you achieve!

Losing weight is sometimes difficult. But improving your health from doing those things that can help you lose weight is not. For example, even a 5% decrease in body weight can lead to a big improvement in blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugars and other risk factors. So instead of concentrating on the outcomes of your program it's often better to concentrate on the processes of what you are doing to get there.

For example, instead of constantly weighing yourself, measure how well you are doing with your daily walking program, or eating the right types of foods. A range of 'process' measures for both food intake and energy expenditure are listed in the table below. Discuss which ones you're prepared to concentrate on with your doctor.

Process measures in weight control

Energy Intake	Energy expenditure
Daily intake of certain foods increased (eg. 3 fruits, 4 vegetables)	Daily steps taken/distance walked daily
Reduced intake of high energy-dense foods	Minimum days of gym/exercise classes
Breakfast eaten daily	Improvements in time taken to exercise eg. walk 1 km
Daily fat intake kept below eg. 40g	Increases in distance covered (eg. walking/swimming etc.)
Only foods eaten with eg. <10% fat	Minimum days/week for planned exercise
Fibre intake increased (eg. to >30g/day)	Effort saving devices not used
Regular healthy snack foods eaten	'Incidental' activities carried out
Frequent daily fluid intake	Car usage decreased
	More gardening
	More playing outdoors with children

Regular monitoring

Monitoring and recording your activities is one of the best ways we know of helping you change. But remember change doesn't happen overnight. And it may not need to be the change you want to get the best benefits from your program. Check other aspects of your health regularly with your doctor and see how these change over time.

For more information on achieving a healthy weight or for tools to assist you in monitoring your progress go to www.lifestylemedicine.net.au OR email: info@lifestylemedicine.net.au