

# Assess yourself

## Are You Ready for Weight Loss?

How well do your attitudes equip you for a weight-loss program? For each question, mark the answer that best describes your attitude. As you complete sections 2–5, tally your score and analyze it according to the scoring guide.

### 1 Diet History

A. How many times in the past year have you been on a diet?

0 times                      1–3 times                      4–10 times                      11–20 times                      More than 20

B. What is the most weight you lost on any of these diets?

0 lb                      1–5 lb                      6–10 lb                      11–20 lb                      More than 20 lb

C. How long did you stay at the new lower weight?

Less than 1 mo                      2–3 mo                      4–6 mo                      6–12 mo                      Over 1 yr

D. Put a check mark by each dieting method you have tried:

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Skipping breakfast                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Skipping lunch or dinner                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Taking over-the-counter appetite suppressants |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Counting calories                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Cutting out most fats                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Cutting out most carbohydrates                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increasing regular exercise               | <input type="checkbox"/> Taking weight-loss supplements            | <input type="checkbox"/> Cutting out all snacks                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Using meal replacements such as Slim Fast | <input type="checkbox"/> Taking prescription appetite suppressants | <input type="checkbox"/> Taking laxatives                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inducing vomiting                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                               |  |



### 2 Readiness to Start a Weight-Loss Program

If you are thinking about starting a weight-loss program, answer questions A–F.

A. How motivated are you to lose weight?

**1** Not at all motivated      **2** Slightly motivated      **3** Somewhat motivated      **4** Quite motivated      **5** Extremely motivated

B. How certain are you that you will stay committed to a weight-loss program long enough to reach your goal?

**1** Not at all certain      **2** Slightly certain      **3** Somewhat certain      **4** Quite certain      **5** Extremely certain

C. Taking into account other stresses in your life (school, work, and relationships), to what extent can you tolerate the effort required to stick to your diet plan?

**1** Cannot tolerate      **2** Can tolerate somewhat      **3** Uncertain      **4** Can tolerate well      **5** Can tolerate easily

D. Assuming you should lose no more than 1 to 2 pounds per week, have you allotted a realistic amount of time for weight loss?

**1** Very unrealistic      **2** Somewhat unrealistic      **3** Moderately realistic      **4** Somewhat realistic      **5** Very realistic

E. While dieting, do you fantasize about eating your favorite foods?

**1** Always      **2** Frequently      **3** Occasionally      **4** Rarely      **5** Never

F. While dieting, do you feel deprived, angry, upset?

**1** Always      **2** Frequently      **3** Occasionally      **4** Rarely      **5** Never

#### Total \_\_\_\_\_

from questions A–F and circle your score category.

**6 to 16:** This may not be a good time for you to start a diet. Inadequate motivation and commitment and unrealistic goals could block your progress. Think about what contributes to your unreadiness. What are some of the factors? Consider changing these factors before undertaking a diet.

**17 to 23:** You may be nearly ready to begin a program but should think about ways to boost your readiness.

**24 to 30:** The path is clear—you can decide how to lose weight in a safe, effective way.

### 3 Hunger, Appetite, and Eating

Think about your hunger and the cues that stimulate your appetite or eating, and then answer questions A–C.

A. When food comes up in conversation or in something you read, do you want to eat, even if you are not hungry?

1 Never      2 Rarely      3 Occasionally      4 Frequently      5 Always

B. How often do you eat for a reason other than physical hunger?

1 Never      2 Rarely      3 Occasionally      4 Frequently      5 Always

C. When your favorite foods are around the house, do you succumb to eating them between meals?

1 Never      2 Rarely      3 Occasionally      4 Frequently      5 Always



### 4 Controlling Overeating

How good are you at controlling overeating when you are on a diet? Answer questions A–C.

A. A friend talks you into going out to a restaurant for a midday meal instead of eating a brown-bag lunch. As a result, for the rest of the day, you:

1 Would eat much less      2 Would eat somewhat less      3 Would make no difference      4 Would eat somewhat more      5 Would eat much more

B. You “break” your diet by eating a fattening, “forbidden” food. As a result, for the rest of the day, you:

1 Would eat much less      2 Would eat somewhat less      3 Would make no difference      4 Would eat somewhat more      5 Would eat much more

C. You have been following your diet faithfully and decide to test yourself by taking a bite of something you consider a treat. As a result, for the rest of the day, you:

1 Would eat much less      2 Would eat somewhat less      3 Would make no difference      4 Would eat somewhat more      5 Would eat much more

### 5 Emotional Eating

Consider the effects of your emotions on your eating behaviors, and answer questions A–C.

A. Do you eat more than you would like to when you have negative feelings such as anxiety, depression, anger, or loneliness?

1 Never      2 Rarely      3 Occasionally      4 Frequently      5 Always

B. Do you have trouble controlling your eating when you have positive feelings (i.e., do you celebrate feeling good by eating)?

1 Never      2 Rarely      3 Occasionally      4 Frequently      5 Always

C. When you have unpleasant interactions with others in your life or after a difficult day at work, do you eat more than you’d like?

1 Never      2 Rarely      3 Occasionally      4 Frequently      5 Always

### Total \_\_\_\_\_

from questions A–C and circle your score category.

**3 to 6:** You might occasionally eat more than you should, but it is due more to your own attitudes than to temptation and other environmental cues. Controlling your own attitudes toward hunger and eating may help you.

**7 to 9:** You may have a moderate tendency to eat just because food is available. Losing weight may be easier for you if you try to resist external cues and eat only when you are physically hungry.

**10 to 15:** Some or much of your eating may be in response to thinking about food or exposing yourself to temptations to eat. Think of ways to minimize your exposure to temptations so you eat only in response to physical hunger.

### Total \_\_\_\_\_

from questions A–C and circle your score category.

**3 to 7:** You recover rapidly from mistakes. However, if you frequently alternate between out-of-control eating and very strict dieting, you may have a serious eating problem and should get professional help.

**8 to 11:** You do not seem to let unplanned eating disrupt your program. This is a flexible, balanced approach.

**12 to 15:** You may be prone to overeating after an event breaks your control or throws you off track. Your reaction to these problem-causing events could use improvement.

### Total \_\_\_\_\_

from questions A–C and circle your score category.

**3 to 8:** You do not appear to let your emotions affect your eating.

**9 to 11:** You sometimes eat in response to emotional highs and lows. Monitor this behavior to learn when and why it occurs, and be prepared to find alternative activities to respond to your emotions.

**12 to 15:** Emotional ups and downs can stimulate your eating. Try to deal with the feelings that trigger the eating and find other ways to express them.

# 6 Exercise Patterns and Attitudes

Exercise is key for weight loss. Think about your attitudes toward it, and answer questions A–D.

## A. How often do you exercise?

- 1 Never      2 Rarely      3 Occasionally      4 Somewhat frequently      5 Frequently

## B. How confident are you that you can exercise regularly?

- 1 Not at all confident      2 Slightly confident      3 Somewhat confident      4 Highly confident      5 Completely confident

## C. When you think about exercise, do you develop a positive or negative picture in your mind?

- 1 Completely negative      2 Somewhat negative      3 Neutral      4 Somewhat positive      5 Completely positive

## D. How certain are you that you can work regular exercise into your daily schedule?

- 1 Not at all certain      2 Slightly certain      3 Somewhat certain      4 Quite certain      5 Extremely certain



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## Total \_\_\_\_\_

from questions A–D and circle your score category.

**4 to 10:** You're probably not exercising as regularly as you should. Determine whether it is your attitude about exercise or your lifestyle that is blocking your way, then change what you must and put on those walking shoes!

**11 to 16:** You need to feel more positive about exercise so you can do it more often. Think of ways to be more active that are fun and fit your lifestyle.

**17 to 20:** The path is clear for you to be active. Now think of ways to get motivated.

# YOUR PLAN FOR CHANGE

The **Assessyourself** activity identifies six areas of importance in determining your readiness for weight loss. If you wish to lose weight to improve your health, understanding your attitudes about food and exercise will help you succeed in your plan.

### Today, you can:

- Set "SMART" goals for weight loss and give them a reality check: Are they specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-oriented? For example, rather than aiming to lose 15 pounds this month (which probably wouldn't be healthy or achievable), set a comfortable goal to lose 5 pounds. Realistic goals will encourage weight-loss success by boosting your confidence in your ability to make lifelong healthy changes.
- Begin keeping a food log and identifying the triggers that influence your eating habits. Think about what you can do to eliminate or reduce the influence of your two most common food triggers.

### Within the next 2 weeks, you can:

- Get in the habit of incorporating more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains in your diet and eating less fat. The next time you make dinner, look at the proportions on your plate. If vegetables and whole grains do not take up most of the space, substitute 1 cup of the meat, pasta, or cheese in your meal with 1 cup of legumes, salad greens, or a favorite vegetable. You'll reduce the number of calories while eating the same amount of food!
- Aim to incorporate more exercise into your daily routine. Visit your campus rec center or a local gym, and familiarize

yourself with the equipment and facilities that are available. Try a new machine or sports activity, and experiment until you find a form of exercise you really enjoy.

### By the end of the semester, you can:

- Get in the habit of grocery shopping every week and buying healthy, nutritious foods while avoiding high-fat, high-sugar, or overly processed foods. As you make healthy foods more available and unhealthy foods less available, you'll find it easier to eat better.
- Chart your progress and reward yourself as you meet your goals. If your goal is to lose weight and you successfully take off 10 pounds, reward yourself with a new pair of jeans or other article of clothing (which will likely fit better than before!).