

Reach Your Goals by 2009

As 2008 draws to a close, many choose to make New Year's Resolutions for 2009. Come January, many of the new patients that I'll work with will be those who decided that 2009 is the year to get healthy, to lose weight, to get fit.

But why wait? Why is it a better time to get healthy in a few months? Shouldn't we all be working on our health right now? What is going to change between now and January?

As part of our intake history form, all new patients are asked what their "Goal Weight" is. I like to have an idea in mind for what an individual would like to accomplish, but also see if they are shooting for a realistic, healthy weight. Unfortunately, all too often people choose a goal weight that is either not healthy, or more commonly, not sustainable. What is this choice based on? Often, people pick a number that they were at in the distant past - high school, for example. People pick a number that they want to weigh, sometimes without really thinking about what it will take to maintain that weight.

Redefining Goals

One way to reach our goals is to rethink how we define them. Instead of shooting for a particular weight, we should aim for being happy and healthy. Shooting for a goal number on the scale is only one piece of the equation. What many people fail to realize is that the majority of the health benefit of weight management comes from losing the first 10-15%, and then keeping it off. That means that for a person who is 200 pounds, losing 20-30 pounds provides the majority of the health benefit.

Earlier this year when I attended the Harvard Medical School "Practical

Approaches to the Treatment of Obesity" course, I

had the opportunity to meet the director of the course and a respected thought leader in the management of obesity, George Blackburn, and pick up an early release of his new book, "Breaking through your Set Point." The premise of the book is that a person's "set point" for their weight is influenced by a variety of factors

including genetics, environment, activity, exercise, age, etc. Moving this set point takes not only time, but change in a variety of these factors. When a person loses a lot of weight rapidly, the body's natural adaptation is to try to return the body to the heavier weight. It does this with a complex set of biological and behavioral interventions. Our bodies are built for a time when calories were scarce, and the natural adaptation is to try to preserve our weight. After losing weight, it can take many months for the body to recognize the new weight as the new set point.

This is where the goal of "happy and healthy" rather than a goal of a number on a scale can be very helpful. Food is certainly an enjoyable part of our lives. For many, exercise too is an enjoyable part of our lives, although certainly not for everybody. How can we focus simply on a "goal weight," without first discussing the following 3 points:

- 1) Is it a healthy weight?
- 2) What foods am I able to eat / not eat to maintain that weight?
- 3) How active will I need to be to sustain that weight?

Happy and Healthy

I would like to suggest a new thought process. Instead of having the priority be a number on the scale, perhaps have the priority be *happy and healthy*. What does this mean? First, shoot for a weight

where you can live a long, healthy life. Your doctor or dietitian is an excellent resource to figure this range out. Once in a healthy range, rather

than always shooting lower, start focusing on your lifestyle. What foods do you really like? What can you live without? Are you really willing to give up chocolate altogether, or do you want to have a few bites a week. Are you really willing to give up alcohol? How about 1 or 2 drinks a week instead of 2 or 3 a night? If it's going to take 2 hours a day worth of medium intensity exercise to maintain the weight, do you enjoy exercise enough to do that much? Or,

ADVANCED FASTING PROGRAMS

CNC is pleased to announce two new meal plan options for 2009. Here are some benefits of the new Modified Fast *Advanced* and Nutrifast *Advanced* programs:

- * A simple structure, similar to the true fasting programs.
- * Not ketogenic, therefore, potassium supplementation is not necessary.
- * Appropriate for longer-term use (because not in ketosis).
- * Every-other week office visits are an option (on the true fasting programs, patients are seen every week).

If you are interested in a structured, simple, low calorie meal plan, our *Advanced* track may be just what you're looking for. Call 303-750-9454 to set up a visit with your dietitian to see if these new programs are a good fit.

would you prefer 30 minutes 3 times per week? Perhaps a health problem is preventing structured exercise completely? If this is the case, are you able to be more active during the day?

If we can figure out this balance something marvelous happens. We realize that we can't go out every night, order whatever we want and clear off the plate. That is, not if we want to maintain the weight loss. Instead, our thinking changes. I often hear "Nothing tastes as good as being thin feels." People start eating in and cooking better. When they eat out, they get a take-out bag with the meal, separate out the portion they should have from what they are served, and get 2 meals for the price of one. They skip the appetizers, drinks, and desserts, and spend less than 1/2 on their meals than they used to (a nice money saver given today's economy). They order the grilled salmon instead of the battered cod, double vegetables instead of the French fries, and if it's a special occasion they even order the molten chocolate cake, but only have a bite or two and share the rest with the other diners.

People start being more active – they really do park in the back of the parking lot, use the stairs, stop using the restroom right next to their office, do a lap around the grocery store before putting anything in the cart and go for a 10 minute walk during the lunch break to re-establish blood flow to the brain instead of the stomach.

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Establishing a New Set Point

By focusing on these priorities rather than just a number on the scale, we can start to explore together a compromise between all of these factors. Let's find a healthy weight you are happy with, a meal plan where you still get the foods you like, and an activity schedule that you enjoy. As this becomes your new lifestyle, you will also establish a new set point with your weight. As the months and years go by, we can continue to re-evaluate weight loss and weight management goals - who knows where we'll end up? But at least it will be a healthy, maintainable weight, and an enjoyable lifestyle.

Why Weight?

Finally, I started out this editorial posing the question, why wait until 2009? Taking more of a lifestyle approach to weight management is something we can all start today. Many patients focusing on this approach find it helpful to be seen at the office monthly (or sometimes every other week). Often we are able to use appetite suppressant medications longer term to help a patient establish a new set point. Often when a patient waits to begin

this, they are slowly adding even more pounds, with the idea that they will take them off later. I call this **weighting**. Rather than weighting and gaining 5 or 10 pounds between now and the New Year and then having a resolution to lose it again, why not start now? Why not set a goal of losing a pound or two per week? You could be 10 or 20 pounds ahead by the New Year and set a goal instead of having 2009 be a happy, healthy year.

As we've always liked to say at CNC, "**Why Weight?**"

Recession-Proof Your Health

October was the worst month for the stock market in over 20 years. Often when money gets tight, people are reluctant or unable to spend on their basic health care needs. Here are 10 ideas on how to get through this financial crisis with your health intact:

- 1 *Talk to your doctor (or Dr. Lazarus / Heather at CNC) about generic alternatives to any expensive medications you are taking.* Many excellent medications are now available generic, for only a few dollars per month. Consider filling these prescriptions at Costco or Sam's Club, or see if your pharmacy will match their prices.
- 2 *Don't forego your annual physical exam.* Finding problems early or preventing problems will be money well invested. It's far more cost-effective to treat a pre-cancer on your skin than to undergo treatment for melanoma.
- 3 *Don't gain weight, or if you are able, lose 5 to 10 pounds.* Often as money gets tight, people become stressed, less active, and turn to less healthy food options. Keeping off just 5 or 10 pounds can have dramatic health benefits, including diabetes prevention and lowering blood

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pressure and cholesterol, saving you money in the long-run.

- 4 *Eat out less often.* Talk to your dietitian about affordable, healthy cooking ideas.
- 5 *Forego the expensive gym membership, if you are not using it.* Instead, buy a good pair of walking shoes.
- 6 *Stop spending money on expensive, useless supplements.* Take only those recommended by your physician.
- 7 *Consider putting your cable subscription on hold.* Spend the time walking instead of sitting.
- 8 *Take public transportation to work one day per week.* Save gas and get the extra steps in!
- 9 *Make your own coffee.*
- 10 *Don't forget to put yourself at the top of your priority list.* Many people dread the holidays because of all the demands made on them by others. Celebrate the holidays by taking care of the most important person in your life: yourself.

Are you receiving our free e-Newsletter?

Did you know that CNC e-mails newsletters every 3 to 4 months to keep our patients up to date on new developments in the fields of health and nutrition?

To sign up, visit our web page at www.clinicalnutritioncenter.com and click on the "Healthstyles" tab. You'll also find copies of previous newsletters.

Also, please be sure to add Healthstyles@clinicalnutritioncenter.com to your "allowed" list in your e-mail program, so that the e-mail doesn't end up in your Spam box.

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Staff News

Congratulations to Tracy Boykin on her marriage to Mark Brindel.

Congratulations to Stephanie Muckey on the birth of her daughter, Cecelia Viola.

Congratulations to Suzanne Boos for 20 years of outstanding patient care at CNC. THANK YOU!

Clinical Nutrition Center
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Breaking through your Set Point

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