

Back to Basics

When you fall off the wagon... get back on!

by Pam Tremble

We hear it often - “Back to Basics” - but what does it really mean?

Sometimes we fall off the wagon with eating and exercise after bariatric surgery and we need to get ourselves back on track with some basic rules and guidelines. Sometimes we find ourselves just eating poorly and ignoring exercise which might result in a slight weight gain. Getting back on the wagon is important when we find that we’ve lost our way.

Support Group Meetings

Find a good in-person local support group and then... never miss a meeting. Make it a priority. Put it on the calendar and don't let other stuff interfere with this important part of being successful. Statistics show that patients who attend in-person support group meetings have a higher rate of long term success in maintaining their weight loss.

The Basics

You know the rules, you know how to use your tool, so do it. Here's a reminder.

- Eat protein first - most bariatric patients need 80-100g per day or about 40% of your total calories
- Eat complex carbohydrates - veggies, fruits, dairy, legumes, whole grains and aim for about 35% of your calories coming from carbs
- Avoid simple carbohydrates - bread, pasta, potatoes, rice, flour, sugar or processed foods
- Choose healthy fats - look for polyunsaturated and monounsaturated and aim for about 25% of your calories coming from fat
- Drink plenty of water – aim for 64 ounces per day
- Be sure your meals are dense, not sliders. Soft foods will slide straight through your pouch and leave you hungry sooner. Dense food can stay in your pouch for up to 2 hours or until



you start drinking water again. Try a meal with 5oz grilled chicken breast and a side salad.

- No drinking with meals or for 30-90 minutes after meals.
- Track every morsel of food that passes your lips. You can't know how to adjust your intake unless you know where you are starting from. Figure out where your calories need to be and stick to it 90% of the time. Studies show that people who track calories lose twice as much as those who don't.
- Plan your meals and eat on a schedule. People who plan their meals have less obsessive tendencies toward food and consume a more nutrient balanced diet
- Be a religious fanatic about your vitamins and supplements
- Exercise your butt off. If you're not sweating like a pig, you're not working hard enough

Be sure you're healthy

If you haven't had labs drawn recently then get that done. Check with your surgeon for a list of labs required. Some vitamin deficiencies can actually cause weight gain or make the scale stop moving, so eliminating that as a culprit is important.

Evaluate your vitamin and supplement routine. Be sure you're following the basic guidelines set forth by the American Society of Metabolic and Bariatric Surgeons (ASMBS), then adjusting your dose based on your most recently lab results.

Also take a close look at your medications list. Are any of your prescriptions causing weight gain or slow weight loss? Check with your doctor for guidance.

Lean on others

When you're not strong enough to do it on your own, lean on others for strength. Become part of the bariatric community, find a friend or mentor and ask for help when you need it. Eventually you will become strong enough and you'll be back on the wagon ... then you can be the support person that someone else relies on down the road. Find inspiration where ever you can and hold onto it as you grow stronger. The Nike "I Can" commercial is a good place to start for inspiration (Google it, it's worth the effort.)

Get help

Bariatric surgery is about two things – the physical surgery is only a small percentage of the journey... all the rest is mental. If you need to deal with the "mental crap" (as I like to call it) - the emotional struggles that we all face with food addiction or disordered eating and figuring out how to create a healthy relationship with food - then make an appointment with a therapist - someone trained to work with weight loss surgery patients. You don't have to do it on your own.

You can do hard things

You are worth the effort it takes to be healthy, happy and strong. Believe in yourself. You can do this. You can do hard things. (Read the wise words of Shari Sharp in her essay entitled: "You can do hard things.")

Motivation vs. Momentum

You can't wait for motivation to come to you before you begin. You must take the first step to create your own motivation. One step leads to a second step which leads to the third step and before you know it, you have created a momentum that is unstoppable. Who needs motivation when momentum is so much more powerful.

Go find your wagon and hold tight on for a wild and exciting ride to a healthier you! 🍷

Pam Tremble lost 115 pounds since 2007 with the help of bariatric surgery. She has chronicled her weight loss adventures (and mis-adventures) at Journey to a Healthier Me at www.PamTremble.blogspot.com.

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