

What Does “Changing Habits” Mean?

Habits are patterns of behavior acquired through repetition.

Doing something just once doesn't create a habit. Maybe you reach for a soda one day at lunch because you're low on sleep and need a pick-me-up. That's fine!

But when you have a soda every day with lunch, regardless of whether you're tired, your brain gets programmed to expect it - and it becomes a habit.

It's not helpful to think of habits as bad or good. There's nothing morally wrong about habits. But some habits will make you gain weight.



Changing Habits for Weight Loss

Changing habits involves both breaking old habits and adopting new ones.

Many people find it easier to make incremental changes to slowly replace an old habit. For example, instead of having popcorn and a soda when you watch a movie, replace the soda with a flavored sparkling water. Then, replace the buttery popcorn with a no-butter version. Eventually, replace the popcorn with lower-calorie snacks like carrots and ranch.

This will feel strange and uncomfortable the first time you do it, because you are *breaking a habit*. But over time, these new habits will begin to feel normal and expected.



Creating New Habits for Weight Loss

Sometimes it's not the habits you have developed, but the ones you haven't. If you're not used to meal planning, creating a grocery list, or checking nutrition labels, you'll need to work to develop these habits in order to lose weight and maintain your weight after you've reached your goals.

While you are losing weight, there are habits like calorie counting that you'll need to develop. Once you've met your weight loss goals, you can rely on your new eating habits to help you stay on track, without having to track every meal.



During the next week, think about what eating habits you have and don't have. Do you meal plan? Check nutrition labels? Are you keeping a food journal? Write down old habits you can change and new habits you need to develop.