

Do you think it is nearly impossible for people to lose weight and keep it off? This assessment will help you learn how people are successful at weight loss and at maintaining the new lower and healthier weights. After you've answered the following questions turn the page over and read about data from people who have lost at least 20 pounds and kept it off for at least three years.

**Instructions:** For each question, circle the answer that best describes your thoughts about weight loss.

1. If a person has been overweight since childhood, it's next to impossible to lose weight and keep it off. True    False
  
2. If a person dieted and failed many times before, there's little hope of ever conquering the weight problem. True    False
  
3. If a person does succeed at losing weight and keeping it off, he or she will have to eat like a bird for the rest of his or her life. True    False
  
4. In order to lose weight and keep it off, people have to exercise hard almost everyday. True    False
  
5. People can't lose weight and keep it off on their own. True    False
  
6. If a person hits a plateau (i.e., stops losing weight), there's little hope of losing more weight. True    False
  
7. If a person starts to regain weight, he or she is very likely to gain it all back. True    False
  
8. If a person doesn't stay at her or his weight goal, that person has failed. True    False

(Cont. on back)



## What it Takes to Take Weight Off and Keep it Off \*

1. **False.** About 45% of people who lost at least 20 pounds and kept it off for at least 3 years said they were heavy as children. Another 25% gained their extra weight when they were in their teens.
2. **False.** Most people did not lose the weight their first try. About 60% tried at least 5 times before they successfully took it off and kept it off. Another 20% tried 3 or 4 times before they finally lost weight and maintained the new lower healthy weight. The trick is to look at previous weight-loss attempts as a wealth of information, like a library, of what worked and didn't-not as failures.
3. **False.** Most people who lost weight and kept it off eat several meals per day, often with snacks in between. They don't deny themselves ANY food-Including pie, cake, chocolate candy, and chips. They eat what they want in moderation, controlled amounts. They learned new ways of eating and to control the desires for food they don't want to give up.
4. **False.** Depending on the study, 70% and up to 90% of successful weight controllers exercise 3 or more times per week. 75% listed exercise in the top 3 methods of keeping weight off. The intensities at which they exercise are ones that they feel are safe, comfortable and enjoyable to them-such as brisk walking. They also exercise for at least 30 minutes per exercise session. Increased physical activity is probably the single best predictor of who will keep off weight. Over half the people you see exercising 3 or more times per week are the ones doing it to keep the weight off.
5. **False.** About half who lost weight and kept it off did it on their own. The other half used formal programs and self-help groups. Remember, though, that most had made many attempts, often in structured programs, and probably learned many valuable skills to maintain the weight loss.
6. **False.** Many lost weight in stages—months and years, not weeks. Over 25% of those who lost more than 20 pounds and kept it off took more than a year.
7. **False.** Weight controllers have learned to catch themselves when they start to regain weight. 98% keep their weight within 10 pounds. Most have a specific plan of action if weight goes up. Many decrease snacking, find healthful substitutes and try to find the cause of the weight gain.
8. **False.** About one-third of the weight maintainers settled for weights that are 5% to 10% higher than originally set as a goal. They are truly happier and healthier, and happy with their appearance. Many have maintained their weight through quitting smoking, having babies, marital problems, losing jobs, dealing with alcohol and other drug problems and other stressful situations.

\* An excellent reference is [Thin for Life: 10 Keys to Success from People Who Have Lost Weight & Kept It Off](#) by Anne Fletcher, MS RD.