

you may be surprised to discover that you have reached the end of the DECO Healthy Living Program Modification Program and are now ready to enter maintenance, STAR (Steps To Avoid Regain). If that prospect seems overwhelming, take heart, here is what you have learned:

- You have developed the technical skills needed for effective weight management
- You have developed a positive self image and increased self esteem
- You have learned ways of dealing with both the internal and external forces around you
- You have learned to recognize stress and discovered ways to minimize its effect upon your life

### The Present

Take this opportunity to feel comfortable and confident. Also take time to remember that while the weight loss phase is over, the program is far from finished. Permanent weight control depends on lifestyle changes which may take many months to accomplish. While eating habits and behaviors have been modified during the program, it is only the beginning.

We have outlined some of the tools and crutches that you will need to develop healthy attitudes towards eating, but you are the one who has to take responsibility for implementing them in your life. It takes time, practice and help of some crutches before the positive attitudes will function on their own.

At first, these may seem awkward and silly and obvious, like any crutches, but you may need to use them until your positive attitudes are healthy and self sustaining. Eventually, you will get to know you Achilles Heel (those cues, beliefs/attitudes, and thoughts/feelings that are particularly destructive) well enough so you can counter its effect before it takes control of the situation.

### The Future

you have your game plan, now you must execute it. You must continue in maintenance to refine these skills under the supportive care of your DECO Healthy Living Program Team. By continually practicing these skills under their watchful eye, you will improve your chances for long term weight control. In time, you will be able to make your own choices and deal with food cues and behavioral situations wherever you may find them.