

While assessing your habits and learning to control them is a difficult task, the rewards of accepting personal responsibility are well worth the effort. Concentrate on developing a positive attitude and keep the value of food in perspective.

Have Your Ever Said

"I have to entertain in my job" or "I'm big boned" or "I just don't have time to exercise." Blaming outside forces only delays positive solutions to your weight problem by shifting the focus of the blame to those uncontrollable factors around you.

"I don't have any will power." Well, if you don't have control, who does, It is highly unlikely that your refrigerator calls you when you are depressed to comfort you with food. Willpower is not an inborn trait, it's a skill that needs development and practice. You have the ability to control your responses to foods; you've just convinced yourself you don't.

"My diets never work." what you are really saying is that your are unworthy of another try. The fact that you have lost and regained hundreds of pounds doesn't mean that you are doomed to fail this time. The DECO Healthy Living Program has no place for negativism – we focus only on success and positive experiences.

"My counselor will make me lose weight", or "I need a diet to make me thin" or "This supplement is all I really need to drop these extra pounds." These rationalizations conveniently remove the responsibility for weight loss from the dieter. As you accept personal responsibility for all of your life, you will recognize these crutches for what they are impediments to success. Focus on what you can do to control your behavior.

Tools for Developing a Sense of Personal Responsibility

Stop. As soon as you feel the urge to eat something decadent, count to twenty. This momentary pause allows you time to exercise your newly learned will power.

Think. Give your defenses a chance to kick in. You've learned strategies for handling food cues – now's the time to use them. Try to match a coping strategy with your current situation.

Listen. To yourself, not the food. Talk yourself out of it. Even if you've give in to the cue and are on the way to burger heaven, pull the car off the road and tell yourself that this is your diet; you are in control. Determine whether the seduction of this one hamburger is worth the consequences.

Establish Situation Controls. Establishing situational controls means removing the temptation before it becomes too strong to resist. The best situational control is not having the temptress in the house. Once you have discovered your weakness, respect your inability to resist. Don't be a martyr. Be goo to yourself!

Identify the Diet Saboteur

“Have some more lasagna....”, “Split a piece of pie with me....” Have you ever wondered why the people around you become your worst enemies the moment you decide to diet? Why is it that people feel so uncomfortable? Do they wonder if the new you will like the old friend? Don’t be afraid to assert your right to be thin. Help those around you understand how their actions influence you and give them suggestions for being more supportive.

Strategies to Shift Your Focus Away From Food

- **State** the problem areas and situations with which you need help or support.
- **Explain** how you feel about the problem and why you need help with its resolution
- **Detail** the action you wish your supporter to take
- **Results** describe to them the results that you expect

Reduce Food’s Influence in Your Life

Unfortunately, many relationships are based on power and control. When efforts at weight reduction threaten to tip the balance of power in a relationship, sabotage often results. The diet saboteurs are comfortable with your relationship as is and are reluctant to see it change. You need to recognize the wolves in sheep’s clothing and assert your right to be thin.

Overpowering the Diet Saboteur	
When they:	You should:
Bring you gifts of food	Assert your right to be free of temptation. Your needs come first.
Urge you to eat	Guilt is powerful. Your refusal to eat is NOT the problem here.
Eat your favorites in front of you	Refuse to be manipulated by this friend. GET AWAY.
Leave your favorite food out	Tell them you will not tolerate their attempt to sabotage your diet AND health.

Take Charge of Your Life

Being true to yourself means not having to settle for anything. Settling is comfortable. When you are comfortable, you are less likely to experience rejection. On the other hand, settling inevitable results in a lack of fulfillment.

Weight loss signals control. Weight loss also signals a readiness to come to terms with your personal fears and insecurities. Overcoming obesity is a major feat. As with recovery from other addictive behaviors such as gambling and alcoholism, weight loss is an active process— a long multifaceted process of change. It will not occur overnight.

The DECO Healthy Living Program meal plans emphasize low calorie, low fat, high fiber and reduced sugar foods. By choosing foods that are naturally low in fat or prepared without the addition of fat/sugar, you can take the important first steps in achieving a healthy diet. Fortunately, there are a wide variety of healthy alternatives to foods that have been traditionally “off-limits” to dieters.

To identify these healthy alternatives, it is very important to read the package label. Usually, the nutrition claims on the front of the package catch your eye first. In the past, these claims and terms were often misleading. For example, “lite” taco shells might have been light and crispy in texture, but not light in calories and fat. With the labeling law which came into effect in 1993, foods must meet strict requirements before they can carry such nutrient content claims. Here are some common claims and their definitions, as set by the FDA.

Label Claim	Definition (per serving)	Label Claim	Definition (per serving)
Calorie Free	Less than 5 calories	Fat Free	Less than ½ gram of fat
Low Calorie	40 calories or less	Low Fat	3 grams of fat or less
Light or lite	1/3 fewer calories or 50% less fat than regular	High Fiber	5 grams or more of fiber

The labeling regulations also cover health claims. Experts agree that diet is one of many factors that may reduce your risk for a number of diseases. These are the typical descriptors that can be found on many of the food packages and their associated implications:

A Diet	Can Reduce Your Risk Of
High in Calcium	Osteoporosis
High in fiber containing grains, fruits and vegetables	Cancer and heart disease
Low in fat or high in fruits and vegetables	Cancer
Low in saturated fat and cholesterol	Heart Disease
Low in sodium	High Blood Pressure
High in oat bran or oatmeal	Heart Disease
High in folic acid (women of childbearing age)	Birth Defects

Activity

Remember, nutrition labels provide important information about the many foods you consume throughout the day. The labels are standardized to how a food fits into a 2,000 calorie diet. Although the typical amount of calories on the DECO Healthy Living Program is 1,000-1,200, you can still use the labels to identify if a food item is a good source of a particular nutrient by focusing on the grams (g) or milligrams (mg) of a given nutrient per serving.

For exam, to see if you are meeting the daily requirements for dietary fiber (25 grams per day), you would tally up the grams for fiber per serving for all the foods you consumed in one day. If the total grams for your daily fiber intake is close to or equal to 25 grams – Congratulations! If it’s low, you need to increase your consumption of high fiber foods. What about foods that aren’t packaged?

Warming Up

Every workout should begin with a warm-up. Muscles that are warmed up and stretched, work better and are less likely to be pulled or strained. A warm up should last 5-10 minutes. By moving your arms and legs in a slow, rhythmic fashion, your body temperature will rise and your heart and blood pressure will increase too.

Some examples of warm up activities include arm circles, arm swings, and marching in place. Select one of these activities and do it to warm up the next time you exercise.

Remember, warm up activities are good for alleviating stress, too. When you are sitting at your desk and feel tension rising, stand up and march in place or do arm swings or circles. Chances are, after 5-10 minutes, you will experience some relief.

Cooling Down

Cooling down is just as important as warming up. When you exercise, your heart beats faster to keep muscles supplied with blood, and the oxygen and fuel that it carries. If exercise is stopped suddenly, a sharp decrease in blood pressure can occur because blood begins to pool in your arms and legs. A gradual cool-down allows the body to adjust better. To cool down, decrease the intensity of your exercise for 5-10 minutes. Also, do some stretching exercises to build your flexibility and help relieve soreness and loosen tight muscles.

Here are the basic steps to follow for proper stretching:

- Slowly stretch into position until you feel a tightness in the muscle
- Hold that position for 10-15 seconds until you feel some tension in the muscle, but not until you feel a burning sensation or pain.
- Release the stretch and wait 3-5 seconds. Then, repeat the stretch again for a total of 3 to 5 times, or more if the muscle feels tight.
- Stretching exercises can also be used as light activities for days when you don't plan to walk.

Activity

Increase your walking program to a 10 minute walk, 4 times per week. If you are already at this level, try a 15 minute walk, 4 times per week. Remember, don't push it! Before you walk, warm up using one of the activities listed above. After you are finished walking, try one of the stretching exercises below. On the days you don't plan to walk, do at least two of the stretching exercises listed below.

<p>Full Tilt Stretch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand tall, arms outstretched above head • Inhale deeply and reach as far as you can • Hold for a count of 3. repeat 3 times 	<p>Lower Back Release</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lie on your back • Gently stretch • Exhale and release. Repeat 3 times
<p>Handling Hamstrings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lie on your back, left knee bent and left foot flat on floor • Extend right leg, toes pointed • Raise leg and grasp right knee with hands • Gently stretch hamstring for count of 3 • Now flex ankle and hold again • Switch legs. Repeat 3 times 	<p>Full Body Stretch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand tall, arms outstretched above head • Reach skyward with both arms, pretend you are picking apples that are just out of reach • "pick" an apple with your right hand, then left • "pick" 20 apples in a row • Lower both arms and shake. Repeat 3 times