



Live Well, Work Well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home and life—brought to you by the insurance professionals at Veritas Risk Services

The worst thing you can do when you hit a rough patch is to give up out of frustration. Be patient with yourself.

BUSTING THROUGH A WEIGHT LOSS PLATEAU

Picture this scenario: You take up a new exercise routine and you immediately start to drop the pounds. Then, two months into your new routine, your scale stops moving, even though you're still putting in the time and effort to work out. What's going on?

When you first start a new exercise routine, your body tends to shed excess water weight, so it appears as though you are really trimming the fat easily and quickly. But these “easy” pounds are the only ones to go fast. After the water-weight loss, your body builds muscle while also burning fat. So, although you may not see a change in your weight according to your scale, your workouts are still facilitating many beneficial changes for your body.

Knock That Plateau

When the calories you burn are equal to the calories you eat, you reach a plateau.

To lose more weight, you need to either increase your physical activity or decrease the calories you eat. Using the same approach that initially worked may maintain your weight loss, but it won't lead to additional slimming.

Want to feel like you're winning the weight game again? Here's how:

- Opt for taking your body measurements instead of weekly weigh-ins. As you build muscle, the scale may not move, but you will be losing inches as you tone up. By recording your measurements, you can gauge your success in the gym. Be mindful to only measure yourself once per week, as your body can slightly fluctuate every day.
- Instead of giving yourself a weight goal, strive to fit into a certain size.

- Keep a food journal to determine exactly what you are putting into your body. As you exercise more, you may be feeling hungrier and consequently eating more without realizing it. Be sure to also record the portions of what you eat, keeping in mind that 1,200 calories a day is the minimum amount recommended for the average person.
- Watch out for little sweet “rewards” or treats. Avoid indulging in too many temptations as a way to congratulate yourself for a job well done.
- Increase your exercise regimen. As you drop the weight, you burn fewer calories in the same amount of time. In order to shrink your waistline, you will need to increase the amount of time you spend working out.
- Add more activity into your day by taking the stairs instead of the elevator at work, parking further away from stores when running errands, or dancing to music while you clean house.
- Substitute fruits and vegetables into your diet in place of foods that are high in fat and do not provide essential nutrients.
- Mix up a regular workout routine by adding intervals into your 30-minute run, increasing speed during your bicycle ride or adding an exercise class to your weekly workout schedule.
- Add strength training to your workouts, which will boost your metabolism, help your body burn more calories and build muscle.
- Be realistic. If you can't further decrease the calories you eat or increase your physical activity, you may have hit your “minimum” weight. It is important to still appreciate the goals you've made and work to retain your level of fitness. If you think you're capable of further weight loss, consult your physician about other strategies.

Whatever you do, don't let a weight loss plateau cause you to give up exercise and nutrition altogether. Because you've already improved your diet and increased your physical activity, you've already improved your health.

