



Your best gut-busting bud.

losing motivation

13 ways to stay
on the straight and narrow

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uy fish, veggies, and gym membership in attempt to make good on New Year's resolution to lose 12 pounds. Make healthy meals and work out five times a week for first 3 weeks. Then two times a week for a month. Then, oh, never. Sound familiar? Maintaining your diet and exercise enthusiasm can be the trickiest part of the weight-loss equation. But before you give in to the Twinkies demon perched on your shoulder, check out these proven motivation boosters.

1 | Have lots of sex.

First off, it's pretty damn fun. But it can also keep you on the slim track. Having an orgasm releases the same endorphins in your brain that eating chocolate does—without the calories. And research shows that the more weight you lose, the better your sex life gets: A Duke University study found that even a 10 percent reduction in weight (that's 15 pounds if you weigh 150) resulted in major improvements in all areas of the participants' sex lives, including arousal, feelings of attractiveness, and enjoyment of sexual activity (read: oodles of Os).

2 | Make a promise.

It's really hard to blow off a commitment you've made to lots of people. For example, "joining an athletic event to raise money means if you default on your training, you're not just letting yourself down but also the charity and everyone who sponsored you," says New York City-based Dan Hamner, M.D., author of *Peak Energy*. Go to stepbystepfundraising.com and click on Athletic Events to find one near you. Choose something strenuous enough that you'll need to train seriously in advance. (Triathlon, anyone?) Some groups, including Team in Training for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Foundation (teamintraining.org), even provide free coaching for participants nationwide.

3 | Enlist Fido.

Consider adopting a fuzzy friend if you don't have one already. Studies show that owning a dog can help you drop pounds. Why? Come rain, sleet, or snow, you've got to get your butt outside with pooch a few times a day (unless you really *want* urine-soaked carpets). What's more, most pet owners say they don't want to let down their exercise-starved doggy at walk

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time. It's another version of rule number 2.

4 | Rock out. A recent study by the North American Association for the Study of Obesity found that women are more likely to stick to an exercise program if they listen to music while working out. So thank God for jogtunes.com. The site lets you select your workout pace, then download playlists of songs with bpm's (beats per minute) that match your heart rate. For example, if yours gets up to about 150 bpm when you exercise (the mid to upper target range for a healthy 30-year-old woman), songs like the Killers' "Mr. Brightside" are perfect.

5 | Get out your sexiest skinny outfit. You know that yogurt commercial where a woman takes a teeny-weeny yellow polka-dot bikini and

hangs it on her wall to help motivate her to lose weight? She's one smart cookie. "I tell clients to take out an outfit they love and haven't been able to wear for a long time," says Christopher Warden, C.S.C.S., a personal trainer in New York City. "Just pulling it out of the closet serves as a visual reminder of the goal they're trying to accomplish."

6 | Lift the weight you've lost. A great way to keep yourself from sliding into what-the-hell eating mode when your weight loss plateaus: Use dumbbells that correspond to the number of pounds you've already dropped. You can't possibly forget how far you've come

when you're straining to complete three sets of triceps kickbacks with a 10-pound weight. Feel how much you're struggling to lift? That used to be on your butt!

7 | Get gabbing. Reams of studies prove that support from other people can keep you motivated to lose weight. And a new study

which offers weekly 15-minute phone sessions starting at \$1 per minute.

8 | Call on your inner cheapskate. You don't blow off the dentist, even though having your teeth drilled is about the most un-fun thing you can imagine. Why? Because you'll get charged whether

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from the University of Kansas shows that dieters who get counseling over the phone lose just as much as those who get it face to face. So if you can't make that 5 P.M. Weight Watchers meeting, check out Bally's Built to Fit weight-loss and nutrition program at ballynutrition.com,

you show or not. Consider buying a package of personal training sessions and scheduling all your appointments now. Ditto with yoga or dance classes: Buy a bunch in advance and sign up at the same time. Who would throw away workouts that are already paid for?

9 | Become a class regular. Join a group exercise class and make friends with your fellow regulars. Seeing your pals will inspire you to attend even when you feel like playing hooky. The guilt factor—always highly motivating—can help here too. After all, in a place where everybody knows your name, they'll also know when you've missed a workout.

10 | Get rubbed. A new study from Ohio State University shows that women who accept their bodies are more likely to have better eating habits. And decadent as it may sound, getting a massage can help with that. "Allowing themselves to be touched by another person—even when they aren't at their ideal weight—can help women become more comfortable with their bodies," says Mitch Klein, a licensed massage therapist in New York City.

11 | Face your reflection. When you feel fat you probably shun mirrors. Turns out you should do the opposite. A study in the *International Journal of Eating Disorders* found that mirror-exposure therapy—staring at your bod in the mirror and stifling the usual criticisms of your thighs—can improve body image, which, as we said in rule 10, can help keep you committed to healthy eating. Try it: Speak to your reflection without using any negatively charged words. For example, instead of "I have a huge butt," say, "My waist looks smaller thanks to my curves."

12 | Chart your progress. Weight loss is serious business. Treat it that way. Weigh yourself every morning—a study in the *Annals of Behavior Medicine* shows that people who do daily weigh-ins are more successful losers—and write the

number down. (We like the Tanita HD-351 digital scale, which displays your current weight plus the number from your previous weigh-in; \$64, amazon.com.) If you're even vaguely computer savvy, it's a snap to create a chart with a fever line that shows the pounds dropping away over time. When you get discouraged—say, you haven't lost a pound in a week—seeing your long-term progress will boost your motivation.

13 | Score some free stuff. There's no motivation like saving money. And since insurance providers want you to stay healthy so you don't develop expensive diseases like diabetes, some offer perks that make getting fit easier. Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield, for example, gives its members discounts to certain gyms and free consultations with a dietitian. Check with your provider. **WH**

Reader Poll

The top five things that motivate you to lose weight, according to a poll of 700 WH readers

- 1 | Improving your health
- 2 | Fitting into clothes better
- 3 | Seeing photos of yourself when you're heavy
- 4 | Seeing photos of yourself when you're slim
- 5 | The upcoming bikini season