

How to Gain Energy, Lose Weight and Push Past Plateaus

By Lisa Schilling RN

Do you feel frustrated, fat and fatigued? You are not alone! This is a common problem, often stemming from the obvious, eating too much and moving too little. However there are some people who put forth big efforts for seemingly small gains.

For these people, frustration is a huge problem. Their body has reached a set-point, a weight it struggles to remain at, regardless of the pressures on it to change. This is what I call a “life-style comfortable” weight. Your body can maintain this weight in a lifestyle that is easy for you to keep up with.

The body is designed to keep you healthy and protect you from starvation. The closer you get to your goal weight the more your body is going to cling to what is already there. This is called the “push-pull phenomenon:” When you attempt to cut calories, your body fights to release the fat while, at the same time, your fat cells are constantly striving to fill themselves back up with *more* fat.

Your body perceives dieting as gradual starvation. Traditional dieting involves deliberately withholding the body’s usual supply of nutrients and energy sources. The body will attempt to fight off this depletion of energy stores by *slowing down your metabolism*. The results of which, can be a weight loss slow down or plateau.

You keep doing the same things you did before, but stop getting results. For some, this can be enough to make them stop trying all together. I have heard people say, “What’s the point? I can’t lose any more weight; no matter how hard I try, so why keep killing myself?” This is a tough place to be.

Realize that it is time to change up your game plan. This is due to the adaptation principal. Your body is smart and can quickly become accustomed to consistent patterns. It is best to keep your metabolism constantly guessing, which prevents your body from quickly *adapting* to a certain routine of exercise or number of calories it expects to receive.

By not allowing the body to adapt to a regular routine, you force the body to work at a more beneficial level. Changing exercise

routines, calorie levels and types of foods, can help to accomplish this.

One way to change things up is to develop a whole-istic eating plan. What does that mean for you? It means making a regular commitment to eating less processed foods and in addition, adding more antioxidant-rich whole foods. These foods are known to turn off fat storage hormones and can reduce cravings and appetite by 20 percent or more. This could be just what you need to punch your metabolism up a notch.

Some foods to consider would be flaxseed, whole wheat, nuts, dairy, yogurt, fresh or frozen fruit—especially berries, prunes, fish of all kinds, fresh or frozen vegetables, beans and lentils, oatmeal-not cut, dark chocolate, lean cuts of meat, and eggs. Also consider adding spices such as cheyenne pepper, cinnamon and garlic. This in addition to plenty of water and occasional green tea will keep your metabolism revved up.

Regularly eating processed foods will slow your metabolism and slow your weight loss progress. Your body does not recognize or metabolize processed foods in the same way that it does natural or fresh foods.

Preservatives, additives and shelf stabilizers can halt your progress. They have been known to stimulate the production of dopamine in the brain. This fuels the urge to eat and makes it more difficult to stop. Studies have shown that heavy consumption of heavily processed foods will actually increase abdominal fat deposits by 30 percent, even for those cutting calories.

If you are at a plateau, commit to a seven day whole food eating plan as a jump start. From there, make fresh, natural or whole food choices on regular days and begin to add some processed foods when offered them at special meals or when eating out, but not on a frequent basis.

Start planning ahead and making the bulk of your diet come from whole, natural and unprocessed foods. That’s it! Sounds easy, but the problem is that it is just as easy, if not easier, not to do it. However, by purposefully altering your eating style in this way, you will begin to feel better, have more energy and it will allow you to bust out of the plateau you are in. The choice is yours, plan, take your time and choose REAL foods consistently.