

Winning at Losing Weight — Is There Really a Chance for Me?

Perhaps your doctor has told you to lose weight, or maybe you just know you should lose weight. However, you have tried repeatedly with little or no success. Should you just give up?

According to researchers at the University of Pittsburgh and the University of Colorado, losing weight is not easy, but almost everyone can be successful — even people who have lost and gained weight many times in the past as well as those who have never lost weight before. These researchers surveyed 629 women who had lost 30 pounds or more and kept it off for an average of 5½ years.

Ninety-three percent of these successful losers, average 44 years old, had tried to lose weight unsuccessfully before. Their average weight went from 210 to 145 pounds when they finally experienced success.

These women credited their success to cutting calories and/or fat grams, decreasing portion sizes, eliminating certain foods, and increasing exercise — usually walking and aerobics. They maintained their weight loss by continuing these practices even after reaching their goal weight. They also reported not skipping meals; most reported eating five meals daily. They limited eating out to no more than three meals each week; only one of those meals was at a fast food restaurant. They also used up about 2,700 calories a week in physical activity beyond the calories required for daily activities like gardening or housekeeping.

Getting started is not easy. Sixty percent of the women in this study said they participated in some type of formal program including the type being offered through Walk Across Texas. If you would like some help towards becoming a successful loser, you may participate in Walk Across Texas, a team walking program starting on _____. Not only will you have a group to walk with, but you may choose to participate in the weight loss program being offered at the same time. Before beginning either a walking or weight loss program, always check with your health care provider. Call your county Extension agent at _____ to sign up.