

Sample Letter to *Walk Across Texas* Participants to Recruit for Weight Loss Letter Series and/or Classes

Thank you for your interest in *Walk Across Texas*. People participating in *Walk Across Texas* in the past have asked for help losing weight while they increase their activity with walking. To meet the request for help with weight loss, we have developed a weight loss program. We looked at all the latest research to determine what works best for people wanting to lose weight. All these studies showed the best results occur when people:

- Increase their activity level,
- Reduce their total number of calories, and
- Adopt behaviors that promote healthy eating.

Enclosed is a way to determine if you might need to lose weight. You can use the Body Mass Index, Waist-to Hip Ratio, or Waist Measurement to determine if you need to lose weight — all are supported by much research. If any of these measurements classify you as overweight or obese, you are at greater risk for health problems.

If you want to learn something each week to help you lose weight, let your captain know. You may choose either a self-study series mailed to you each week or classes at _____ during *Walk Across Texas*.

The self-study series and classes will include the following topics:

- Determining your Weight and Calorie range for weight loss
- Using the Food Guide Pyramid
- Reading Food Labels
- Behavior Changes
- Reducing Fat and Eating Out
- Diet Programs
- Fad Diets
- Maintenance

If you would like to learn how to lose weight safely or if you have questions, please call _____ at your County Extension office. We recommend checking with your health care professional before participating in *Walk Across Texas* and/or the weight loss program.

Sincerely,



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Weight Management Series — Health Break 1

Are You at Risk?

Goal:

To determine “readiness” for beginning a weight management program

Objectives:

Participants will:

- Figure their body mass index (BMI), their waist-to-hip ratio, and their waist measurements.
- Decide if they need to lose weight.
- Determine if they are at risk for overweight related illnesses.
- Confirm their “readiness” to achieve and maintain a healthy weight.

Key Teaching Points:

- BMI, waist-to-hip ratio, and waist measurement are more accurate indicators for overweight and health risks than weighing on scales.
- Where your body stores fat has a direct relationship for risk of disease.
- Waist measurement is a primary factor in determining the risk of diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke, osteoarthritis, and heart disease.
- Readiness to change is one of the most important factors in losing and maintaining weight.

Activities:

- Have participants determine their BMI, waist-to-hip ratio, and waist measurement. Materials: Tape measure, Calculator, and *How to Determine BMI* and *Recommended Standards* charts.
- Help participants complete the “Readiness Awareness Check List” so they can decide if they want to make the commitment to the weight management program.

Evaluation

- Yes No 1. Reaching and staying at a healthy weight is easy.
- Yes No 2. Body mass index estimates your body fat and health risk.
- Yes No 3. People who store fat in the abdominal area are at higher risk for some diseases.
- Yes No 4. Waist-to-hip ratio is not a good way to determine health risk.
- Yes No 5. “Readiness” is a major key to successful weight management.

Answers: 1. No; 2. Yes; 3. Yes; 4. No; 5. Yes

Are You at Risk?

The first step to having and maintaining a healthy weight is to decide if you are ready to make the changes in your life to meet your weight goal. Many people who have weight problems believe they are ready to “take pounds off” without really knowing why they should lose weight. Often they do not understand the hard work that goes into losing weight. For many, maintaining a healthy weight is even harder work. People who have lost weight and maintained the loss for 5 years or more knew why they wanted to lose weight, were prepared for the hard work, and were ready to deal with possible relapses.

Being overweight is associated with diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke, osteoarthritis, and heart disease. Illnesses associated with being underweight include anorexia nervosa (an excessive desire for being thin to the point of death) and bulimia (eating large amounts of food and then vomiting the food up to prevent weight gain). The focus of this program is weight loss and maintaining a healthy weight.

The goal of this series of weight loss lessons is to help you learn why you should want a healthy weight, to provide a step-by-step approach to losing weight with the hope of making it easier for you to achieve your weight loss/maintenance goal, and to show you how to deal with possible relapses.

Note: You should check with your health care provider before starting any weight loss program.

Do You Need to Lose Weight?

How overweight you are is usually determined by excess body fat. Let us look at three different ways to determine if you have excess body fat.

Body Mass Index

The body mass index (BMI) uses your height and weight to determine if you are underweight, normal weight, overweight, or obese (very overweight). BMI may be used for adults between 19 and 70 years old. Do not use BMI if you are a pregnant or breast feeding woman, a competitive athlete, a body builder, a child, or an elderly person who is frail and inactive.

To find out your BMI:

- Measure your height in inches and round off to the nearest inch.
- Weigh yourself and round off your weight to the nearest pound.
- Find your BMI by using the chart.
- Decide on your health risk based on your BMI.

For example: You are 5 feet 6½ inches tall and weigh 175 pounds. You would look on the chart and find 5' 7" (remember to round to the nearest inch) on the left side of the chart and 175 at the top of the chart. Your BMI is 27. Determine your BMI and then look below to determine if you are underweight, overweight, normal weight, or obese.)



BMI

Underweight:	Less than 18.5
Normal Weight:	18.5 – 24.9
Overweight:	25.0 – 29.9
Obesity:	30.0 – 39.9
Extreme Obesity:	Less than or equal to 40

Waist-to-Hip Ratio

The way people store fat may indicate if they are at risk for disease. Some people tend to store fat in the abdominal (stomach) area, and others tend to store fat in the hips and thighs. People who tend to store fat in the abdominal area are at higher risk for diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke, osteoarthritis, and heart disease. The more fat in the abdominal area, the higher your risk for these diseases.

To determine your waist-to-hip ratio:

- Measure your waist in inches.
- Measure your hips in inches.
- Divide the waist measurement by the hip measurement.

For example: Your waist is 40 inches and your hips are 42 inches. $40 \div 42 = 0.95$. Look at the *Recommended Standards* chart to determine your disease risk. If you are a man, your disease risk is very low. If you are a woman, your disease risk is high.

Recommended Standards

Waist-to-Hip Ratio		
Men	Women	Disease Risk
Less than or equal to 0.95	Less or equal to 0.80	Very Low
0.96 – 0.99	0.81 – 0.84	Low
More than or equal to 1.00	More than or equal to 0.85	High

Waist Measurement Only

Your health risk of diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke, osteoarthritis, and heart disease may be increased:

- If you are a man with a waist measurement of 40 inches or greater.
- If you are a woman with a waist measurement of 35 inches or greater.

Are You Ready?

BMI, waist-to-hip ratio, or waist measurement should only help you determine if you are at risk for disease. Now you must decide if you are ready to lose weight.

Readiness Awareness Check List

Agree *Disagree*

- | | | |
|-------|-------|--|
| _____ | _____ | 1. My BMI is _____. I do not believe that this BMI is a serious threat to my health. |
| _____ | _____ | 2. I believe my weight is beyond my control. Nothing I can do will make any difference. |
| _____ | _____ | 3. I am happy just the way I am. I do not want to lose weight. |
| _____ | _____ | 4. I would like to lose weight, but I can't do it right now. (I'm too tired, busy, and stressed out; there's too much going on in my life, etc.) |
| _____ | _____ | 5. I want to lose weight and am willing to do whatever I must do to make it happen. |

If you agree with statements 1, 2, or 3, you are probably not ready to lose weight right now. Consider preventing further weight gain.

If you agree with statement 4, you are probably interested in losing weight, but may not be ready or able right now to do what you must do to be successful. Consider preventing further weight gain.

If you agree with statement 5, you are likely to be both interested and ready to lose weight.

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Educational programs of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.

How To Determine BMI

HEIGHT (FEET)	100	105	110	115	120	125	130	135	140	145	150	155	160	165	170	175	180	185	190	195	200	205	210	215	220	225	230	235	240	245	250
5'0"	20	21	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49
5'1"	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	43	44	45	46	47
5'2"	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46
5'3"	18	19	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	43	44
5'4"	17	18	19	20	21	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	39	40	41	42	43
5'5"	17	17	18	19	20	21	22	22	23	24	25	26	27	27	28	29	30	31	32	32	33	34	35	36	37	37	38	39	40	41	42
5'6"	16	17	18	19	19	20	21	22	23	23	24	25	26	27	27	28	29	30	31	31	32	33	34	35	36	36	37	38	39	40	40
5'7"	16	16	17	18	19	20	20	21	22	23	23	24	25	26	27	27	28	29	30	31	31	32	33	34	34	35	36	37	38	38	39
5'8"	15	16	17	17	18	19	20	21	21	22	23	24	24	25	26	27	27	28	29	30	31	31	32	33	33	34	35	36	36	37	38
5'9"	15	16	16	17	18	18	19	20	21	21	22	23	24	24	25	26	27	27	28	29	30	30	31	32	32	33	34	35	35	36	37
5'10"	14	15	16	17	17	18	19	19	20	21	22	22	23	24	24	25	26	27	27	28	29	29	30	31	32	32	33	34	34	35	36
5'11"	14	15	15	16	17	17	18	19	20	20	21	22	22	23	24	24	25	26	26	27	28	29	29	30	31	31	32	33	33	34	35
6'0"	14	14	15	16	16	17	18	18	19	20	20	21	22	22	23	24	24	25	26	26	27	28	28	29	30	31	31	32	33	33	34
6'1"	13	14	15	15	16	16	17	18	18	19	20	20	21	22	22	23	24	24	25	26	26	27	28	28	29	30	30	31	32	32	33
6'2"	13	13	14	15	15	16	17	17	18	19	19	20	21	21	22	22	23	24	24	25	26	26	27	28	28	29	30	30	31	31	32
6'3"	12	13	14	14	15	16	16	17	17	18	19	19	20	21	21	22	22	23	24	24	25	26	26	27	27	28	29	29	30	31	31
6'4"	12	13	13	14	15	15	16	16	17	18	18	19	19	20	21	21	22	23	23	24	24	25	26	26	27	27	28	29	29	30	30

Source: Shape Up America! Here is a shortcut method for calculating BMI (if you are too short or too tall for the table) Example: for a person who is 5 feet 5 inches tall weighing 149 lbs
 6707 Democracy Blvd Step 1) Multiplying weight (in pounds) by 703 Step 1) 149x703=104747
 Suite 306 Step 2) Multiplying height (in inches) by height (in inches) Step 2) 65x65=4225
 Bethesda MD 20817 Step 3) Divide the answer in step 1 by the answer in step 2 to get your BMI Step 3) 104747 divided by 4225=24.8 BMI=25 (rounded off)

Underweight
 Normal Weight
 Overweight
 Obese



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