

Heart&Stroke Healthy Weight Action Plan™

A condensed print version of our online program



MY Heart&Stroke
Healthy
WEIGHT
ACTION PLAN™



HEART &
STROKE
FOUNDATION

Heart&Stroke Healthy Weight Action Plan™

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Welcome to a new way to look at weight

The **Heart&Stroke Healthy Weight Action Plan™ (HW Plan)** provides a fresh take on achieving and maintaining a healthy weight. It is not a diet or exercise program. You don't have to starve yourself or join an expensive gym. Rather, the HW Plan is a 12-week program for acquiring the skills and habits that naturally lead to finding and maintaining your own healthy weight.

The HW Plan is the result of the Heart and Stroke Foundation's concern about the health impact of being overweight. Statistics Canada reports that 37% of Canadian adults are overweight and another 24% are classified as obese. Because of their weight, more than six out of every 10 Canadian adults are at increased risk of serious diseases, such as high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, kidney disease and some forms of cancer.

The Heart and Stroke Foundation wanted to offer a program that would have the greatest chance of helping Canadians avoid the pitfalls and dangers of fad diets and make realistic, sustainable, healthy lifestyle changes. To create that kind of program, the Foundation consulted experts in behaviour change, exercise physiology, nutrition and e-health. The HW Plan reflects what you would experience if you met weekly with a registered dietitian or weight loss consultant. It can empower you to take control and make small but sustainable positive changes in your everyday life. No more being "on" or "off" a diet – the HW Plan is about adopting healthy habits that you can sustain for life.

The web-based HW Plan uses online tracking tools and journals, has a library of articles and tips, and other options. If you want to enjoy the full HW Plan experience, visit the Heart and Stroke Foundation website at heartandstroke.ca/hwplan and register. But for people who can't easily access the web, or who prefer to work with printed paper, we've developed this booklet which is a condensed version of the web-based program.

So, let's get started.

The HW Plan is designed for adults 18 to 65 years of age who are overweight or mildly obese (a BMI between 25.0 and 34.9 kg/m²). If your BMI is 35.0 or greater, or you have serious health conditions such as diabetes or heart disease, are pregnant, breastfeeding or thinking about becoming pregnant, talk to your doctor before starting any weight-loss program or physical activity program. You may require individual medical supervision. The Heart and Stroke Foundation recommends that those who have a BMI lower than 25 use the HW Plan to help learn the behaviours that will keep your weight at a healthy level. Speak to your healthcare provider.

Why is a healthy weight important?

Everyone likes the idea of looking attractive, but the most important reason for achieving and maintaining a healthy weight is your health.

Some of the conditions and diseases associated with being overweight include: high blood cholesterol, type-2 diabetes, gallstones, heart disease, high blood pressure (hypertension), certain cancers, kidney disease, osteoarthritis, sexual dysfunction, sleep apnea and stroke.

If you are overweight, even a modest weight reduction of as little as 5 to 10% of body weight can reduce your high blood pressure and total blood cholesterol.

The following will help you determine if you are at a healthy weight currently and what an appropriate goal might be for improved health.

Are you at a healthy weight?

There are two main methods of assessing if you are at a healthy weight:

1. Calculating your Body Mass Index (BMI)
2. Measuring your Waist Circumference (WC)

Body Mass Index (BMI)

BMI is a ratio of weight-to-height (it is calculated by weight in kilograms divided by the square of your height in meters). We have provided an easy chart below for you to calculate your BMI. If you have any questions about measuring your BMI speak further with your healthcare provider.

BMI	Normal						High						Obese	
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	35	40
Height (cm)	Weight (kg)													
147	41	44	45	48	50	52	54	56	59	61	63	65	76	87
150	43	45	47	50	52	54	56	58	60	63	65	67	79	90
152	44	46	49	51	54	56	58	60	63	65	67	70	81	93
155	45	48	50	53	55	58	60	62	65	67	70	72	84	96
157	47	50	52	55	57	60	62	65	67	70	72	75	87	99
160	49	51	54	56	59	61	64	66	69	72	74	77	90	102
163	50	53	55	58	61	64	66	69	71	74	77	79	93	105
165	52	55	57	60	63	65	68	71	74	76	79	82	95	109
168	54	56	59	62	65	67	70	73	76	79	81	85	98	112
170	55	58	61	64	66	70	72	75	78	81	84	87	101	116
173	57	60	63	65	69	72	75	78	80	84	86	90	105	119
175	58	61	65	68	70	74	77	80	83	86	89	92	107	123
178	60	63	66	70	73	76	79	82	85	89	92	94	110	126
180	62	65	68	71	75	78	81	85	88	91	95	98	114	130
183	64	67	70	74	77	80	84	87	90	94	97	100	117	134
185	65	69	72	75	79	83	86	90	93	96	100	103	120	137
188	67	70	74	78	81	85	88	92	95	99	102	106	124	141
191	69	73	76	80	84	87	91	95	98	102	105	109	127	145
193	71	75	78	82	86	90	93	97	100	105	108	112	130	149

BMI	Normal						High						Obese	
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	35	40
Height (in)	Weight (lbs)													
58	91	96	100	105	110	115	119	124	129	134	138	143	167	191
59	94	99	104	109	114	119	124	128	133	138	143	148	173	198
60	97	102	107	112	118	123	128	133	138	143	148	153	179	204
61	100	106	111	116	122	127	132	137	143	148	153	158	185	211
62	104	109	115	120	126	131	136	142	147	153	158	164	191	218
63	107	113	118	124	130	135	141	146	152	158	163	169	197	225
64	110	116	122	128	134	140	145	151	157	163	169	174	204	232
65	114	120	126	132	138	144	150	156	162	168	174	180	210	240
66	118	124	130	136	142	148	155	161	167	173	179	186	216	247
67	121	127	134	140	146	153	159	166	172	178	185	191	223	255
68	125	131	138	144	151	158	164	171	177	184	190	197	230	262
69	128	135	142	149	155	162	169	176	182	189	196	203	236	270
70	132	139	146	153	160	167	174	181	188	195	202	207	243	278
71	136	143	150	157	165	172	179	186	192	200	208	215	250	286
72	140	148	154	162	169	177	184	191	199	206	213	221	258	294
73	144	151	159	166	174	182	189	197	204	212	219	227	265	302
74	148	155	163	171	179	186	194	202	210	218	225	233	272	311
75	152	160	168	176	184	192	200	208	216	224	232	240	279	319
76	156	164	172	180	189	197	205	213	221	230	238	246	287	328

What your number means:

- **Below 18.5:** You may be underweight and at risk for some health conditions, such as osteoporosis (thinning bones) or malnutrition.
- **Between 18.5 to 24.9:** You're in the range considered normal which has the lowest risk of health problems.
- **Between 25.0 and 29.9:** You're in the overweight category and your risk of diseases is beginning to increase.
- **30 or more:** You fall into the obese category and have the greatest risk of health problems. The greater your BMI, the greater your health risk.

Caution: The BMI is designed for adults and may not be accurate for children, youth under the age of 18, seniors aged 65 and over, or women who are pregnant or nursing. Health risks can vary and the BMI may not be an accurate indicator of health risks for people who are extremely muscular.

Waist circumference (WC)

Measuring your WC looks at where you carry your weight, which can be as important as how much weight you carry. A large waistline may be a greater risk to your heart health than extra weight on the hips and thighs. Your WC is not the same as your waist or pant size. Read the information below to learn how to measure your WC and what it means.

How to measure your waist circumference:

1. Clear your abdominal area of any clothing, belts or accessories. Stand upright facing a mirror with your feet shoulder-width apart and your stomach relaxed. Use a flexible paper or plastic tape measure that provides measurements in inches or centimeters. Wrap the measuring tape around your waist.
2. Use the borders of your hands and index fingers – not your fingertips – to find the uppermost edge of your hipbones by pressing upwards and inwards along your hipbones.

Tip: Many people mistake an easily felt part of the hipbone located toward the front of their body as the top of their hips. This part of the bone is in fact not the top of the hip bones, but by following this spot upward and back toward the sides of your body, you should be able to locate the true top of your hipbones.

3. Using the mirror, align the bottom edge of the measuring tape with the top of the hipbones on both sides of your body.

Tip: Once located, it may help to mark the top of your hipbones with a pen or felt-tip marker in order to aid you in correctly placing the tape.

4. Make sure the tape is parallel to the floor and is not twisted.
5. Relax and take two normal breaths. After the second breath out, tighten the tape around your waist. The tape should fit comfortably snug around the waist without depressing the skin.

Tip: Remember to keep your stomach relaxed at this point.

6. Still breathing normally, take the reading on the tape. Record this measurement. It is your WC.

My waist circumference is: _____

What your number means:

Waist circumference is a good predictor of your risk for heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol and type-2 diabetes. If your waistline measurement is greater than the cutoff according to your gender and ethnicity you are at increased risk for these conditions. Even if your waist circumference is approaching the cutoffs (8 cm/3 in. or less than the cutoff), your risk is starting to increase. It's important to do something about your risk now by achieving and maintaining a healthy weight.

Waist Circumference Chart by Gender and Ethnicity

Waist Circumference by Gender and Ethnicity*	Male	Female
European/Caucasian, Sub-Saharan Africans, Eastern Mediterranean, Middle Eastern	102 cm (40 in.)	88 cm (35 in.)
South Asian, Malaysian, Asian, Chinese, Japanese, Ethnic South and Central Americans	90 cm (35 in.)	80 cm (32 in.)

*Waist circumference measurement does not apply to pregnant or nursing women or people under the age of 18 or over the age of 65.

There's also an instructional video in the *Healthy Waists* section of the Heart and Stroke Foundation website (heartandstroke.ca/healthywaists) that shows you how to measure your waist properly. If you have any questions about your WC please speak with your healthcare provider.

What your weight means for your health:

In the space below, record your BMI and waist circumference and use the tables above to note your overall health risk for your measurements.

My BMI is: _____	I fall into the category of:	This means my risk of heart disease and stroke is:
	<input type="checkbox"/> underweight	<input type="checkbox"/> low*
	<input type="checkbox"/> normal weight	<input type="checkbox"/> low – if I also have a healthy waist measurement
	<input type="checkbox"/> overweight	<input type="checkbox"/> higher
My waist circumference is: _____ cm or _____ inches	<input type="checkbox"/> obese	<input type="checkbox"/> much higher
	My waist measurement is:	This means my risk of heart disease and stroke is:
	<input type="checkbox"/> in the healthy range	<input type="checkbox"/> normal
	<input type="checkbox"/> not in the healthy range	<input type="checkbox"/> higher

*Underweight people may be at risk for other types of health conditions.

If your BMI falls into the overweight or obese range or your waist measurement falls into the unhealthy range, you could benefit from losing some weight. Losing even a modest amount of weight could help to reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke, as well as other conditions and diseases. A modest amount of weight is defined as 5% to 10% of your total body weight, or 1 to 2 pounds (0.5 to 0.9 kg) per week.

Are you ready to make a change?

It is important to reflect on if you are ready to make the changes in your diet and the amount of physical activity you do.

Do you accumulate at least 150 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous aerobic physical activity per week, in bouts of 10 minutes or more? "Moderate" activity means such things as brisk walking, active gardening, swimming, dancing or biking. Are you currently trying to be more active or looking to make changes to be more active within the next 30 days or six months? Or are you not interested currently in making changes until later?

Are you looking to make changes to have a healthier diet? Are you looking to make changes in the next 30 days or 6 months? Or are you not interested in making changes until later or at all?

It is important to reflect on your intent to make changes in your life. This booklet and program are intended for persons currently making changes or looking to make a change in the next 30 days. If you are still deciding but think you might make a change in the next 6 months, this booklet might help you formulate some issues and ideas you need to reflect on. If you aren't looking to make changes soon, then this booklet is probably not the right resource for you at this point in time.

Next steps

Over the next 12 weeks, each lesson will teach you a new skill to help you make permanent, healthy lifestyle changes – the sort of changes that make it possible to safely achieve and maintain a healthy weight. But not all programs are appropriate for all people. If you have health concerns, speak with your healthcare provider before starting the HW Plan.

Week 1: Log your current habits

Let's get started. We're glad you're here. If it's any consolation, you're not alone in your desire to lose weight. Maintaining a healthy weight is not always easy, that's why more than half of Canadians struggle with their weight. Achieving a healthy weight is important for your health. The key to the HW Plan is to develop and maintain healthy habits. This program will help you do both. So give yourself a pat on the back for picking up this booklet and making a personal commitment to making some healthy changes.

You may have a specific weight loss goal in mind and that is why you have come to this program. Some may lose a modest amount of weight while others may just maintain their weight by the end of this 12 week program. This in itself should be seen as a success. As you adopt these lifestyle changes, they will lead to important changes in your health. Adopting the skills that you will learn in this plan may help you meet your weight goals after the 12 weeks and maintain the loss.

Key to Success #1: Keeping a log

Keeping a log will help you develop and maintain healthier lifestyle choices. In fact, it's a key element throughout the HW Plan. But before you can make changes, it's important to have a clear picture of your current situation.

During Week 1, your main priority will be to keep a daily log and write down everything you eat and drink, as well as how long you are physically active and what types of activities you engage in. Make enough copies of the Food & Activity Log at the end of this booklet for each day of the week. Or just write your information down on a pad of paper or in a journal or use our online tracker if you have access to the internet (heartandstroke.ca/hwplan).

When completing your log:

- Be specific and include as much detail as possible. For example, if you have a sandwich, write down the kind of bread, filling and spread.
- Record the serving size, time and place you ate. The Serving Size Guide on the next page will help you to understand portion sizes for various types of food. Refer to it often until you are familiar with what is meant by a serving. For example, one bagel may actually represent two grain servings. Over-estimating portion sizes is a very common mistake that can lead to weight gain.
- Record when you are physically active. Remember, physical activity doesn't mean just structured recreation or exercise – it includes everyday activities such as walking the kids to school, gardening, biking or heavy housework.

It's important to be totally honest and non-judgmental. Don't censor what you write or be critical of yourself.

Some people want to get started right away. But if you stop and fill out the Food & Activity Log for a week, you may be surprised at what you will learn. At the next session, we'll review your logs and find areas where you are doing well, as well as areas where you can make improvements.

My Heart&Stroke Healthy Weight Action Plan

Serving Size Guide

Vegetables

Vegetables are free and unlimited. Please note that peas, squash, turnip and parsnips have a higher carbohydrate content than other vegetables so keep serving sizes of these vegetables to about ½ cup (125 ml).

Fruit

One serving of fruit is equivalent to:

- 1 cup (250ml) berries, cherries, grapes or cut melon
- 1 medium whole fruit*
- ½ cup (125ml) unsweetened canned fruit
- ½ cup (125ml) unsweetened applesauce
- ¼ cup (60ml) dried fruit
- ½ cup (125ml) fruit juice

*exceptions are 1 small banana or papaya, 3 small fresh apricots, 2 mandarin oranges, 2 medium plums or kiwis, ½ medium mango



Visual guide

One medium fruit is about the size of a fist or tennis ball.

Meat and Alternatives (choose lower fat or lean)

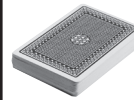
One serving of meat, fish or poultry is equivalent to 3 ounces (85 grams). It is okay to combine two of your recommended daily protein servings at one meal i.e. 6 oz, if desired.

Examples of approximate servings are:

- 1 small chicken breast or leg
- 1 small hamburger patty
- 1 small fish fillet
- 1 small pork chop
- 1 small steak
- 1 to 2 slices of roast beef, pork, veal, ham, lamb, game
- 2 to 3 slices lean deli meat
- 2 eggs
- ½ to ¾ cup (125ml to 175ml) canned tuna or salmon (not in oil)
- 10 to 12 medium scallops or shrimp

Vegetarian Sources

- 2 tbsp (30 ml) peanut butter
- ⅓ cup (75ml) tofu
- ¼ cup nuts or seeds
- ⅓ cup (75ml) hummus
- ½ cup (125ml) cooked legumes



Visual guide

One 3 oz (85g) serving of meat, fish or poultry is equivalent to the size of a deck of cards.

This serving size guide will help you choose healthy amounts of food. Measure your food for a day or two until you become familiar with healthy serving sizes. After that you should be able to estimate a serving size by looking at it. If your serving sizes start to increase, measure them again.

My Heart&Stroke Healthy Weight Action Plan

Serving Size Guide

Milk and Alternatives (choose lower fat)

One serving of milk and alternatives is equivalent to:

- 1 cup (250ml) milk (skim or 1%)
- 1 cup (250ml) lactose-reduced milk
- 1 cup (250ml) fortified soy beverage
- 1 cup (250ml) goat milk, enriched
- ½ cup (125ml) chocolate milk
- ¾ cup (250ml) yogurt (0% or 1%)
- ½ cup (125ml) cottage cheese (no fat or 1%)
- 1 oz (30g) cheese
- ½ cup (125ml) canned evaporated milk



Visual guide

One ounce of cheese is about the size of your thumb.

Grain Products (choose whole grains)

One serving of grain products contains approximately 15 grams of carbohydrates. Use this as a guide when you read the Nutrition Facts table on labels for breads, cereals, pasta, crackers and other grain products.

Examples of approximate servings are:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 slice bread • ¼ large bagel or ½ small bagel • ½ English muffin • ½ 6 inch (15cm) pita • ½ hamburger/hotdog bun • 1 small (2 inch/5cm) muffin • 1 small (4 inch/10cm) pancake • 1 small dinner roll • 1 small (6 inch/15 cm) tortilla, roti, chapati • 1 4 inch (10cm) waffle • ½ to 1 cup (125 ml) cereal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ cup (125 ml) granola • ¾ cup cooked hot cereal • ½ cup (125ml) cooked pasta, couscous • 1³ cup (75 ml) cooked rice, millet • ½ cup (125ml) cooked barley, bulgur • ½ cup (125 ml) quinoa • 4 to 6 small crackers • 1 small or ½ medium potato • 1/3 cup sweet potato or plantain • ½ cup (125 ml) corn • ¼ of 6 inch (15cm) Naan bread |
|--|---|

Fat

One serving of fat is equivalent to:

- 1 tsp (5ml) oil, butter, margarine, mayonnaise
- 1 tbsp (15ml) salad dressing
- 1 tbsp cream cheese

Week 2: Goal setting

This week's focus will provide you with an important foundation for the program. We will be reviewing your current habits, determining your meal plan and helping you to set smart goals.

Key to Success #2: Assessing your situation and setting goals

Step 1: Assess your current habits

Let's begin by assessing what happened during your week of self-monitoring. Take out your Food & Activity Logs and, using the Serving Size Guide, answer the following questions. Don't worry about being too exact. The important thing is to get an overview of your current dietary choices.

Healthy eating

	Yes	No
On most days did you eat a meal or snack about every 3 to 4 hours?		
On most days did you include a protein source at most meals?		
On most days did you eat 2 or 3 or more servings of vegetables? (One serving of vegetables is equal to 125ml (1/2 cup) of raw or cooked vegetables (either fresh, frozen or canned), one cup of salad, or 125ml of vegetable juice.)		
On most days did you eat 2 or 3 servings of fruit? (One serving is equal to 250ml (1 cup) cut fresh, frozen or canned fruit or berries, 125ml (1/2 cup) 100% fruit juice, 60ml (1/4 cup) dried fruit, a medium apple, pear or orange, or a small banana.)		
On most days did you have 2 or 3 servings of milk or alternative products? (One serving of milk and alternatives is equivalent to 250ml (1 cup) of lower-fat milk or fortified soy beverage, 250ml of lower-fat yogurt, 125ml (1/2 cup) of lower-fat cottage cheese, or 30g (1 oz) of cheese.)		
On most days, when eating grain products, did you choose whole-grain varieties? (Examples of whole-grain products include %100 whole wheat, brown rice, barley, quinoa and oatmeal.)		
On most days, did you make lower-fat choices? (A lower fat choice might be drinking 2% milk or less, reduced fat cheeses, yogurt that contains less than 3g of fat per serving and lean or extra lean meats or cuts of meat.)		
On most days, did you limit your intake of added fats? (Added fats include oils for cooking, butter, margarine, salad dressings, dips and cream cheese).		
On most days, did you limit your intake of non-nourishing, or empty calorie, foods? (This includes treat foods that may be high in calories, salt, sugar or fat and are not found on your Serving Size Guide. Think about any chips, nachos, soft drinks, alcohol, specialty coffee drinks, cakes, cookies, donuts, chocolate bars etc... that you ate this week.		
On most days, did you consume water throughout your day? Only count unflavoured, non-carbonated water here.		

	Yes	No
During the past week, how frequently did you eat while watching TV, working on the computer, talking on the telephone, driving, or engaged in other activities?		
<p>When you think about the recent past, do you find you make unhealthier food choices (e.g., choosing empty calorie or high-fat comfort foods) or eat too much when faced with the following (check all that apply for you):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You're around food that you can't seem to refuse or to eat in reasonable quantities (e.g., someone bring sweets or chips into the house or to the office) • Celebrating with family or friends (e.g., holidays, parties or special events) • Eating in restaurants • To calm yourself when you're upset, sad or agitated • When you're bored or want to distract yourself • When you want to reward yourself • When you feel rushed or lack time to make healthier choices • When you're eating with people who say they don't choose healthier foods • When you get cravings for certain foods • When you feel famished or so hungry that it's hard to make wise choices • You've eaten but you don't feel satisfied and want to snack • People who offer you unhealthier foods or large portions, even though they know you are trying to eat healthy • Other : _____(enter your own food trigger)_ 		
<p>Over the past five years, have you (Select one of the options that best describes your situation):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lost weight and maintained your weight loss using a special diet • Lost weight on a diet but regained it, at least once • Lost weight on a diet but regained it, more than once • Never tried to follow a diet to lose weight, before joining the HW Action Plan 		

Look at your answers. Where you responded Yes, you are on the right track. But look closely at the questions where you answered No – they show where you need to pay attention and make some changes. (Hint: you might want to use a highlighter to colour your No answers so you can clearly see where you need to make improvements.)

The HW Plan is based on three principles of healthy eating.

1. ***Eating healthy meals and snacks regularly throughout the day.*** Why? Healthy meals and snacks every three to four hours during the day can help keep your energy levels and metabolism up and reduce the risk of overeating, binging or making unhealthy food choices. There's also good evidence that people who eat a healthy, lower-fat breakfast tend to weigh less than those who skip breakfast. So be sure to start every day with a healthy breakfast.
2. ***Eating lots of vegetables and fruit.*** Vegetables are great choices if you are concerned about your weight – they are typically low in fat and calories and give you plenty of the nutrients you need to stay active and healthy. Try to prepare vegetables and fruit with little or no added fat, sugar or salt and make them the centre of each meal you eat.

3. **Making lower-fat choices whenever possible.** There's nothing magic about foods that advertise themselves as low-fat – especially if they are foods that are low in nutritional value, such as cookies or snack food. But consistently choosing lower-fat dairy products and lean cuts of meat and incorporating alternatives such as beans and soy beverages more often can have a beneficial effect over time.

Other things you'll want to consider:

- Watch portion sizes – portion control is an important key to achieving and maintaining a healthy weight (refer often to the Serving Size information in Lesson One to understand portion sizes).
- Try to make at least half of your grain servings whole grains.
- Limit fats and oils to two to three tablespoons (45 mL) of unsaturated fat per day. (Visit heartandstroke.ca/healthyliving if you need help sorting out the healthy from the unhealthy forms of dietary fat.)
- Choose lower-fat milk and alternatives such as fortified soy beverages.
- Drink water. It is a healthy, zero-calorie way to stay hydrated.
- Avoid empty calories – foods and beverages that are high in calories and low in nutritional value. To help you assess the caloric cost of occasional indulgences, there is a list of common empty calorie foods on the HW Plan website heartandstroke.ca/hwplan.

Physical activity

Most people who have successfully lost and kept off significant amounts of weight for long periods of time are physically active most days of the week. Let's look at your activity levels.

	Yes	No
<p>During the week, how would you describe your physical activity? On most days you were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Sedentary] – you are not very active and most of what you do involves only light effort (e.g., light dusting or strolling, working at a computer) • [Moderately active] – moderately or vigorously active for at least 30 to 60 minutes a day at home, at home or during your leisure time, such as brisk walking, biking, raking leaves, swimming, dancing, or lifting or carrying • [Very active] – moderately or vigorously active for at least 30 to 60 minutes a day and at least 20 to 30 minutes of that activity is very vigorous and demanding aerobic activities, such as running, jogging, hockey, basketball, fast swimming or fast dancing, climbing, or very heavy lifting or carrying 		
<p>During the week, how many hours did you spend in sedentary leisure activity such as watching TV or sitting at the computer for pleasure?</p>		
<p>In the past, has any of the following interfered with your plans for being physically active? Check all that apply for you.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of time • Feeling too tired • You find being active uncomfortable or painful • You feel embarrassed to be active in front of other people • Can't afford a gym or club membership • There are people in your life who resent it if you take time to be active or who undermine your motivation • When upset or stressed, it's easier to watch TV and skip exercising 		

	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You quickly become bored with your chosen activity or feel frustrated if you don't feel you're making progress Other: _____(enter your own challenge or barrier) 		

Now look at your answers. If you're active for less than four days a week, there's an opportunity to improve your health by becoming more active. Or if less than 50% of your activity is moderately or very vigorous, you may be able to boost the health benefits by increasing the intensity of your activity. Finally, if you report a high number of hours in sedentary leisure activities, perhaps this is where you can find the time for more active hobbies or interests. Maybe it's as simple as turning off the TV and tuning in to nature by taking a walk.

Physical activity is great for helping you achieve and maintain a healthy weight and can relieve stress, lower your blood pressure and control blood glucose and blood cholesterol levels. Physical activity also helps in the management of arthritis and bone loss (osteoporosis) and reduces the risk of falls in the elderly. Check out our publication called *Getting Active for Life* at heartandstroke.ca/healthyliving to help you figure out how to get active. Before starting any physical activity program, speak with your healthcare provider.

Step 2: Setting your meal plan

To determine how much you should eat in order to lose weight, you have to begin by looking at how many calories are needed to maintain your current weight. The following table shows values that roughly approximate Health Canada's Dietary Reference Intakes for adults. Find the value that reflects your gender, age and level of physical activity.

Health Canada Daily Recommended Calories for Adults*						
Age Group	Women			Men		
	Sedentary**	Moderately active	Active	Sedentary**	Moderately active	Active
19-30 years	1,900	2,100	2,350	2,500	2,700	3,000
31-50 years	1,800	2,000	2,250	2,350	2,600	2,900
51+ years	1,650	1,850	2,100	2,150	2,350	2,650

* These are general guidelines only. They are not applicable to women who are pregnant or nursing, or those with special dietary or nutritional needs. Speak with your healthcare provider before making any significant change in your diet or activity level.

**Sedentary means you are sitting most of the day, moderately active means you are on your feet some of the day, and active means you are on your feet and walking most of the day.

My daily recommended calories for weight maintenance are: _____ calories.

If your goal is to maintain your current weight, this is your target number of calories per day. If you want to lose weight, you need to take in 500 calories less than your daily recommended calorie intake. This allows you slow sustainable weight loss, if you cut more than this it can work against your goal by interfering with your metabolism. It is best to set a modest goal that allows you to lose 1 to 2 lbs at most per week.

So now calculate:

_____ (your daily recommended caloric intake) – 500 = _____ calories

The resulting number will tell you approximately how many calories you should take in if you want to safely lose a pound (500 grams) a week.

Now that you know your target number of calories per day, use the following tables to choose a meal plan. We've given you two meal plan options: one is higher in carbohydrates and the other contains more protein. Both are consistent with Canada's Food Guide and both have been shown to support healthy weight loss. Choose the meal plan that is closest to your target number of calories per day and reflects your personal food preferences.

1. Higher carbohydrate option – suggested number of servings per day by calorie intake

Calories	1,200 calories	1,500 calories	1,700 calories	2,000 calories
Meat & alternatives	2	2	3	4
Grain products	5	7	7	8
Milk & alternatives	2	3	3	3
Fruit	3	3	4	5
Vegetables	Free (5+)	Free (5+)	Free (5++)	Free (5++)
Added fat	2	3	3	3

2. Higher protein option – suggested number of servings per day by calorie intake

Calories	1,200 calories	1,500 calories	1,700 calories	2,000 calories
Meat & alternatives	3	3	4	5
Grain products	4	4	5	6
Milk & alternatives	2	3	3	3
Fruit	2	3	3	3
Vegetables	Free (5+)	Free (5+)	Free (5++)	Free (5++)
Added fat	2	3	3	4

Now, when using the Food & Activity Log, you can fill in the number of servings you should eat each day for each of the food groups (your target number of servings). Remember – tracking your food intake is a key to success!

You can also find 10 sample meal plans online at heartandstroke.ca/hwplan along with a collection of recipes tailored to calorie requirements.

Tip: Eating too little can sabotage your weight loss efforts. When you eat too few calories, your body will go into starvation mode and start to burn muscle as well as fat. When you lose muscle, it slows down your metabolism, making weight loss more difficult.

Step 3 – Setting SMART Goals

Now it’s time to set some SMART goals for yourself.

SMART goals are specific (S), measurable (M), attainable (A), realistic (R) and have clear time (T) frames. They challenge you to make changes that are:

- Meaningful to you
- Focused on improving your health
- Realistic given your build, age, family commitments or occupation

Look at your answers at the beginning of this chapter. Set goals that address your problem areas. Physical activity is a key area for most people, so be sure to develop a realistic but still challenging activity goal for yourself. Other goals might address issues such as skipping meals, not eating enough vegetables and fruit, or not making lower-fat food choices whenever possible. Or maybe there are other changes you’d like to make – we’ve left some room to write in your own.

If you want to set a specific weight loss goal, we suggest you aim for no more than one to two pounds (about half to one kilogram) a week. Depending upon your current weight and how you do, over the next 11 weeks you could lose anywhere from 11 to 22 pounds (5 to 10 kg). Losing weight steadily and slowly is a realistic goal that supports a sustainable change in your behaviour – and your weight. Studies show that when a lot of weight comes off too quickly, there’s a tendency to regain it quickly too.

Already at a healthy weight?
The HW Plan can also be used to learn the habits that support maintaining your current weight.

As a rule, it’s best to keep your goals to a manageable number. Try to create no more than four or five.

Area my goal addresses	My SMART goal (what I’m going to do)	Time frame of my goal
Weight loss or maintenance		
Increasing the amount and intensity of physical activity		
Eating healthy meals and snacks		
Eating more vegetables and fruit		
Making lower-fat choices whenever possible		

Area my goal addresses	My SMART goal (what I'm going to do)	Time frame of my goal

You may have heard of people exercising to the point of collapse or becoming sick to their stomach in the pursuit of quick weight loss. This approach is not sustainable and will set you up for injuries and illness. A smarter approach is to start slowly and build over time. For example, start with a 20-minute walk and build up in 5- or 10-minute increments until you are walking 30 to 40 minutes a day. Your goal is to develop a physical activity program that you can sustain for life – not just a few weeks.

Step 4 – Planning for success

Weekly planning will help you to stay on track with your meal plans and SMART goals. Setting aside a little time each week to reflect on your progress, anticipate and plan for challenges you may encounter, and map out your healthy choices for the week can be really helpful. Some people like to write out weekly meal plans and grocery lists; others schedule times to be active. You can find a weekly planner at the back of this booklet or online at heartandstroke.ca/hwplan.

That's it for this week. Now you can get started on your goals. And remember to keep tracking your food and physical activity.

Week 3: Tracking your progress

Have you continued to monitor your diet and physical activity? We hope so, because tracking is an important key to success. This week we will focus on tracking and reflecting on our habits.

Key to Success #3: Tracking and reflecting

Research has shown that people who are successful at losing weight and maintaining a healthy weight over long periods of time consistently:

- Track what they eat, using a food journal or diary.
- Are physically active most days of the week.
- Monitor their weight and and/or waist circumference regularly.

Tip: Consider whether you want to use a scale to measure your progress in achieving or maintaining a healthy weight. Some people find measuring the inches or centimetres they lose, particularly around their waist circumference, is more motivating. If you want to use the scale, limit yourself to once-a-week weigh-ins.

Tracking and taking some time to reflect on what happened during the past week – both where you did well and where you didn't – will enable you to:

- Congratulate yourself when you make progress.
- Identify what contributes to being successful (for example, do you do better when you're around certain people or have more time?).
- Identify events, people or activities that may be getting in the way of your success, such as stress, having to work late or family demands.

Look over your Food & Activity Logs for last week. Ask yourself the following questions and write your responses in the spaces provided.

- How did I do in terms of meeting my target number of servings for the different food groups? Are there some areas where I succeeded and others where I could make improvements?

- Did I learn anything about myself this week that I can use to make improvements?

Remember to keep tracking your food servings and physical activity. Tracking is a powerful key to success!

Healthy Eating Tips

- Fill three-quarters of your plate with high-fibre foods such as vegetables, whole grains, legumes and fruit. The rest should be your protein: lean meat or lower-fat meat alternatives such as fish or beans.
- Use the Serving Size Guide from Week 1 to check your portion sizes. You may have to measure your food in the beginning until you get familiar with what a single serving looks like.
- People who eat breakfast regularly tend to have a healthier weight than those who skip it.

Week 4: Identifying and preparing for challenges

Before starting this week's lesson, let's do a quick recap of what we've covered so far.

1. Monitoring and evaluating your behaviours can help you identify the areas where you're doing well and those where you need to make improvements.
2. It's important to set SMART goals that challenge you to change but are still realistic and attainable.
3. Ongoing tracking is an essential key to success.
4. Reflecting on what you track enables you to continually learn more about what works for you.

Key to Success #4: Preparing for challenges

This week we're going to look at the issue of challenges. Behaviour change experts say that it takes at least six months before a new behaviour becomes so engrained that we don't have to think about it. Until then, it can sometimes be tempting to revert back to old, familiar habits. This is particularly true when you're under stress, upset, multitasking or just plain rushed.

To achieve your healthy weight goal, you need to have a Plan of Action for dealing with challenges. Sometimes you can deal with challenges as they arise, but it's best to make a plan ahead of time. Being prepared will help you to successfully manage stressful or challenging situations.

Let's look at some examples so you can see what we mean.

The Challenge	The Solution (Plan of Action)
Dale's kids love chips so there are always a couple of bags in the kitchen cupboard. Most of the time, she can ignore them. But one evening, she had to work late and missed dinner. When she finally got home – tired and frustrated – the kids were eating the chips and she was so hungry and they smelled so good that she couldn't help herself and started to eat them. She ended up eating a whole bag.	The next time Dale needs to work late, she needs to plan ahead so she can stick to her goal of eating every three to four hours. For example, she could pick up a lower-fat yogurt, vegetable sticks, fresh fruit, or nuts during her lunch hour so she has something to eat in the early evening. If she doesn't feel famished when she gets home, she'll have more control over her eating and will be less likely to binge on unhealthy foods.
Family gatherings and celebrations are a big problem for Bob. He doesn't want to insult anyone – most of all, his mother – by not eating but before you know it, he's stuffed himself to the point of bursting.	Bob needs to remember that just because it's a celebration, that doesn't mean he has to abandon a goal that is important to him, such as losing weight. After all, this goal concerns his health. And without his health, Bob can't be the husband, son, brother, father, uncle or friend he'd like to be. Bob made a plan to eat a small, healthy snack before going to a family gathering so that when he arrived he wouldn't be overly hungry and easily tempted. His next strategy was to eat but pick and choose the healthiest food items, eat

The Challenge	The Solution (Plan of Action)
	only reasonably sized portions and politely but firmly turn down second helpings. He also made a conscious effort to eat slowly, savour his food, and stop as soon as he started feeling full. Finally, to make it easier to stay on track, Bob avoided alcohol. Alcohol is high in calories and can make it more difficult to resist temptation.
Ahmad knows physical activity is important but is having trouble squeezing it into a busy schedule.	When Ahmad stopped thinking physical activity had to be some sort of sport or working out and started exploring various opportunities for integrating activity into daily life, it became a lot easier. A 15-minute coffee break became a 15-minute walk with a co-worker; picking up the kids became an opportunity to walk to the school and back.

We've given you three common scenarios. In the space below, write down some of *your* biggest challenges in eating healthy, being active and achieving or maintaining a healthy weight. Then brainstorm about how to handle these situations. Write down your ideas as possible solutions (your Plan of Action). We've listed some of the areas or issues you'll probably want to think about, but left space for others that are important to you.

Issue	My biggest challenge	Possible solutions (Plan of Action)
Keeping to my food option plan		
Eating healthy meals and snacks throughout the day		
Eating more vegetables and fruit		
Making lower-fat choices		
Being physically active 4 or more days a week		

That's it for this week. Keep monitoring your food intake and physical activity. If you face one of your challenges in the following week, try to put your solution or Plan of Action into place.

Week 5: Support systems

How has it gone for you the past week? Are you succeeding in meeting the goals you've set for yourself?

In the previous weeks we've talked about the importance of tracking, how to set SMART goals and how to identify and plan for challenges. This week we'll talk about another important tool for sustained behaviour change: social support.

Key to Success #5: Building a support system

Research has shown that when you're trying to make changes in your behaviour, the support of friends and family can be a big help.

There are several different types of support:

- **Emotional:** People to talk with who motivate you, encourage you and fulfill your emotional needs.
- **Instrumental:** Tangible and practical support, such as someone to help with chores so you can go for a walk.
- **Information:** People who give you information, advice and guidance, including help in problem-solving and finding solutions to challenges.
- **Companionship:** Someone willing to join you when doing activities that support your goal, such as going for a walk, cooking healthier meals or attending a weight-loss program.
- **Informal support:** Support groups that develop spontaneously, such as a group of co-workers who go to the gym every day or a group of on-line buddies who are also trying to lose weight.
- **Formal support:** Structured programs, such as weight-loss group meetings or one-on-one support from a registered dietitian, personal trainer or behavioural therapist.

Try to build a weight loss support network to help you in your efforts. Look for positive people who have accomplished similar goals. Partner with someone who is also trying to achieve or maintain a healthy weight. Make sure there is give and take and that you celebrate each other's successes.

Not everyone who is close to you is necessarily a good candidate for your social support network. Some people may not understand how important achieving or maintaining a healthy weight is to you. They may try to tempt you to go off your plan. Canadian psychiatrist Dr. Valerie Taylor, co-author of the book, *The Cognitive Behavioral Workbook for Weight Management*, recommends that when you are faced with people or situations that tempt you to eat unhealthy foods:

- Remind yourself of your goal to eat healthy and protect your health.
- Don't worry about disappointing or offending someone by politely turning down food or drink. It's unlikely the person will care and they might even admire your self-discipline.

Other people to be aware of are those who state that they like you just the way you are and consciously or unconsciously undermine your progress. Maybe they are afraid that you're going

to change or that you'll stop doing certain activities with them. Talk with these people and explain the importance of a healthier lifestyle. If possible, try to involve them in your healthy weight activities (for example, ask them to join you when you go walking). Be gentle but very firm. Never forget that you have a right to work toward your goal of a healthier you.

Over the next week, try to identify who could give you different types of support and help you progress toward your goals. Think through the specific role or type of support you might ask them to provide (such as encouragement, someone to walk with you) and record it below. Contact them and ask them to work with you.

Type of support	Who I will ask to provide this support?

Keep monitoring your food intake and physical activity. If you encounter problems, review your list of challenges and put into place your appropriate Plan of Action. If you encounter a new challenge that you didn't anticipate, add it to your list and think about what you could do if it happens again.

The urge to binge can be powerful and dangerous. Instead of giving in, sit down, breathe deeply and try to figure out what is triggering this feeling. Are you sure that you're eating enough to keep your body well fueled? Go over your diet plan. In your enthusiasm to lose weight, did you inadvertently choose a food plan that can't meet your body's needs? Are you choosing foods that supply your body with all the nutrients you need, such as vegetables, fruit, whole grains and lower-fat dairy products? Is there a protein source in each meal? Or is your urge to binge the reaction to problems or negative emotions, such as depression, anger, loneliness or boredom? If so, remember that bingeing will only make you feel worse, instead of better. This is the perfect time to call someone who can give you emotional support or companionship.

Week 6: Setbacks and glitches

You're now halfway through the program. How have you done over the past week?

At this point we've gone over several important keys to behaviour change success:

- Tracking and reflecting
- Setting SMART goals
- Planning for challenges
- Developing a support network

These keys will help you if and when you face something many of us encounter when making permanent behaviour change: temporary setbacks.

Key to Success #6: Overcoming setbacks

Have you had any slip-ups yet? If you haven't, you're doing fantastic. But if you have, don't worry. When making changes, most people slip up once in a while. But there's a good side to slip-ups – they give us valuable opportunities to think about what we're doing and problem-solve.

For example, let's take the example of John. John's goal was to make more low-fat food choices and for the most part he's been pretty successful. But one day he was in a rush and stopped at a fast-food restaurant. Almost without thinking, he ordered his old standard – the double-decker hamburger, fries and a chocolate milkshake. OK, so it wasn't a healthy choice. But John understood that he couldn't let a temporary glitch get in the way of pursuing his ultimate goal of a healthier diet. Instead, he went back to eating healthy for the rest of the day. Moreover, he promised himself that if this situation came up again, he'd be prepared and order the side salad with the hamburger, instead of the fries, and 2% milk instead of the milkshake.

If you experience a setback, it's important to keep it in perspective. Don't let one mistake throw you off track or abandon all the progress you've made. You're working toward permanent lifestyle changes. If you were trying to learn archery, you wouldn't expect to shoot a bull's-eye the first time and every time after, would you? Integrating new behaviours into everyday life takes time. Keep your eye on the big picture and don't let small stumbling blocks stop you. Give yourself a break – and don't give up on yourself!

Here are some other things to remember:

- **Turn negative thoughts into positive ones.** View your setback as a powerful learning tool. Admitting there was a problem and analyzing what went wrong will help you prepare for the future.
- **Identify what caused the setback.** If a sports team or star athlete loses an important game or match, one of the first things they do is watch the replays. Why? Because they want to see the mistakes they made so they can fix them and come back even stronger.
- **Evaluate your overall progress.** Other than this setback, are you taking small steps toward your goals? Maybe you're making more progress than you think.
- **Reassess your situation.** Have you set a realistic goal? If not, maybe you need to develop one that is still challenging but more realistic.

- **Make a plan to prevent setbacks in the future.** Make a list of the things that caused you to have a setback. Think about strategies you could use to handle them, avoid them or prevent them in the future. Review your list of challenges and solutions and update it with any new ideas you've developed.
- **Continue tracking.** Keeping track of your progress will help you stay focused on your goal and motivate you to succeed.
- **Seek support.** Ask your family and friends to help you overcome setbacks and get back on track.
- **Start a healthy weight journal.** Some people find that, in addition to tracking, it is helpful to keep a journal of how they are feeling and what they are learning about themselves as they work toward their goals. What you write can sometimes give you valuable insights into the sorts of challenges you're facing – and what you could do in the future to better manage them.

That's it for this week. Keep tracking and we'll meet next week to discuss another key to behaviour change success.

When you eat lunch and dinner, try to fill half your plate with vegetables, one quarter with whole grains and the last quarter with chicken, fish, meat or legumes. Are you getting a variety of different types of vegetables? Be careful when eating out or filling up your plate at salad bars. Avoid vegetables loaded with added fats, such as butter or cream sauces. Even salads can be fattening if they include deep-fried items such as taco chips or are loaded with cheese, bacon bits, croutons or high-fat dressings. Try to avoid these high-fat traps. Whenever possible, ask for a lower-fat dressing on the side, such as a vinaigrette, and use it sparingly.

Week 7: Rewarding yourself

We hope that you're still tracking your activity and what you eat every day. Have you encountered any challenges or setbacks? If so, did you use your Plan of Action or call upon your support network? In this lesson, we'll give you yet another strategy for effective, sustained behaviour change.

This week, in addition to tracking your activity and diet, take some time to develop your own reward system. Write your rewards down – something in writing is more tangible. If you encounter any challenges or setbacks, be sure to review your Action Plan and call upon your social support network to help you.

Key to Success #7: Develop a reward system

When we use the word “reward” most people think of external rewards, such as prizes or presents. But when it comes to the HW Plan, internal rewards are just as important – perhaps even more important. Internal rewards come from within you. It's the sense of accomplishment you feel when you achieve your goal, the pride you take in being a great role model for your children, or the pleasure you get from feeling more confident and energized. Healthy living can make you feel better about yourself.

But external rewards can also help. External rewards are tangible symbols marking your progress in working toward your goals. They are ways to celebrate reaching important milestones, such as meeting your physical activity goals for three weeks in a row. Just make sure that your reward supports your goal. If your goal is to make lower-fat food choices, then an ice cream cone may be a counter-productive reward.

Healthy rewards you can use to help celebrate your successes include:

- Things you buy, such as a heart rate monitor to use when jogging, a new power tool or a new outfit
- Things you do, such as a night out at the movies or an adventure holiday
- Setting aside time for things that are important to you, such as going for a round of golf with your buddies, going to a spa or simply time alone to read, relax or meditate

To create rewards that make a difference:

- Choose a reward ahead of time, so you have something to work toward.
- Only use a reward if it means something to you personally.
- Mix up your rewards so they don't become routine or boring.
- Select a reward that reflects the size and importance of the goal it is supposed to celebrate: a small task deserves a small reward, whereas a major accomplishment might justify a larger reward.
- Reward yourself immediately after accomplishing your goal.

Ask yourself the following questions about potential rewards:

- Are my rewards things I will enjoy?
- Will my rewards be available right after I achieve my goals?
- Did I avoid using food or high calorie beverage as a reward?

- Do my rewards accurately reflect the importance of my achieved goal?
- Are there enough different rewards to prevent getting bored?

Take a few moments to write down your goals using the following table. For each goal, write down a reward that is important to you (the middle column) and would help motivate you. In the column at the far right, specify what you have to do to earn the reward or when it should be awarded.

Goal	Reward	When or what to do to earn the reward
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Now, looking at your reward ideas, ask yourself the following questions.

	Yes	No
1. Are my rewards things I will enjoy?		
2. Will my rewards be immediately available after I achieve my goal?		
3. Did I avoid using food as a reward?		
4. Do my rewards accurately reflect the size and importance of the associated goal?		
5. Are there enough different rewards to prevent boredom?		

Have you been successful in integrating more physical activity into your daily routine? Remember that every little bit helps. Try to choose activities that suit your personality. For example, if you're an extrovert who enjoys doing things with other people, you might want to focus on team or racquet sports, hiking or biking clubs, aerobics classes, dancing or the martial arts. If you prefer having some time to yourself, consider walking or jogging, working out at home with exercise DVDs or tapes, or sports or activities that allow you to work at your own pace such as yoga, Pilates, resistance training or archery. To optimize your health and minimize the chance of injuries, try to participate in different activities that promote cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength, flexibility and balance. Develop your own smorgasbord of activities so you can be active no matter what the weather or your schedule. And remember that daily activities such as climbing the stairs, heavy gardening or housework, or walking or biking to work are also important ways to be active.

Week 8: Behaviour contract

So far, we've talked about several important keys to making and sustaining behaviour change. We've looked at a number of issues, such as self-monitoring, planning for challenges, building a support network, overcoming setbacks and setting up your own reward system. In this lesson, we'll pull many of these elements into a single, powerful document.

Key to Success #8: Write a contract

By now, you've probably learned a lot about healthy eating, physical activity and what works – or doesn't work – for you. But it's important to keep motivated and focused upon your goals. So this is a good time to write out your Behaviour Contract.

Over the past several weeks, you've created all of the parts that will make up your Behaviour Contract. Pulling it together in one document will be a powerful tool for helping you keep on track – especially now that you're entering the final phases of the program. So in the Behaviour Contract form at the end of this booklet write down:

- The goals you've set for yourself (we've left room for lots)
- When you hope to achieve your goal
- Your plan for rewarding yourself as you reach milestones or achieve your goals
- Any notes you'd like to make about a goal (such as potential challenges and solutions you've identified)
- The members of your support team

Signing your Behaviour Contract and having a witness sign it is a visible symbol of your commitment to changing your behaviour – and sustaining those changes. You may even want to ask your healthcare provider to sign it.

If you had tried to write your Behaviour Contract the first week, it might have seemed overwhelming and complicated. But now, with all you've learned, you'll find it much easier.

Completing your Behaviour Contract will also give you an opportunity to look at the goals you set in Week 2. Do you need to revise or change any of your goals? For example, if you started out with a goal of walking four times a week for 20 minutes but now find it almost too easy, you might want to increase how often, how quickly or how long you walk. Or maybe one of your original goals has turned out to be too ambitious and is leading to frustration. If that's the case, rewrite your goal so it is more realistic and in keeping with your life. But never make a goal too easy – you still need a challenge if you want to change.

Once you've completed and signed your Behaviour Contract, you may want to make a copy and post it where you will see it frequently. It's a great way to keep reminding yourself of your commitment to healthy eating and physical activity.

In the meantime, keep tracking your diet and physical activity and we'll meet next week.

Week 9: Time management

Are you still tracking your activity and what you eat? When you're feeling rushed, you may feel tempted to skip tracking. But tracking is an important key to achieving your healthy weight goal, so stick with it. Today's lesson may help as it focuses on time management.

Key to Success #9: Good time management

What's time got to do with achieving and maintaining a healthy weight? Well, lack of time is a common excuse for making unhealthy lifestyle choices. "I don't have time to be physically active," some people say. "I have to eat in a hurry because I don't have time to cook a healthy meal," others complain.

What to do? Here are some ideas for you to consider.

- **Get your priorities straight:** We all have 24 hours in a day and it's up to us how we manage that time. If something is important enough to us, we make it a priority and do it. Losing weight is important to your health and therefore a priority.
- **Re-categorize physical activity:** Some people claim they don't have time to be active because they have a rigid concept of "exercising." But there's a multitude of ways to be active and many of them can be integrated into your everyday life, such as walking instead of driving to do chores or using the stairs instead of escalators or elevators.
- **Multitask:** Combine your healthy behaviours and family commitments. Get your physical activity by taking the family swimming or skiing. Use the time you need to wash and chop vegetables to talk with your children or partner about their day.
- **Be flexible:** Rigid diet or physical activity plans can lead to boredom and burnout. Spice up your diet by experimenting with new, healthy recipes (you'll find lots at the Heart and Stroke Foundation website at heartandstroke.ca). Getting tired of walking? Sign up for a yoga class or try your hand at volleyball.
- **Don't leave healthy choices to chance:** People who achieve and maintain a healthy weight plan ahead so they consistently make the healthiest choices possible. Plan your meals for next week and create a grocery list before you go shopping.
- **Setting priorities:** Sit down at the start of each week and determine your priorities for the week. Some people find that it is helpful to actually book time for their physical activity. Book time like you might book a dentist appointment. Set up alternative plans when weather or other issues that might arise take you off track.

For more tips and some great, healthy recipes, go to the Heart and Stroke Foundation website at heartandstroke.ca

Week 10: Stress management

How did it go last week? In areas where you've done well, give yourself a well-deserved pat on the back. Doing poorly elsewhere? Don't worry. Just try to figure out why setbacks occurred and how you can improve next week.

Stress and how you cope with it play a vital part in weight management. Often when you are stressed you may reach for high-calorie foods or beverages. If you are stressed you may use it as an excuse not to be active, sitting in front of a TV or computer, when being active is one of the most effective stress busters.

Key to Success #10: Manage your stress

Does stress affect the way you eat? To find out, ask yourself the following questions.

Do you:

- Frequently eat even though you're not hungry?
- Turn to food during times of stress or despair?
- Continue to eat even after you're full?
- Binge on large amounts of unhealthy foods?
- Eat late at night?
- Think about food often?

If you answered Yes to any of these questions, you may be a stress eater. To break the habit of stress eating, consider the following:

- **Distract yourself:** Go for a brisk walk around your house or workplace. Practice deep breathing. Work on your favourite hobby. Distract yourself and the urge will quickly fade.
- **Talk it out:** This is the time when your support team can really help you. Talk about what is bothering you. Don't use food to bury your emotions.
- **Eat healthy meals and snacks regularly throughout the day:** If you skip meals, you may feel so hungry that it's difficult to resist temptation. As we talked about in Week 2, regular healthy meals and snacks are an important tool for achieving and maintaining a healthy weight.
- **Always be aware of what you're eating:** Mindless eating, in which you eat food without paying attention, can easily lead to overeating. Sit down, turn off the TV and focus on your food.
- **Slow down:** At least one recent study has found that people who eat slowly eat less than speedy eaters. If you slow down and become more conscious of what you eat, your stomach has a chance to tell your brain when you are full.

- **Meet with a professional:** If your car has a problem, you take it to a mechanic. If you have a toothache, you see a dentist. If you feel that you are helpless to control your eating, talk with a professional, such as a registered dietitian, your healthcare provider or a nurse, doctor or psychologist who specializes in weight management.

For more great tips on handling stress, check out the Heart and Stroke Foundation website at heartandstroke.ca.

Week 11: Plateaus

It's fantastic that you've made it so far. We hope you're still using all of your behaviour change tools that we've discussed over the previous week: tracking, reflecting, planning, using your support network and rewarding yourself. Is your Behaviour Contract posted some place where you can refer to it frequently?

Key to Success #11: Surmounting weight loss plateaus

Many people find that after a while, their progress appears to stall or they reach a plateau. A number of factors may be involved when your progress appears to stall. The important thing to remember is that if you maintain your healthy habits, your health will continue to benefit. And if your weight is at, or nearly at, a healthy range for you, you may actually be in a maintenance phase. Maintaining a healthier weight is really a great achievement.

If you feel your weight loss journey is not complete and you have hit a plateau, here are some things to consider:

Issue	Solution
Your physical activity regimen is getting pretty easy for you – in fact, too easy.	You may need to increase how long you're active (duration), how frequently you're active and/or the intensity of your activity.
You're getting pretty bored with your physical activity regimen. You feel like you could do it in your sleep.	You may be just going through the motions and not really exerting yourself. Maybe it's time to mix up your routine or try something new.
You may be forgetting or failing to write down everything you eat.	If you don't write it down, it's easy to take in more calories than you realize. Re-dedicate yourself to writing down everything you eat so you can get a clear idea of what you are eating.
Your portion sizes may have increased.	Use the Serving Size Guide for the next couple of days to re-educate yourself about what is meant by a single serving. You may be eating more than you realize.
You eat quickly and at the end of your meal still feel hungry.	You need to slow down. It takes at least 20 minutes after eating for the body to release the hormones that make you feel satiated or full.
You've been doing well but lately you've been allowing yourself treats such as a piece of cake at a co-worker's birthday party or another beer with the guys.	Occasional treats are fine – but a treat several times a week or every day could be sabotaging your progress. You may need to ask yourself: "Is that food worth the setback it may have on my progress and my goal to be healthy?"
Over time, you've drifted away from eating five or more servings of vegetables a day.	Re-commit yourself to eating at least three to five servings of vegetables per day. Vegetables are great for you: they're filling, full of great nutrients, naturally low in calories and fat, and high in healthy fibre.

Week 12: A new beginning

You've made it to the last of the 12 weeks. Congratulations! We hope you've planned a nice reward for yourself in recognition of reaching this tremendous milestone.

Key to Success #12: A new attitude toward weight

At this point, you should understand and be committed to the behaviours you need to achieve and maintain a healthy weight. They include:

- Being physically active most days of the week
- Eating healthy meals and snacks regularly throughout the day
- Eating more vegetables and fruit
- Making lower-fat choices whenever possible

You've also learned essential behaviour change tools and strategies:

- Self-monitoring
- Tracking and reflecting
- Identifying challenges and developing plans for handling them
- Building a support network
- Overcoming setbacks and plateaus
- Developing a reward system
- Writing and committing to a Behaviour Contract
- Managing stress and your time

At this point, you may or may not have achieved your original weight loss or management goal. But by making it to the end of the program, you are a winner. Over the past 12 weeks, you've learned about and applied the tools needed for long-term, sustainable behaviour change. You've used these tools to develop healthier eating habits and to increase your level of physical activity.

If you think that you're now at the end of the HW Plan, you need to readjust your thinking. The "on a diet/off a diet" way of thinking is a huge barrier to achieving and, more importantly, maintaining a healthy weight.

Should you continue to track your food choices and activity? It might be a good idea. Evidence suggests that people who continue to self-monitor, be active and keep food diaries are more likely to be successful in maintaining a healthier weight over the long term. Keep up the healthy eating and physical activity habits you've learned over the past 12 weeks, and you can be on your way to life-long better health.

So this is not good-bye but *bon voyage*. Good luck on the rest of your journey to a healthier, happier you.

Want to continue with the HW Plan? You can go to the Heart and Stroke Foundation website and register for the online program (heartandstroke.ca/hwplan) or simply re-use your booklet. Re-reading the lessons can be a great way to re-energize your weight loss journey. For ongoing information on healthy eating, physical activity and exclusive heart-healthy recipes, sign up for *He@lthline*, the Heart and Stroke Foundation's free monthly e-newsletter at heartandstroke.ca/subscribe

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Food & Activity Log

When I ate	What I ate	How I felt, where I ate or other factors that influenced my food choices	Using the Serving size guide, estimate the number of servings you ate:					
			Vegetables	Fruit	Meat and Alternatives	Milk and Alternatives	Grains	Fat
Early morning								
Mid-morning								
Noon								
Afternoon								
Evening								
Late evening								
Total number of servings for the day for each food group								
Cups of water consumed (check them off as consumed): 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> 8 <input type="checkbox"/>								
Physical activity at home, work and traveling to or from work:		Number of minutes spent in:						
Describe your activities		Light activity	Moderate activity	Vigorous activity	Sum of all physical activities	Sedentary leisure activities		
Total number of minutes per day								
<p>Light activity Activities that do not make you breathe hard or sweat, such as strolling, light housework or stretching</p> <p>Moderate activity Activities that make you feel warm and breathe harder than usual but you're still able to carry on a conversation without difficulty. Examples include brisk walking, gardening or recreational dancing</p> <p>Vigorous activity Activities that make you sweat and breathe so hard it's difficult to carry on a conversation, such as running, climbing, biking up hills, very heavy gardening or very heavy lifting and carrying</p> <p>Sedentary leisure activities Leisure activities that do not require any physical effort, such as watching TV, working or playing on the computer or reading</p>								

Behaviour Contract

Goal 1

I will _____ by _____

Reward _____

Support Team _____

Notes _____

Goal 2

I will _____ by _____

Reward _____

Support Team _____

Notes _____

Goal 3

I will _____ by _____

Reward _____

Support Team _____

Notes _____

Members of my support team:

Signed:

Your signature

Date

Witness signature

Date

My Weekly Planner

PLAN YOUR WEEK

At least once a week, you should dedicate some time (e.g. 20 to 30 minutes) to plan for the coming week:

- How you'll make healthier meal choices
- How you'll allot time for physical activity
- How you'll face challenges or temptations

This weekly planner will also allow you to reflect on your progress and anticipate and plan for challenges you may encounter. You may like to write out weekly meal plans and grocery lists or you may like schedule time to be active.

What is going on this week that might impact your goals?

How did you do last week?

What would you do differently next week?

MY GOALS:

MY GOAL IS TO:

ONE REASON I WANT TO DO THIS IS:

ONE KEY BEHAVIOUR I PLAN TO ADAPT IS:

WITH HELP FROM:

WHO WILL HELP ME BY:

TO DO:





**HEART &TM
STROKE
FOUNDATION**

HELPING CANADIANS MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT

More Canadians are overweight and obese than ever before. Given that work, home, school and community environments all affect the food choices we make and the level of physical activity we engage in, this challenge requires solutions beyond eating right and getting active.

In search of answers, the Heart and Stroke Foundation is working with all levels of government and in communities, workplaces and schools across the country to build our knowledge of the most effective ways to address unhealthy weight and obesity through research, policy, social change and health education.

The Heart and Stroke Foundation believes that by working together, we can encourage Canadians to maintain a healthy weight, give them the tools to succeed, and prevent heart disease and stroke.

The Heart and Stroke Foundation website offers a wealth of information and tools to help you and your family prevent and manage heart disease and stroke. Find:

- Delicious heart-healthy recipes
- Tips to get and stay active for life
- Current heart disease and stroke patient information
- Breaking news on Foundation-funded research
- Free newsletters, Heart&Stroke He@lthline and He@lthline for Parents
- How to get involved and make a difference in your community

www.heartandstroke.ca

or call

1-888-HSF-INFO

(1-888-473-4636)

The information contained in the Heart&Stroke Healthy Weight Action PlanTM is for educational purposes only. The information is not intended to provide medical advice, recommendations, diagnosis or treatment. Consumers should always seek the advice of a physician or other health care professional before making medical decisions or when you have questions regarding medical condition. The information within is provided to consumers to facilitate discussion with their physician or other healthcare professionals. Consumers should not rely on this information as a substitute for professional medical advice or delay seeking professional medical advice because of information contained within.

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The information in this resource has been independently researched, written and reviewed by the Heart and Stroke Foundation and is based on scientific evidence.

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or e-mail us at CSOR@hsf.on.ca

