

# Dietary Consistency



Have you fallen into the all-or-nothing trap where you eat perfectly one day and abandon healthful eating the next? Is a vacation or holiday a happy excuse to overindulge in foods that you've labeled as taboo?

It's no secret that lasting weight loss is very hard to achieve. Common reasons dieters give for tossing out their healthy eating goals include:

- I was so strict that I just couldn't stand it anymore.
- It was too hard to get back on track after the holidays or after vacation.
- I missed eating my favorite foods.
- I hated watching other people eat the foods I craved.

Researchers with the National Weight Control Registry found that dieters who had consistent eating habits day to day and month to month maintained a greater weight loss than

those who splurged more on weekends and holidays.

So, how can you make the consistency principle work for you?

Find the sweet spot between super strict diet rules and eating anything and everything. Imagine that eating habits fall on a scale of 1 to 10. Number 1 is that place of rigidity that many dieters love for a short time. It's that period of high motivation, deprivation, and rapid weight loss. Number 10 is the other end of the spectrum, where a former rigid dieter might just say, "I'll eat whatever I want, for tomorrow I may get hit by a bus." Healthful eating is moderation, and that's between 4 and 6. Healthful number 4 is when someone is trying to lose weight. Number 5 is working at weight maintenance and good health. (Yes, that too is work.) Finally, number 6 is when you're on vacation, so you allow yourself an extra glass of wine or piece of pie — but not a jug of wine or an entire pie.

Once you find that healthful middle ground, you'll find better health and loads more fun.

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