

WEIGHT-LOSS READINESS QUIZ

Are you ready to lose weight? Your attitude about weight loss affects your ability to succeed. Take this Weight-loss Readiness Quiz to learn if you need to make any attitude adjustments before you begin. Mark each item true or false. Please be honest! It's important that these answers reflect the way you really are, not how you would like to be. A method for interpreting your readiness for weight loss follows:

1. ___ I have thought a lot about my eating habits and physical activities to pinpoint what I need to change.
2. ___ I have accepted the idea that I need to make permanent, not temporary, changes in my eating and activities to be successful.
3. ___ I will only feel successful if I lose a lot of weight.
4. ___ I accept the idea that it's best if I lose weight slowly.
5. ___ I'm thinking of losing weight now because I really want to, not because someone else thinks I should.
6. ___ I think losing weight will solve other problems in my life.
7. ___ I am willing and able to increase my regular physical activity.
8. ___ I can lose weight successfully if I have no "slip-ups."
9. ___ I am ready to commit some time and effort each week to organizing and planning my food and activity programs.
10. ___ Once I lose some initial weight, I usually lose the motivation to keep going until I reach my goal.
11. ___ I want to start a weight-loss program, even though my life is unusually stressful right now.

SCORING THE WEIGHT-LOSS READINESS QUIZ

To score the quiz, look at your answers next to items 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, and 9. Score "1" if you answered "true" and "0" if you answered "false."

For items 3, 6, 8, 10, and 11, score "0" for each true answer and "1" for each false answer.

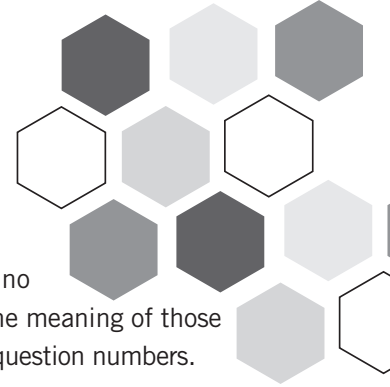
To get your total score, add the scores of all questions.

No one score indicates for sure whether you are ready to start losing weight. However, the higher your total score, the more characteristics you have that contribute to success. As a rough guide, consider the following recommendations:

1. If you scored 8 or higher, you probably have good reasons for wanting to lose weight now and a good understanding of the steps needed to succeed. Still, you might want to learn more about the areas where you scored a "0" (see "Interpretation of Quiz Items").
2. If you scored 5 to 7, you may need to reevaluate your reasons for losing weight and the methods you would use to do so. To get a start, read the advice given on the next page for those quiz items where you received a score of "0."
3. If you scored 4 or less, now may not be the right time for you to lose weight. While you might be successful in losing weight initially, your answers suggest that you are unlikely to sustain sufficient effort to lose all the weight you want, or keep off the weight that you do lose. You need to reconsider your weight-loss motivations and methods and perhaps learn more about the pros and cons of different approaches to reducing. To do so, read the advice on the next page for those quiz items where you scored "0."

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INTERPRETATION OF QUIZ ITEMS

Your answers to the quiz can clue you in to potential stumbling blocks to your weight-loss success.

Any item score of “0” indicates a misconception about weight loss, or a potential problem area. While no individual item score of “0” is important enough to scuttle your weight-loss plans, you should consider the meaning of those items so that you can best prepare yourself for the challenges ahead. The numbers below correspond to the question numbers.

1. It has been said that you can't change what you don't understand. You might benefit from keeping records for a week to help pinpoint when, what, why, and how much you eat. This tool also is useful in identifying obstacles to regular physical activity.
2. Making drastic or highly restrictive changes in your eating habits may allow you to lose weight in the short-run, but be too hard to live with permanently. Similarly, your program of regular physical activity should be one you can sustain. Both your food plan and activity program should be healthful and enjoyable.
3. Most people have fantasies of reaching a weight considerably lower than they can realistically maintain. Rethink your meaning of “success.” A successful, realistic weight loss is one that can be comfortably maintained through sensible eating and regular activity. Take your body type into consideration. Then set smaller, achievable goals. Your first goal may be to lose a small amount of weight while you learn eating habits and activity patterns to help you maintain it.
4. If you equate success with fast weight loss, you will have problems maintaining your weight. This “quick fix” attitude can backfire when you face the challenges of weight maintenance. It's best—and healthiest—to lose weight slowly, while learning the strategies that allow you to keep the weight off permanently.
5. The desire for, and commitment to, weight loss must come from you. People who lose and maintain weight successfully take responsibility for their own desires and decide the best way to achieve them. Once this step is taken, friends and family are an important source of support, not motivation.
6. While being overweight may contribute to a number of social problems, it is rarely the single cause. Anticipating that all of your problems will be solved through weight loss is unrealistic and may set you up for disappointment. Instead, realize that successful weight loss will make you feel more self-confident and empowered, and that the skills you develop to deal with your weight can be applied to other areas of your life.
7. Studies have shown that people who develop the habit of regular, moderate physical activity are most successful at maintaining their weight. Exercise does not have to be strenuous to be effective for weight control. Any moderate physical activity that you enjoy and will do regularly counts. Just get moving!
8. While most people don't expect perfection of themselves in everyday life, many feel that they must stick to a weight-loss program perfectly. This is unrealistic. Rather than expecting lapses and viewing them as catastrophes, recognize them as valuable opportunities to identify problem triggers and develop strategies for the future.
9. Successful weight loss is not possible without taking the time to think about yourself, assess your problem areas, and develop strategies to deal with them. Success takes time. You must commit to planning and organizing your weight loss.
10. Do not ignore your concerns about “going the distance,” because they may indicate a potential problem. Think about past efforts and why they failed. Pinpoint any reasons, and work on developing motivational strategies to get you over those hurdles. Take your effort one day at a time; a plateau of weight maintenance within an ongoing weight-loss program is perfectly okay.
11. Weight loss itself is a source of stress, so if you are already under stress, it may be difficult to successfully implement a weight-loss program at this time. Try to resolve other stressors in your life before you begin a weight-loss effort.

