

Congratulations! You've reached the halfway stage of this guide.

There may have been bumps in the road but you've shown the determination to continue the journey. By sticking with it over the weeks, you've shown a real desire to change.

We're rooting for you. You can do it. Use this midway point to review your routine to make sure there's nothing holding you back from losing weight.

- Tell family and friends how you're doing – you might even inspire them to join you
- Plan a non-food reward for when you get to 12 weeks.
- Tell other people how you're getting on setbacks are normal when trying to change habits of a lifetime. Accept this, and it will help you have the right attitude to get back on track when a slip-up does occur. Plan ahead how you will cope with potential bumps on the road, such as a meal out or a party.

Your actions for Week 6

Well done. If you've got this far and have stuck to the advice you should be feeling really pleased and proud of yourself. And it's that mental boost that you need to push yourself on to further success. Spend some time thinking about areas where you're struggling and come up with your own list of actions for overcoming them. A lifestyle change like this has to be an active process. The more you invest in it, the more you'll achieve.

Weight loss pitfalls

Are you struggling to lose weight? Find out what could be tripping you up. Here are some of the most common weight loss traps and some quick fixes.

Skipping breakfast: Skipping breakfast can lead to unplanned and unhealthy mid-morning snacking or bingeing at lunchtime.

Fix: go for breakfasts containing fibre, such as wholegrain bread or porridge.

Skipping meals: Skipping any meal is a bad idea. It may reduce your calorie intake for a brief period, but you'll be much hungrier later on and more likely to overeat.

Fix: eat regularly and don't starve from one meal to the next. Have some healthier snacks handy just in case.

Losing track of your calories: A cafe latte, a handful of crisps, a piece of chocolate, a biscuit ... mindless munching can easily sabotage an otherwise well-planned diet.

Fix: make a note of every bite to stay within your calorie allowance.

Unhealthy snacking: High-calorie snacks will do your waistline no favours, but healthier snacks can help you control hunger and keep your energy levels up.

Fix: choose snacks with fibre such as fruit, veg and wholegrain food.

Lapping up low-fat: 'Low-fat' or 'fat-free' doesn't always mean low calorie.

Fix: always check food labels for fat, sugar and calorie content.

Drinking too many calories: Some fancy coffees, sweet fizzy drinks, smoothies and alcoholic drinks can pack a calorie punch.

Fix: go for water (still or sparkling) with a slice of lemon, tea or coffee with reduced-fat milk, or herbal tea.

Weighing yourself too often: Your weight can fluctuate from day to day, so weighing yourself daily may not give a true picture of your weight loss.

Fix: weigh yourself once a week and use other goals to measure progress.

Setting unrealistic goals: Thinking you'll lose half a stone (3kg) in your first week is probably setting Yourself up for failure. A realistic goal is vital to successful dieting.

Fix: smaller goals are the building blocks to weight loss success.

Gaining weight from exercising: Take care not to cancel out the calories you've burned during exercise by eating more afterwards or you might end up putting on weight.

Fix: for a low calorie post-workout snack, read 10 surprising 100 calorie snacks at [nhs.uk/100-calorie-snacks](https://www.nhs.uk/100-calorie-snacks).

Oversized portions: This is a common reason why people struggle to lose weight.

Fix: use smaller plates and stop eating before you feel full.

Take the Week 6 MoT test

It's time to take stock of your progress and highlight any problems. Are you:

- Carefully recording all calories? "
- Weighing food when cooking? "
- Watching your drinking? "
- Reading food and drink labels? "
- Exercising 150 minutes a week? "
- Getting your 5 A DAY? "
- Having breakfast every day? "

If you didn't tick all the boxes then think about why and find a fix.

Non-food rewards

Tried and tested non-food rewards to help you celebrate your progress:

- New music
- New pair of jeans
- New running shoes
- Trip to the movies
- A DVD box set
- A day at a health spa
- A cooking class
- A day off work

Resisting peer pressure

In a perfect world, family and friends would do nothing but encourage you during your 12 weeks. In reality, it's not always like that. You may have had a friend tell you, "just one more drink won't hurt" or a partner say, "forget the gym tonight, let's go out for dinner" or a parent who urges you to have another slice of their homemade cake.

It's probably well-meaning. But that doesn't help when it comes to sticking to your daily calorie allowance. Here are seven ways to resist peer pressure:

- Get home support. Tell your family how much you value their support. The more involved they feel, the more sensitive they're likely to be.
- Ask those around you not to offer you your favourite treats so you don't give in to temptation.
- Plan evenings out in advance to adjust your calorie intake during the day so you don't go over your daily allowance.
- Avoid "rounds" at the pub. They can force you to keep up with your friends' drinking. Sit them out and buy your own drinks.
- If you're eating out, decide beforehand what you'll eat. Many restaurants display menus online.
- Learn to say no. It's not unfriendly to refuse unwanted food or drink offered by loved ones. Be polite but firm.
- Celebrate your success. When you hit a target, let everyone know so they see how much it means to you.
- Connect with other people following the weight loss plan.
- Share your experiences, ask and answer questions about losing weight, and help others on their journey.

Diet-friendly socialising

Here are some ways to spend time with friends to take your mind off food:

- A country walk
- The cinema (take your own low-calorie popcorn!)
- Bowling
- A bike ride and (low-calorie) picnic
- Roller-skating
- A game of Frisbee or football on the park
- A day at a spa

Weight loss tips for parents

Cooking for children can derail your diet so try these tips:

- Plan family meals ahead of time. If necessary, include a child-friendly option alongside your own healthy meal.
- Don't 'supersize' your children's meals. That way, there'll be fewer leftovers to graze on. Good Portion control can benefit the whole family.