



### Weighing In

The scale has been known to make people crazy. Otherwise sane people can become overjoyed or depressed, depending on the number revealed. It's easy to forget that the scale is just a tool, providing information that is useful but limited.

Weight includes muscle mass, fat, bones, etc, *and* fluid volume. My weight varies up to 4 pounds from day to day, and even within a day, depending on my hydration status. Carbohydrate metabolism also affects fluids. Fluid levels drop if you avoid carbs, and return when you resume eating them.

Exercise makes a big impact on weight. As you exercise you build muscle. This is a good thing. Muscle increases metabolic rate, so you burn more calories (not only while you exercise, but all the time!) Muscle weighs more but takes up less space, so it is possible to actually gain weight *and* have to buy clothes in a smaller size. Often weight stays the same, but clothes feel looser, indicating more muscle and less fat.

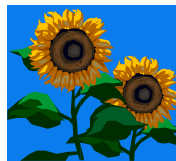
If weights have limited reliability, how do you know if you are being successful? Your ultimate measure of success is your health and how you feel. If you are making healthy food choices, eating moderate amounts and exercising – then you are on a good path to improving your health. Some people see confirmation on the scale, and some don't. No matter what the scale says, you can look and feel more fit and trim, have more energy, and see improvements in blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels.

To weigh or not to weigh—what should you do? It depends on you. If you are affected by the numbers on the scale, then just skip it. Focus instead on developing healthy habits. Weights are probably most useful for weight maintenance: if your weight is up several days in a row, it is a signal to pay attention.

### Taking Care of Yourself

It is important to take care of ourselves, and most of us are not very good at it. We excel at taking care of others; it makes us feel good, at least for a little while. But later, when we are running on empty, we wonder why.

We don't expect to drive our car without stopping regularly to fill it with gas. Yet we are willing to push ourselves past the point of exhaustion without stopping to rest and refuel. We expect so much from ourselves. We may try to fill that exhaustion with food, drink, shopping, or pain killers. But none of those refuel us. They ultimately make us more exhausted. And while food *is* part of our fuel, consuming extra food doesn't help. Only rest and self care does.



How can we take care of ourselves? What are the things that fill *you*? Begin to pay attention to what energizes you. For me, it is quiet time alone. For some of you, it's being with the people you love. For some it will be art or creative projects. You may feel refueled with exercise or being in nature. There seems to be a universal human need for the silent space of meditation, prayer, or just sitting quietly.

We need to change the way we look at these activities. These are not activities that can wait until we have extra time. We can't leave it until we finish all the 'important' chores. Taking care of ourselves IS the important thing. Even if you have children. When you are empty, you limit what you have to offer. When you are full you have so much more to give. No one else can do it for you. Feed that deep hunger by taking care of yourself.

### Fighting "What Is"

I've heard it said that our suffering is caused by fighting "what is." This rings true for me. I'd even take it a step further, and suggest that it's a common reason for overeating. Let's explore this idea further.

Most of us have our own favorite version of "the way it's supposed to be." We are supposed to be happier, healthier, wealthier, more disciplined. People around us are supposed to be more caring, considerate and to support us better. Essentially, we are in an argument with reality. We think things should be different. And they are not.

We experience the gap between what we expect and what we actually find (or "what is so") in different ways. We may feel vaguely uncomfortable and uneasy. Or we can experience it as anger or resistance. We can feel fear: fear that if we really stopped and confronted it that we would get sucked in and . . . (what? never escape?) All of these are good reasons to eat. It is a sure way to comfort ourselves. Or is it *really*?

The interesting thing is that when we stop, and choose to accept the discomfort rather than resisting it, it leads to resolution. It can feel edgy at first, but usually it is not as bad as we thought it would be. When we are able to just be with our feelings, as if we were sitting with them and keeping them company, they gradually shift. We gain comfort and clarity. And we become more free.

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Health and Wellness Coaching and Nutrition Consulting. Transform the challenges of stress eating.

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