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## Assessing needs

### Assessing Your Weight Management Skills

For some people, managing their weight seems effortless and requires little in the way of conscious attention or planning. Most of us, however, need to devote time and energy to this task. For some, it can feel like a full-time job.

Congratulations on your willingness to tackle this task.

The benefits of weight loss and long-term weight control are many and significant. This lesson will help you set your goals and direct your efforts.

Our best research and clinical experience has identified the following areas as essential to weight management. Each area is made up of a number of specific skills and knowledge competencies that center on a common theme. Rate your current level of mastery of each specific skill using the following 3-point scale:

1. Low skill level – improvement needed
2. Moderate skill level – satisfactory
3. High skill level – excellent

### tools for success

- Develop an overview of the areas of skill and knowledge that promote weight loss and long-term weight control.
- Understand your strengths and weaknesses with respect to managing your weight.
- Prioritize your needs for skill and knowledge acquisition, with the goal of improving your weight management effectiveness.

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Rank your current knowledge and understanding of the following topics.

1 = Low    2 = Medium    3 = High

Understanding the causes of weight gain	Rating
Understand the notion of "energy balance" and how to influence it	
Know the caloric values of common and preferred foods	
Know the value of various forms of physical exercise for "burning" calories and improving physical and mental health	
Understand the need for self-monitoring of food intake and physical activity	
Understand how the environment affects food intake and physical activity	
<b>Total</b>	
<b>Controlling exposure to unhealthy foods at home and work</b>	
Inventory foods kept at home to eliminate unhealthy food choices	
Stock healthy food choices at home, and place in high visibility areas	
Identify low-calorie beverages, and have them on hand at home and work	
Identify "high-risk" areas at work or school (where unhealthy food is often available) as "off limits"	
Identify "high-risk" stores and restaurants along your typical travel routes as "off limits"	
<b>Total</b>	
<b>Using will power when food shopping and eating out</b>	
Plan meals ahead and shop for food only from a list	
Avoid convenience stores and the snack food aisles in the supermarket	
Have frequented restaurants with healthy menu choices	
Plan for a healthy snack before food-oriented social events to "take the edge off" your appetite	
Have familiarized yourself with healthier menu choices of major fast food restaurant chains	
<b>Total</b>	
<b>Nutrition basics</b>	
Know the nutrient sources (protein, carbohydrates, and fats) of foods and the basic food groups	
Understand how to construct a simple, low-calorie, nutritious meal and how to choose a snack that will satisfy your appetite between meals	
Understand the difference between simple and complex carbohydrates	
Understand the difference between healthy and unhealthy fats	
Know which foods satisfy your appetite and which stimulate or "whet" your appetite	
<b>Total</b>	
<b>Programmed physical activity</b>	
Appreciate the difference between "programmed" and "lifestyle" physical activity	
Can identify an aerobic physical activity that you enjoy and that you have the potential for life long enjoyment	
Can identify types of strength training that you enjoy and that support your aerobic activity or your preferred lifestyle activities	

Have developed a flexibility (stretching) routine that will keep you limber and guard against injury during your other activities

Have maintained a dialogue with your doctor about your physical activity

**Total**

### **Lifestyle activity**

Have reviewed your daily routine and look for opportunities for additional muscle-powered activities such as walking and stair-climbing

Find and use the stairwells in the buildings you frequent

Have identified one or more leisure activities that you enjoy and incorporate into your weekly routine

Have reviewed the amount of television that you watch on weekdays and weekends and kept your viewing to +/- 14 hours/week

Have identified and use walking routes to stores within a mile of where you live

**Total**

### **Self-monitoring**

Use a calorie guide to determine the nutritional composition of foods

Have developed the habit of measuring and weighing foods to determine what a "serving" or portion size should look like

Have learned how to regularly read and evaluate food labels

Have developed the habit of recording amounts and calories of foods consumed

Have begun an "exercise journal," recording daily bouts of physical exercise

**Total**

### **Building self-confidence for weight control**

Identify weight loss goals that are realistic and appropriate to your body type and shape

Set modest but attainable goals and are prepared to give yourself credit for achieving modest weight losses

Recognize that the body types and shapes presented in the media are unrealistic for the typical person

Are prepared to be patient and to "stay the course" with your weight control efforts

Are prepared to learn from your eating and exercise lapses, and to go lightly with self-criticism

**Total**

### **Stress management**

Can identify situations that you can directly connect with your unhappy emotional times and behavioral issues

Can identify your typical thoughts in these difficult situations

Can learn how to challenge your unhappy thoughts and come up with helpful alternative thoughts

Can identify a stress management technique (for example: meditation, yoga, guided relaxation) that makes sense to you and can practice regularly

Understand that physical exercise and good nutrition are important stress management techniques

**Total**

### Preventing relapse

Can identify and prepare for "high-risk" situations for problematic eating or sustained inactivity	
Have developed the habit of anticipating high-risk situations beforehand and have developed plans to reduce the risk	
Are able to be comfortable with the strategy of avoiding high-risk situations	
Understand that sheer "will power" is of limited value in dealing with high-risk situations, especially when they need to be endured over a period of time	
Have developed a "comeback" plan for dealing with episodes of eating and physical exercise routine lapses, and/or periods of weight regain	
<b>Total</b>	

### Bring the totals forward

Understanding the causes of weight gain	
Controlling exposure to unhealthy foods at home and work	
Using will power when food shopping and eating out	
Nutrition basics	
Programmed physical activity	
Lifestyle activity	
Self-monitoring	
Building self-confidence for weight control	
Stress management	
Preventing relapse	

Compare ratings for the various topics. If your score for that area is:

15 – 13.....your proficiency in this area is **excellent**.

12 – 9.....your proficiency in this area is **satisfactory**.

8 – 5.....your proficiency in this area **needs improvement**.

You can use this scale to assess your individual needs for skill and acquiring knowledge in the specific area. During the course of the program, focus on an area that needs improvement. When you have made changes in this area, select another set of skills to work on. Work through all the topics in this manner. Your group may not cover the topic areas in the same order, but all areas will be covered.

We wish you good luck, and good skill, in pursuing your weight management goals!

## key goals

Using the tips in this module, develop 2 – 3 goals to work towards.

1	
2	
3	

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