client

HANDOUT

Tracking Your Eating

Is your training program not doing all you want it to with regard to weight management? You may be able to solve the mystery with a food diary. Having to write down everything you consume can motivate you to eat well. It can also help you learn a great deal about your eating habits, says Boston nutritionist Debra Wein, MS, RD.

Wein suggests keeping a food diary for three to five days, or longer if it proves helpful to you. You can review the information yourself or with your trainer.

How to Monitor Your Diet

Using the format shown here, create your own food diary. Use a separate page for each day. Write down everything you eat or drink, including water, added salt, candy, gum, condiments, vitamin/mineral supplements, sports drinks, medications and alcoholic beverages. In the "Time" column, record the time you ate or drank. Try to record your food intake immediately, so you don't forget what you have eaten. Be honest, and try not to make any judgments.

Be specific: Write down the cooking method, the food's brand name, the amount, and the ingredients in foods such as sandwiches or salads. On the back of the page, record any feelings you experience related to eating, and any obstacles you face when making your food decisions. Jot down comments or questions for your trainer. (You may also want to work with a nutritionist.)

Making Positive Food Changes

How can you turn your food diary into better eating habits? Take a look at the information you have recorded and ask yourself the following questions:

1 **Are your food portions appropriate?** Large servings can sabotage good intentions. Use the Food Guide Pyramid's serving sizes to track your portions.

2 **Are you eating enough fresh or minimally processed foods?** It isn't healthy to get all your calories from prepared and processed shakes, bars, pills and powders rather than real food.

3 **Are you getting enough fiber?** Check food labels, and increase your intake of whole-grain foods, fruits and vegetables, and beans and lentils if you are not getting 20 to 35 grams of fiber a day.

4 **Are your calories spread out equally over the course of the day?** Eating too lightly throughout the day can cause overeating at night.

5 **Are you eating enough servings from each of the food groups?** An unbalanced diet can lead to cravings, binges and other health problems.

6 **Are you snacking healthfully?** Healthy snacks can fill in the nutrient gaps in your diet.

7 **Are you a weekend eater?** If your eating habits worsen significantly on the weekend, you may not be getting enough nutrients during the week.

DAILY FOOD RECORD

TIME	FOOD/BEVERAGE	AMOUNT	FOOD GROUP

Day & Date

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