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Resolution for Success: Learn Why Diets Fail

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POSTED: Thursday, December 27, 2007

FROM BLOG: [Nutrition Tidbits - HealthCastle](#) - Fun and practical diet tips from the largest online nutrition community run by Registered Dietitians - HealthCastle.com

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What are your plans for January? Perhaps you will spend the month putting away holiday decorations and easing back into a regular schedule. And, if you're like millions of people, your plans may include embarking on a new diet.

Not surprisingly, a 2005 study conducted by a popular weight loss franchise announced that just under half of US women admit that losing weight is a likely New Year's resolution. With the holiday cakes and pies already devoured and out of sight, many people find the fresh start of a new year the perfect time to embark on a [weight loss](#) plan.

Unfortunately, unrealistic diet expectations can sabotage the very best intentions, leading to frustration when diets fail. If your January plans include a change in eating habits, check out our top takes on why diets fail, then use the suggested tips to choose a diet that will lead you to success.



Top 4 Reasons Diets Fail

1. Something's Missing

Diets eliminating an entire food group (such as [carbohydrates](#)) and not using the full spectrum of My Pyramid are difficult to follow, and will likely lead to a slip. A good rule of thumb is to ask yourself, "Can I eat like this forever?" A successful diet should allow choices from all food groups in moderation, and be something that you can follow for the long term.

2. Going Low

If you eat too few [calories](#) and are constantly hungry, you risk an eventual willpower blowout, leading to a major diet setback. Successful diets are adequate enough in calories so you don't experience prolonged deep hunger, but low enough to allow for a moderate weight loss of 0.5-1 lb per week. Looking beyond weight loss, it's also important to understand that consuming less than 1,200 calories per day for an extended period of time is never a good idea because it isn't enough to give your body the nutrients it needs to function best.

3. Diet. Period.

If you've embarked on a weight loss regime, but have no plans to incorporate exercise, your weight loss will most likely hit a frustrating plateau. Adding exercise can keep you motivated to stick to your diet, even on the weeks when the scale won't budge, since exercise can help you whittle off the inches. Regular exercise also increases the rate at which your body burns calories, helping you to see results faster than diet alone. Multiple research studies have concluded that the most successful diets include a combination of diet and exercise.

4. Friend or Foe?

A 2007 study published in the New England Journal of Medicine suggests that those who surround themselves with overweight or obese family and friends are more likely to be overweight or obese themselves. The study found that a possible explanation for the conclusions may be that your sense of "normal" weight and eating behavior can be influenced by those around you. For example, if everyone close to you is overweight or obese, your opinion may be that being overweight or obese is normal, thus you may not be motivated to lose weight. For the best success, surround yourself with family and friends sensitive to your goal, and make a personal commitment to follow through on your plans. If you have overweight family or friends, why not make a group resolution to work together for better health?

The Bottom Line

Dieters with long term successes are proof that the best plans include adequate choices from a wide variety of foods, are flexible and reasonable, and partner with exercise and support from peers. A diet that encourages weight loss slowly over time will help you form better habits to make your diet the beginning of a lifetime of [healthy eating!](#)

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