**Day 39**

**Title: How to recover from a plateau in your weight goal**

You’re on a roll. You’ve lost 10 pounds this month and you’re one zip away from fitting into your skinny jeans again. Then, like a ton of bricks – you hit a wall. You reach a plateau in your weight loss.

When you lose weight, you also lose a bit of lean body mass (muscle), which can lower your metabolism. As the new lighter (lower weight) you, you burn fewer calories and it becomes more difficult to continue losing weight at the same rate of speed. To shake it off, you have to do something different.

**Getting through the plateau**

Plateaus are great fun to walk on. You can see at a higher vantage point and see exactly where you’re going. It’s comfortable. But when you want to go higher, there’s nothing to grab a hold of. These tips can help you reach new heights to achieve your weight goals.

* Check your eating habits. You may have started out strong but chances are you’ve allowed some old habits to creep back onto the table. Recommit to your meal plan and check your portion sizes.
* Cut some calories. Don’t be tempted to go on a super low calorie diet because it will likely backfire. Dipping below 1,200 calories a day is not recommended. You won’t get adequate nutrition and you’ll probably be hungry.

In any case, cutting calories can make you feel like something is missing. Focus on getting more foods that fill you up, not out. Vegetables are high in water and fiber and can help you feel full on fewer calories. Having adequate protein at meals can also help keep hunger at bay.

* Do something different to get different results. Skating along on the elliptical trainer at the same pace and level of intensity will continue to yield the same results. Try a kickboxing class or dance workout to challenge your muscles more. If these options are not within your reach, increase the duration or intensity of your existing workouts to burn more calories.
* Add strength training. Increasing your lean body mass is one of the best ways to rev up your metabolism. Go to the gym or do it at home using your own body weight or hand weights.
* Move more**.** Since you can’t add more time to the day, add more activity wherever you can. Bike to work or take the stairs to the bathroom a couple flights up versus going to the one next to your office.

You might even consider adding a fitness tracker to help you see exactly what you are doing in terms of movement. Use the tracker to stay motivated and be sure you’ve met your daily physical activity goals.

**If you’re trying to gain weight**

If on the flip side you’ve reached a plateau in your weight gain efforts, it’s time to reassess. Ask yourself:

* Are you being consistent? Skipping a high calorie snack or meal will slow down your rate of weight gain. You have to be consistent to achieve sustained weight gain. No room for skipping meals. Eat more and eat consistently.
* Have you started working out more? Doing more requires more calorie burn, which means fewer calories available for putting on weight. Don’t forget to account for any additional activity you’ve started like walking or biking to work or taking public transportation instead of driving.
* Have you successfully gained 10 or more pounds? Great job! Guess what? You may need more even calories now. Calorie needs increase with weight gain, especially if it’s in the form of lean body mass.
* Add an additional serving of nuts or a calorie packed smoothie to meet the calorie demand from your extra physical activity or weight gain.

**A final word**

In any case, the good news is that you’ve already made progress in your weight loss or weight gain journey. You’ve improved your diet and you’re probably more physically active and may even feel better. Even small weight improvements can have a positive impact on your risk for chronic disease. So, give yourself a pat on the back. Celebrate your progress and keep moving forward. This is not the time to give up or stop. A plateau is temporary - a signal that it’s time to change gears.