

# Get Your Motivation Back!

## Or, how not to give up...

Which came first—you lost your motivation or your self-confidence to maintain your weight?

Weight maintenance is a challenging endeavor—how can you stay motivated to just stay the same? You were good at losing weight and were rewarded for it, but do you feel confident that you can hold that weight?

Weight loss was a positive motivator—you could anticipate being thinner, healthier, more active, and happier with yourself. Weight maintenance can be a *negative* motivator—*avoidance* of weight regain, *avoidance* of health problems, *avoidance* of aging. The trick is to restructure your goals so the outcome is “staying this weight” and rewarding yourself for accomplishing “the goal.” In other words, think “*rewarding*” instead of “*avoiding*.”

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Five Ways to Sustain Your Motivation</b></p> <p><b>Find the pleasure.</b> Examine how much you enjoy your new weight by reading <i>Your Lucky Stars</i> worksheet. Post this list by your mirror. Reflect on your current rewards.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Stay accountable.</b> Track your behavior, if only an X on the calendar for a simple behavior.</li> <li><b>Get support.</b> Find likeminded people (your S.T.A.R. coach or your group)</li> <li><b>Recognize negative self-thoughts and confront them.</b> See <i>Attitude Adjustment</i> worksheet.</li> <li><b>Create mini-goals, and reward yourself.</b></li> </ol>	<p><b>RATE ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10.</b> (10 being the most and 1 being the least)</p>
	<p><b>How important is maintaining your weight now?</b></p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p>
	<p><b>Why is this not a higher number?</b></p>
	<p><b>What could make it a higher number?</b></p>
	<p><b>How confident do you feel you can maintain this weight?</b></p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p>
	<p><b>What could you do to increase your confidence?</b></p>

Rewarding yourself is a skill—you may need to learn to motivate yourself with rewards. You might feel uncomfortable “patting yourself on the back” or feel you need to be “perfect” to deserve a reward. It may feel contrived or funny to literally give yourself a “gold star” to reward yourself, but finding a visual tool can be very meaningful.

<p><b>How to Successfully Self-Reward</b></p>
<p>Why is this important? Rewards are great motivators! You develop a sense of accomplishment when you achieve a small reasonable goal. Self-reward helps you stay on track toward your greater goals. You have tangible feedback that you are doing what you set out to do. You are encouraging new behaviors and reinforcing them when you give yourself a reward.</p>

**Rules for Self-Reward**

Self-rewards need to be decided before hand—make a contract with yourself:

- ★ Be specific.
- ★ Track the behavior.
- ★ Follow the rules you set and be strict.

You must value both the behavior change and the reward. Self-reward *must* happen as soon as possible—even immediately—after the behavior.

**Ways to Reward Yourself**

- ★ **MONEY:** Each time you perform a specific behavior, reward yourself with a small amount of money. Plan to spend the accumulated money on a specific thing.
- ★ **SYMBOLIC REWARDS/GOLD STARS:** Use a symbol, like a gold star sticker on your calendar each day you exercise for more than 30 minutes. Set a goal, such as, if you collect 15 stars in a month, you earn a reward such as a new pair of walking shoes, the latest electronic gizmo, or a manicure!
- ★ **BEHAVIORS THAT YOU CAN DO REGULARLY:** For instance, if you like to work on crossword puzzles but feel you don't deserve to spend the time, set a reward for something like packing a healthy lunch which would earn you the reward of 20 minutes of uninterrupted puzzle time that day.

**Make a list of ways you can reward yourself. Here are some for starters:**

<i>Sleeping late</i>	<i>Go to a movie</i>	<i>Listen to a relaxation tape</i>

Now decide which behavior you want to change, and how you will track this change and reward yourself. For example: "I will keep a food diary every day for a week. I will put \$2.00 in a jar every day I remember to enter my meals in the diary, and when I succeed, I can spend the money on some new music. If I don't keep the record every day, I can't use the money until I can do it 7 days in a row." What personal behavior changes might be worth rewarding?

**Motivation Commitment**

<b>Date:</b>	<b>From:</b>	<b>To:</b>
I agree to (list specific behavior you will do)		
If I do this, I may (define your reward). If I do not perform the target behavior, I cannot take my reward.		
I will track this behavior by:		
<b>Signature:</b>		<b>Date:</b>

At your next visit, share your contract and discuss your progress.