

Shifting the Focus Off Weight & Onto Healthy Behaviors

Many of us may feel like we "have" to focus on weight in order to keep our weight/health/body size "in check."

We may feel as though there are two options:

- (1) Fixate on weight in an effort to be healthy / at a specific body size
- (2) Not fixate on weight and allow everything to spiral out of control

Thinking this way is what I would consider a false dichotomy. In other words, we may think these are the only choices and thus feel like we have to focus on weight, because after all, who wants to be unhealthy and to have their weight spiral endlessly out of control??

Thankfully, there is a third (and in my opinion, much better) option!

Focusing on life-giving, healthy behaviors!
(Something we can directly control, unlike weight).

Reasons I Don't Recommend Focusing Directly on Weight:

1. So many factors go into weight beyond food/exercise.

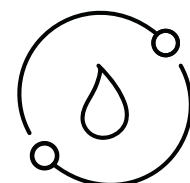
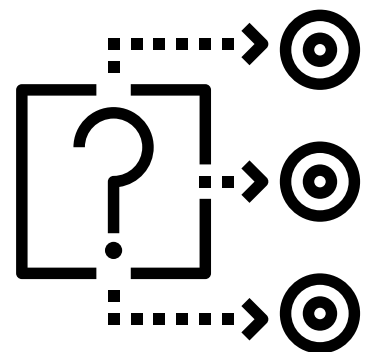
There are SO many factors that go into weight beyond what we are eating and how we are exercising. If the scale goes up one day and down the next, there is no way to know if that is due to what you ate OR any other number of factors. A recipe for obsession/chaos!

Some of the factors that go into the number on the scale at any given time:

- FLUIDS: This includes hydration status, sweating, menstruating or not, salt intake, and more. Weight can vary by as much as ~5 lbs within a 24-hour period solely due to fluids/water status. This is the biggest factor in day to day weight variations. (NOT what you ate!)
- Bowel movements (or lack thereof)
- Time of day
- Recent meals/snacks

Short-term slight variations in weight are relatively meaningless. They mainly tell us how hydrated a person is!

What's more, muscle weighs more than fat. Let's say you exercise regularly and generally eat a balanced diet. If the scale goes up slightly, maybe this is due to your healthy strength-building work at the gym!



2. Letting weight dictate food/exercise decisions is incompatible with eating intuitively.

If, when you step on the scale, you eat more or less depending on the number, this is letting an external tool/voice/device guide your eating decisions, NOT your body's innate wisdom.

And since there are so many factors that go into the number at any given moment, why let that number determine your exercise/food choices? Why give weight more power than it needs to hold as far as your food/exercise and overall life decisions go?

What would it look like to focus more on tuning into YOUR body/mind/intuition and how you feel instead?

Another way forward:

"Weight loss" or "body change" are not actions we can go out and directly "do" or make happen. Nor do those things necessarily mean improved health! When we instead choose to focus on caring for ourselves well physically through behaviors we can actually do and control, we can trust we are on the path to improved health.

When combining this approach with addressing any underlying root issues (such as environmental toxins, hormonal imbalances, gut issues, etc.) that are preventing our bodies from being in balance despite healthy behavior changes, our actions will lead our bodies to the sizes at which they are the healthiest. This could mean losing weight, gaining weight, or staying roughly the same. I see the point as better health, not a specific weight or size goal.

What We Cannot Directly Control:

- Weight
- Body size & shape
- Genetics



What We Can (Generally) Control:

- Eating habits, including eating regularly & eating nourishing/balanced meals
- Exercising regularly
- Strength + flexibility routines
- Sleep habits
- Stress management
- Eating plenty of fruits, veggies, + fiber
- Drinking enough water
- Walking throughout the day
- Getting outside most days
- Etc. etc!

