

# Overcome Weight Plateaus

## Session Overview

This session is devoted to understanding weight plateaus and how to move past them.

### OBJECTIVES FOR SESSION

1. Recognize and understand a weight plateau
2. Learn about ways for getting past a weight plateau
3. Understand the health benefits from a 10% weight loss

### SESSION PREPARATION

- Have the following materials available to share with participants:
  - B18 Motivate!
  - M02 Handling Weight Plateaus
  - M09 It's Your MOVE!
- The following materials may also be helpful for facilitator review when planning the session or for participants to review independently, after session:
  - M05 10 Health Gains from a 10% Weight Loss
  - B06 Yes, You Can Keep That Weight Off
- Remember to focus on strengths, and foster active participation from the group.
- Your role is to facilitate discussion without lecturing.

### Session Outline *(60 minutes)*

- Check-in (5 minutes)
- Discussion Topics (40 minutes)
- Stretch Activity (2 minutes)
- Putting It All Together (10 minutes)

## **CHECK-IN** (5 minutes)

- Facilitate weigh-ins; enter weight into the CPRS Vital Signs package.
- Collect Daily Food and Physical Activity Diaries and commend those who completed them.

## **DISCUSSION TOPICS** (40 minutes)

### **Introduction**

- Welcome everyone to the session and let them know they are 2/3 through – so great perseverance.
- Post Group Guidelines and review if new participants.
- Describe the purpose of today's class. State today's objectives and discussion topics.
- Invite participants to discuss their homework, daily food and activity diaries, progress on goals and challenges since the last class.
- Facilitate group problem-solving for any barriers.

### **Discussion #1: What is a weight plateau?**

#### **Weight Loss Plateau**

There is no official definition of a weight plateau, but many define the weight loss plateau as a failure to lose weight or inches around your waist for at least 4 weeks.

- Review this definition with the group. Ask participants to talk about their experiences with weight plateaus and solicit possible solutions. What helped them overcome it in the past? Write feedback/ideas on the board.

### **Discussion #2: How can I get past a weight plateau?**

- Thinking about their responses to your question, "How have you overcome being stuck in a plateau in the past, without giving up? Ask, "How might you change your thinking or behavior in the future to be able to get past a plateau successfully?"
- See how many of the concepts in [M02 Handling Weight Plateaus](#) they can generate and discuss any as requested.

- Some other ideas you may want to discuss with them are:
  - Reassess your habits. Ask them what this means and if they can offer actions for reassessing their behavior.
  - If they don't mention the points listed below, ask permission to share some other ideas with them and choose one or two:
    - Consider stepping your workout up a notch. Increase the amount of time you exercise by 15 to 30 minutes. You might also try increasing the intensity of your exercise. Additional exercise will cause you to burn more calories. Consider adding resistance or muscle-building exercises. Increasing your muscle mass will help you burn more calories.
    - What about shifting your focus a little? For example, if you have been working hard on reducing foods high in unhealthy fats, try also cutting down on carbohydrates. If you have been doing mostly flexibility or simple stretching, try adding in walking or other aerobic activities.
    - Cut a few more calories. Reduce your daily calorie intake by 200 calories – provided this doesn't put you below 1,200 calories. Fewer than 1,200 calories a day may not be enough to keep you from feeling hungry all of the time, which increases your risk of overeating. In addition, this reduced calorie intake should be sustainable. If not, you'll regain the weight you've lost and more.
    - You may need to get assistance recalculating your actual energy/calorie needs, especially if you have already lost a significant amount of weight.
    - Most important, **Don't Give Up!** You may feel as if you are no longer losing weight – but you most likely are and it just isn't registering on the scale. Losing even 1/3 of a pound per week amounts to a weight loss of 17 pounds over a year. Don't get discouraged; keep up the hard work and you will be rewarded in the long run.

### **Stretch Activity** (2 minutes)

Incorporating physical activity into the session reinforces the healthy lifestyle message and provides an opportunity to demonstrate some simple but effective exercises.

#### **Ask participants, if they wish, to join you in doing the following stretch activity:**

Invite participants to stand up if they are able. If not, they may remain seated.

#### **Simple Stretch:**

Extend your arms overhead with elbows straight. Lower arms to sides and reach away from your body. Reach arms behind you and extend away from your body within your comfort zone.

### **Discussion #3: How will I benefit from losing 10% of my weight?**

- Explain to participants that one technique to help get past a plateau is to remember why they initially joined the program.
  - Invite participants to share from memory, or review their worksheet, [Why I joined the MOVE! program](#).
- Another way to rekindle motivation may be to think about the benefits of losing weight.
  - Invite participants to share their ideas of the benefits they will get from losing weight.
  - Use handout [M05 10 Health Gains from a 10% Weight Loss](#) to continue the discussion about the positive effects of losing weight.

### **PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER** (10 minutes)

#### **Session recap:**

- Review a few of the techniques discussed to overcome a plateau.
- Could point out additional resources that might be helpful to review at home such as [M09 It's Your Move!](#), and [B18 Motivate!](#) to remind participants why they chose MOVE! and for support when they encounter a plateau.

#### **Goals and action planning for the next week:**

- Stress the importance that weight plateaus do happen, but are **often** temporary. Encourage Veterans to stick with their program; they should start losing again!
- Ask them which of the alternatives discussed today they would like to try if they feel stuck in the future (i.e. increasing their physical activity or mix it up by adding something new to their program).
- If they are not recording their food intake, ask if they would be willing to start again to see if extra calories have crept into their food plan.
- Encourage them not to give up!
- Ask, “What was most helpful today? What could have been better?”

#### **Homework for next week:**

- Remind participants to continue logging in their Daily Food and Physical Activity Diary, and to bring the diary and their pedometer to every session.
- Provide information necessary for attending the next session (date/time/location, etc.).

#### **Topic for next week:**

[Finesse Your Food](#)