

So you've successfully dropped those unwanted pounds. Give yourself a pat on

the back; the hard part is over! Are you worried about gaining the weight back?

No need to fret. We've talked with some of the top weight loss specialists

in the country. Here are their 10 unexpectedly easy ways to keep

up your healthy new lifestyle.

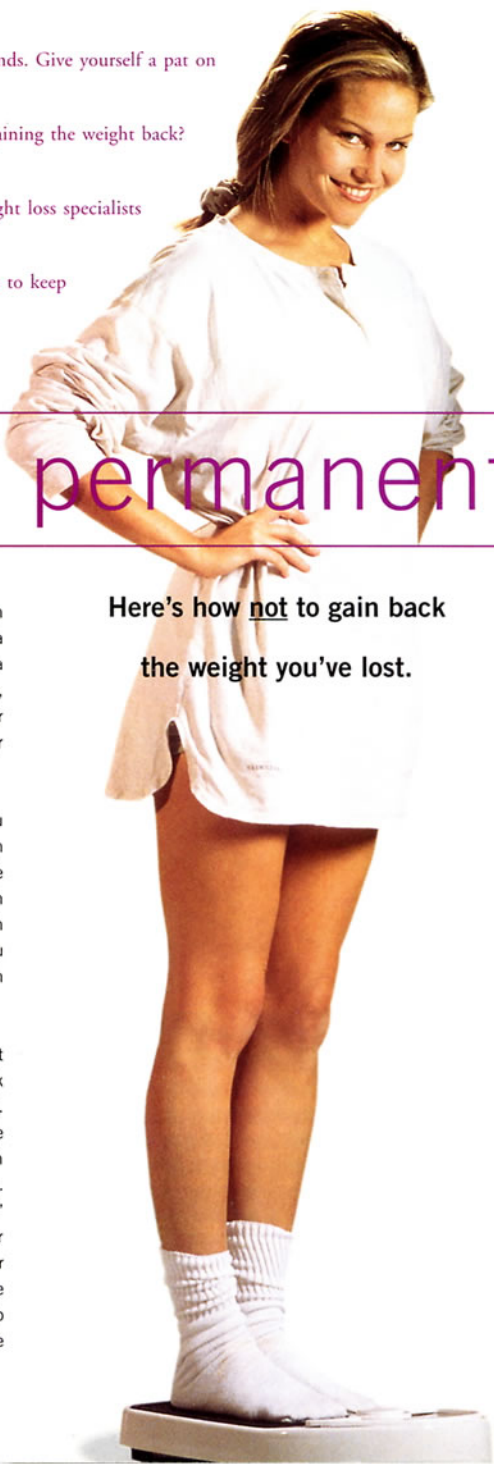
secrets of permanent

eat every meal Starving yourself in preparation for eating a big meal later or in penance for overindulging at a meal consumed earlier doesn't work, says Deirdra Price, a clinical psychologist who specializes in eating disorders, nutrition and body-image issues. "It's when you throw your hands up in exhausted defeat and eat everything in sight for days that you pack on the pounds."

drink water When the need to eat strikes you, you may in reality only be thirsty. "The hunger signal is often confused with the signal for thirst in your brain," says Marge Bryan, RD, at St. Francis Regional Heart Center in Indianapolis, Indiana, who serves on the dietetic education advisory board for Purdue University. The next time you think you're hungry, try drinking a tall glass of water, then wait 10 to 15 minutes to see if the feeling subsides.

go for what you crave It is possible to eat chocolate, ice cream or cake without gaining an ounce. The trick is not to deny yourself, because that will end up backfiring. "Successful weight loss maintenance means permitting a favorite treat in moderation," says Price. Denise Austin, nationally known fitness expert and TV host for both ESPN and Lifetime, agrees. "It is completely natural for your body to crave specific foods," says Austin. She suggests having some chocolate sorbet or chocolate milk the next time the urge for chocolate hits. Either will calm the craving with fewer than 100 calories. Feel like something creamy? Try skim milk pudding, spicy black-bean dip or a banana. In the mood for something sweet? Go for a couple of Fruit Newtons or a small piece of angel food cake.

Here's how not to gain back
the weight you've lost.



eat slowly "If you're the last person at the table to take the first bite, and the last person to take the final bite, you'll be ahead of the game," says Bryan. Letting your food digest properly gives your stomach more time to tell your brain it's full.

eat at home A study done by the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center—the biggest study ever done on successful weight loss maintenance—found that none of the successful participants ate out more than twice a week. Home dining gives you more control over what you put in your mouth—you can keep the fat out of your cooking repertoire. Then, on the occasional times you do dine out, you can indulge guilt-free.

weight loss

be restaurant savvy If you do eat out, ask the waiter to bring the bread with your meal instead of before it. Be the first to order, so you'll be less likely to be influenced by your fellow diners' higher-fat choices. Ask for salad dressings and sauce to be served on the side; dip your bare fork in the sauce and then pick up your food with it. Divide your dish in half before you dig in—and the waiter can bag the uneaten half after the meal.

exercise Just a little will do. You don't have to train for a marathon to be healthy. A study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found that people who did everyday activities, such as mowing the lawn or walking, were as

healthy as those who had a formal exercise program. But you do have to exercise. Every successful participant in the weight loss maintenance study reported using a combination of diet and exercise to maintain weight loss. To promote health, prevent disease and maintain a healthy weight, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American College of Sports Medicine recommend moderate activity for a cumulative time of at least 30 minutes most days of the week. Take a 10-minute walk instead of a coffee break, spend 10 minutes gardening and walk your dog for 10 minutes afterward.

get some sleep "If you get plenty of sleep, you're less likely to be cranky. When you're cranky, irritable and stressed, you're more likely to reach for fatty, sugary comfort foods," says Therese Franzese, RD, assistant professor of clinical nutrition at the New York Institute of Technology.

send yourself a signal It's amazing how much eating you can do after you're actually done with your meal. Giving yourself an "I'm finished" sign can help to curb any after-meal eating. Try brushing your teeth, says Franzese. It's tough to resume munching with the taste of toothpaste in your mouth. If a toothbrush isn't handy, or you like to linger at the table, putting a napkin over your plate can help do the trick.

eat potatoes It might sound strange, but potatoes serve a weight management function. "When you're hungry, a baked potato—without the high-fat sour cream and butter—can curb your appetite and prevent carbohydrate binges," says Price. A study done at the University of Wisconsin at Madison found that potatoes were the food that caused people's bodies to produce the highest level of serotonin (a brain chemical that makes you feel calm).
—Andrea Dawn Clark

m o t i v a t i o n t o s t a y i n m o t i o n

Give your body small challenges during your workout, says Covert Bailey, author of *Smart Exercise* (Houghton Mifflin, 1994). If slow walking is your fastest comfortable exercise, go up a short hill during your walk. As you see that you can handle a new level in your routine, you'll feel proud of yourself, and will be motivated to take on more.

Exercise in the morning before you have too much time to think about it, Therese Franzese advises. Don't give yourself an entire day to develop excuses.

Once you've lost the weight, take the focus off weight loss and put it on your own personal well-being, says Deirdra Price. The best measure of your overall health is how energetic you feel. It's your healthy style of living that will ward off weight gain.
—A.D.C.