



Being overweight was getting to be a drag. When you carry around extra baggage, you trudge through life with a burden you don't believe is the real you. At 178 pounds, that's when Marilyn Zamora decided she had had enough. While her husband was out on deployment, she enrolled in MWR's Weight Management program last June and is thrilled to share her success story.

During the six-week program, her weight slowly began to drop, which motivated her to continue on her own even after the program ended. She learned to accept responsibility for her weight and became accountable to herself. Within six months, she lost 25 pounds and continues her newfound ways as a lifestyle, not just a diet. "When you finally see some success, then it becomes easier to stay focused," she said.

Zamora attributes her success to the lessons learned from her instructor, Navy Fitness Specialist Mark McFarland. "Even after the session is over, Mark continues to support us," she said. "He asks how I'm doing and always replies to calls or email." Through this program, Zamora found the right motivation factors that set her free. Whether it's healthier eating habits, better nutrition, a need to improve one's cholesterol or blood pressure, or just weight loss, this program may help you, too. Here are some of the tips she learned and wants to share with others.

Keep a food journal. Log every morsel that goes into your mouth so you know your calorie intake. Better yet, plan your meals for the entire day, including snacks and beverages. If you work, pack your lunch to the office so you can plan portion sizes and include nutritious choices of fresh fruit and vegetables. Be accountable for the calories that you consume. Bottom line is, if your physical activity does not keep up with or exceed your calorie intake, you will not lose weight.

Get cranking with any type of workout, whether it's just a 20-minute walk after dinner or a

sweat-producing run on a treadmill. (See your doctor first before beginning any major exercise program). You will be surprised at how your body will begin to crave the energy release and magical endorphins that are produced. For some people, early morning is better. If you get your workout done in the beginning of the day, it can energize you for the rest of the day. If you have had a stressful day and plan to go to the gym afterward, you might sabotage yourself and talk yourself out of heading that way. Don't be your own victim.

Learn to enjoy fresh fruits to satisfy your sweet tooth. Sugary snacks and even sugar substitutes can trick you temporarily but they will continue to signal your body for more. Better to try and wean your cravings by not starting the "sugar cycle" to begin with.

Even fast food chains offer good and bad choices. Read menu ingredients and take time to ask for substitutions. For example, you can order your item "fresco style" at Taco Bell and they'll substitute a fat-free salsa instead of cheese or other fattening sauce.

Create your own support team and help to motivate others as well. It helps to have someone encourage you or to meet at the gym. But, remember, you have to be accountable to yourself.

Education is the key. The more you learn about nutrition, exercise and fitness, the better equipped you'll be to succeed. McFarland encourages participants to read books and use web resources. "Check out www.foodfit.com and www.fitday.com. These two websites are great because they give you nutrition tips, healthy snacks and allow you to track your calories," he said.

The next Weight Management class starts January 3rd, running every Tuesday and Thursday evening for six weeks. Cost is \$75 for the full program, which includes a full physical assessment, nutritional education, and a motivational fitness professional to guide you through cardiovascular and weight training exercises. For more information, call Bloch Arena Fitness at 473-0793.

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