

REWARDING YOURSELF CELEBRATING YOUR SUCCESS



dietflex

LOZ life

Changing behaviour is one of life's greatest challenges, and if it's an entrenched habit can be difficult and painful. That's why we need to reward ourselves for each small step, especially at the start of the process.

Everyone likes a pat on the back every once in a while. And there's no better time to get one than when you're out of your comfort zone, challenging yourself to improve, and nervous about whether you can succeed.

Too often we focus on what we're losing or missing out on, but it is far more helpful to think about what we're gaining. This enables us to focus on what we're doing right or doing well, and to forgive ourselves for the mistakes or slip-ups that inevitably occur. Nurturing a positive approach helps keep our mind on the benefits and the goal, and helps to maintain enthusiasm and motivation.

Rewards create a feeling of doing something you want to do, not just what you're forcing yourself to do. Even the smallest of rewards can work wonders as you travel from day to day, kilo to kilo, and milestone to milestone.

When we celebrate behaviour change with rewards, we're recognising achievement, motivating ourselves to continue, and building self-esteem. This last part is key to maintaining change as self-esteem gives us the courage to keep moving forward and to keep trying. Self-esteem can counter 'low' feelings that may accompany a backslide into bad habits.

MAKE REWARDS MEANINGFUL

The first rule of rewards is that they should make you feel good. They should have value. And they should be immediate – in other words, when we achieve a determined goal, big or small, we get the reward that matches. Generally, there are two types of rewards:

- Extrinsic - coming from the outside, such as buying a CD, going to a spa, getting praise from others
- Intrinsic - the reward is in how the action makes us feel: proud, content, victorious

Though rewards that change our inner life (intrinsic) are more important in the long run, extrinsic rewards serve as important pats-on-the-back on the road to change.

PLAN FOR YOUR REWARDS

Rewards work best if we start small and end big. Planning for a variety of short-range, mid-range, long-range and maintenance rewards along the way means you always have the next reward to look forward to.

Extrinsic, or material, rewards are easy to think about, but don't neglect the intrinsic rewards. You lost weight, and now you look better and feel amazing. Write down how you feel, treasure the positive experience and connect it to the behaviour change.

- **Reward the positives but don't punish slip-ups.** Making long-term change may be a long-term process, and as with learning anything new you're bound to make some mistakes, have some slipups or set-backs, and 'fall off the wagon' along the way. This is all normal and you can learn from everything that happens.
- **Celebrate small accomplishments.** A lot of small rewards, used for meeting smaller goals, are more effective than relying solely on the bigger rewards that require more work and more time, or even more money.

- **Choose some milestones or reward levels.** This might be for specific weights or weight loss, for dates, for consecutive days planning your meals, or for levels of consistency.
- **Don't over-reward.** Over-rewarding, like overpraising, can backfire. Make the reward match the effort/output.
- **Let other people know about your successes.** The pat on the back you get from others can be a great motivator to continue toward your ultimate goals. Celebrate with others, especially a mentor.
- **Make the reward meaningful.** What's right for you may not be for the next person. A new pair of shoes may be a beautiful reward for one, while a quiet evening with a book and the kids having a sleep-over a better reward for someone else. Work out the things which best motivate you.
- **Never use food as a reward - not even good food.** It's just too much of a slippery slope. Don't go there.
- **Plan to celebrate.** Figure out now how you're going to celebrate reaching your health, fitness or nutrition goal. Involve other people now by telling them about it. Create a celebration that you can anticipate and then keep it within sight all the time.
- **Be honest with yourself.** Taking a reward before it has been earned can slow your progress of building a lifetime habit. Remember to keep your focus on building a habit, not just figuring out how to get the reward.
- **Re-evaluate your goals and rewards.** If they don't work, change them.
- **Reduce rewards as the new behaviour becomes a habit, while keeping a few maintenance rewards in line.**

40 IDEAS FOR REWARDING YOURSELF

1. **COMPLIMENT YOURSELF.** Write down what you would say if someone else had achieved what you have.
2. **PUT \$1 IN A JAR EVERY TIME YOU MEET A GOAL.** Set a target and when you reach the target, treat yourself.
3. **MAKE A LUCKY DIP OF LITTLE PRIZES.** When you reach a goal, grab a reward!
4. **CREATE A TROPHY SCRAPBOOK** Collect mementos from your accomplishments and keep adding to it.
5. **GO FOR A SPA TREATMENT OR MASSAGE.** What could be more indulgent than being pampered?
6. **BUY YOURSELF A GIFT CERTIFICATE.** Use it once you've achieved a specific milestone.
7. **TAKE A LIMO RIDE.** Take your friends and have some fun.
8. **SUBSCRIBE TO A MAGAZINE YOU ALWAYS WANTED.** Avoid tempting foodie magazines - resistance is difficult.
9. **READ A BOOK.** Browse the library for a title you never knew you wanted to read.
10. **CELEBRATE "100% DAYS"** These are the days where you've done everything right!

- 11. MAKE SOME TIME TO BE BY YOURSELF.** Sit out in the sun, breathe deeply, look at the trees, listen to the birds, relax.
- 12. PAY SOMEONE TO DO THE GARDEN, POOL OR HOUSE CLEANING THIS WEEK.** Watch them do it if that increases your sense of reward.
- 13. SOAK IN A BUBBLE BATH.** Fill the tub with warm water and bubbles and soak your cares away.
- 14. RELAX IN THE PARK** Enjoy the outdoors and get a bit of sun.
- 15. TAKE A NAP** Naps are a great reward because you wake up refreshed and ready to go.
- 16. SEE A MOVIE** Seeing new movies is an all-time favourite pastime for many.
- 17. CALL SOMEONE YOU LOVE** Schedule a 20-minute catch-up conversation.
- 18. BUY SOMETHING SMALL** Retail therapy – with limits – is a popular way to reward yourself.
- 19. EXERCISE GO FOR A RELAXING STROLL –** by yourself or with company.
- 20. SCHEDULE CUDDLE TIME WITH YOUR PARTNER** Make a date of it, and make it something to look forward to.
- 21. SELL SOMETHING ON THE INTERNET** Find something around the house that has value and post it for sale online.
- 22. SEARCH FOR NEW MUSIC** Check out iTunes or a music store for something new.
- 23. INDULGE IN A GUILTY PLEASURE** Trashy TV, gossip mag, romance fiction –11. Make some time to be by yourself. Sit out in the sun, breathe deeply, look at the trees, listen to the birds, relax.
- 24. GO ON A PICNIC** Gather up your picnic basket for a day of relaxation. Take someone with you.
- 25. SCHEDULE A QUICK GROOMING SESSION** Eyebrows, pedicure, whatever you want or that needs doing.
- 26. PLAY YOUR FAVOURITE GAME** Online games alone or with friends, or a board game with the family.whatever takes your fancy.
- 27. TURN OLD CLOTHES INTO NEW** Clean out your closet and repurpose unwanted clothes.
- 28. TAP INTO YOUR CREATIVE SIDE** Resume an old hobby or take up a new one.
- 29. PLAY A GAME IN THE BACK YARD WITH THE KIDS** Go on, surprise them!
- 30. GET A MAKE-OVER** Get a make-over at the cosmetics counter at the nearest department store.
- 31. EXPERIMENT IN THE KITCHEN** Be creative using only ingredients allowed on your plan. Share your successes.
- 32. BUY A NEW BRA** Get professionally fitted, and look fabulous.
- 33. BUY YOURSELF A BUNCH OF FLOWERS** A lovely vase of bright fresh flowers is a real indulgence. Have them delivered to work and make everyone else wonder.
- 34. GO DANCING** Play your favourite music, turn out the lights, and move. Relax and enjoy.

35. PAINT YOUR NAILS You'll be forced to sit and relax while waiting for them to dry.

36. DO SOMETHING SCARY Think about something which is just a little bit out of your comfort zone.

37. TRY AN ADVENTURE ACTIVITY Give canoeing, rock climbing, or skiing a try. Do something outdoorsy.

38. BUY SOME NEW CLOTHES Keep this for a big reward, and enjoy it.

39. TAKE A VACATION OR WEEKEND GETAWAY Whatever your ideal getaway, start planning - and saving - and treat yourself when you've achieved your biggest goal.

40. WHAT IDEAS DO YOU HAVE?
