

Lapses, Prevention of Relapses and Overcoming Obstacles

There is no doubt about it, changing our eating and exercise behaviours is hard work. There are many factors which we experience on a day-to-day basis that make weight management difficult. Likely the 2 greatest challenges are 1) adhering to new behaviour changes and 2) **not** viewing setbacks in behaviour changes as failures.

Lapse: A time limited period in which you revert to a behaviour you are trying to alter, change or improve.

Relapse: A full return to old behaviours.

2 key reminders: A lapse does not equal a relapse and a lapse in behaviour does not mean that you have failed!

A little more about lapses:

- They are to be expected when making behaviour changes
- They are part of the process of behaviour changes
- They give you the opportunity to learn about yourself, your motivators and skills to manage change
- They help you to solidify your new behaviours

As you embark on your transition into a healthier lifestyle, it is important for you to understand that no one is perfect. From time to time expect to have a lapse or a slip and accept that a lapse is inevitable and normal. The danger in having a lapse is not that it has happened, but in how you perceive the lapse and recover from it.

So when a lapse occurs:

- Be prepared for its arrival
- Stay calm and positive
- Identify the trigger that led to the lapse
- Label it for what it is, an opportunity to learn
- Remember your motivators and long term goals
- Take control of the situation
- Remind yourself of your progress thus far
- Return to your concrete strategies (journaling, meal planning, exercise log etc)
- Reach out for support
- Remember that this is a lifestyle change and that behaviour change takes time.