

FitFacts®



10 Tips For Choosing A Quality Weight Loss Program

CONSUMERS SPEND BILLIONS OF DOLLARS EACH YEAR ON WEIGHT LOSS PROGRAMS AND PRODUCTS, AND YET OBESITY RATES CONTINUE TO INCREASE. WITH SO MANY OPTIONS AVAILABLE, HOW CAN YOU CHOOSE THE RIGHT ONE THAT WILL HELP YOU LOSE WEIGHT SAFELY AND KEEP IT OFF FOR GOOD? TO MAKE IT EASIER, WE'VE PUT TOGETHER A LIST OF KEY PROGRAM ELEMENTS TO LOOK FOR:

- 1. Behavior changes.** Learning to think in new ways is essential for long-term success. A reputable program will help you replace faulty thinking patterns with positive, productive ways of thinking that support your health goals.
- 2. Safety.** A sound weight-loss program will encourage you to check with your healthcare provider before you get started. Your provider will evaluate your health status, order any necessary tests, and offer special precautions as needed.
- 3. Credibility.** A quality program will have credentialed providers such as registered dietitians [registered dietitians link to: <http://www.eatright.org/iframe/findrd.aspx>], certified fitness professionals and health coaches [certified fit pro and health coach link to: <http://www.acefitness.org/acefit/locate-trainer/>], licensed psychologists or counselors, and licensed medical professionals such as physicians and registered nurses.
- 4. Flexibility.** Programs that demand adherence to a rigid diet or exercise plan set you up for failure. Look instead for programs that consider your food and physical activity preferences. For long-term success, you'll need to adopt lifestyle changes you can live with.
- 5. Realistic outcomes.** "Lose 20 pounds in 1 week" may catch your eye, but the truth is that permanent weight loss happens slowly—at a rate of ½ pound up to a maximum of 2 pounds per week. Consider it a red flag if a program does not list data regarding average amount of weight lost and long-term follow-up of participants.
- 6. Self-monitoring.** Numerous studies have shown that people who keep track of their food, exercise, and weight lose significantly more weight than those who do not. A good program encourages self-monitoring as part of the weight loss journey.
- 7. Sensible nutrition.** Avoid programs that eliminate entire food categories or are too restrictive. Also steer clear of diets that make you eat foods in special combinations or certain foods in unlimited quantities. These don't work and can cause your body to miss out on important nutrients.

- 8. Regular exercise.** Not only is physical activity the cornerstone to losing weight and keeping it off, but it is also an excellent way to improve mood, boost brain power, and counteract emotional eating. A quality weight loss program should encourage you to find ways to make physical activity a part of your everyday life.
- 9. Believable claims and no pressure.** Walk away from any program that pressures you to buy special foods, supplements, pills, or gadgets or promises a quick fix. There are no magic pills to "melt your fat away."
- 10. Longevity.** Perhaps the best question to ask when selecting a program is, "Could I reasonably make these changes for the rest of my life?" If the answer is "no," then keep looking for a more practical program to fit your needs and preferences.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[American Council on Exercise](#)

[Choose MyPlate](#)