

[Losing Weight For Texas Women An Ongoing Challenge](#)

It's not that women in Texas have any greater a challenge than those living elsewhere in the U.S. But when you consider its sheer size -- with cities like Austin, Dallas and Houston the Lone Star State is one of the most populous in the country -- trends on issues like dieting emerge.

Like it or not, perhaps because of society's near-obsession with how people look, there's a continuing focus on losing unwanted pounds. With that focus comes a plethora of "suggestions" that typically take the form of diets, fad or otherwise, that typically promise wondrous results in no time at all.

Among the programs millions of women have tried with varying results: those with the names Atkins, South Beach and Weight Watchers, as well as products from companies such as NutriSystem, Jenny Craig and Slim Fast. The list goes on, and on, and on.

But have women always had this focus on weight and weight loss?

Apparently not. In the 19th century -- the 1800s -- the vast majority of people, 97% in fact, had a healthy weight as determined by their body size. Just 3% of people in the adult population were considered to be overweight.

Yet today, that number is something on the order of 60%, with a doubling and tripling of the number of overweight children in recent years. And, whether someone has health insurance or not, experts are quick to point out that such numbers are not something to take lightly.

So what's changed? Willpower? The diets themselves?

Many say the real culprit is a combination of food and lifestyle, both of which aren't improving when it comes to promoting good health. With depletion of soils and a proliferation of mega farms that are increasing so far away from where the food is purchased and consumed, the reality is that food today has far less nutrition than what our ancestors ate even just a few decades ago. In short, there's just not as much goodness in what we put in our mouths.

While we obviously can't change (easily that is) where we live and how food is grown and subsequently processed, taking high quality multi-vitamin supplements is one way healthy people today are coping. For women, who typically have another problem -- a lack of time -- another way to gain the nutritional edge they need might be through a daily protein smoothie shake, a tasty habit that's likely to be an easy and enjoyable way to deal with the nutritional issue Texas residents face.

There's also the issue of how much food we eat. Even a modest ingestion of excess food -- 100 calories a day -- adds up to about 10 extra pounds a year. Five years later, it's 50 pounds and we wonder what happened. The message: you need to stop the gain before you can think about taking off the excess weight.

Food aside (and some would underscore the point that setting at least some food aside is, in itself, a pretty good idea), the issue of exercise is another area where Texas women -- especially in larger cities like Dallas, Austin and Houston where typically sedentary office work may be more common than elsewhere -- can get where they want to be from a health perspective.

One of the easiest, least expensive ways to raise the bar when it comes to the exercise quotient is to take a walk. Even a half hour in place of a TV sitcom (bring your MP3 player along if nature isn't company enough) can, over time, make a significant and healthier difference. Joining (and, more importantly, going to) a gym can be another way to sustain the exercise routine, especially if a woman can team up with a friend or colleague who also wants to benefit from the power of accountability.

Some women have also found journaling -- writing down what they eat and how much (or little) exercise they do -- to be a great way to hold themselves accountable. That activity is, in itself, an eye-opener. And when the one doing the journaling does a little detective work (such as finding out what is actually contained, in the form of fat and calories, in the food being consumed), it becomes a real tool for healthy life change.

Another tip for a healthier lifestyle is to limit the number of restaurant visits in any given period of time. One of the bigger areas of risk is the typical fast food restaurant, although even there healthier choices abound -- think grilled chicken breast instead of the double bacon cheeseburger on the full color menu.

But is all this change worth it? And, more to the point, is it really going to make a difference? Experts will tell you, regardless of age, it's never too late to make a lifestyle change related to weight and nutrition.

Your heart will love you for it.

Weight and nutrition are ongoing concerns in today's modern society. But there are things that anyone can do to improve their health, regardless of their age. How you take care of yourself will certainly affect you as you age, and eventually your wallet, as well.

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