



Get Off the Slippery Slope of Relapse

You've lost weight—the last thing you want to see is any of it come back! How to avoid a relapse? Minimize small lapses—like that last-minute-high-calorie fast food meal or that week of no exercise. We'll give you the tools to head off a lapse even before you see it coming!



Tiny Lapses Are a Part of Life

How does one ice cream cone or a couple of no-exercise days lead to a full-blown relapse? There are several reasons, including negative self-talk and a lack of planning. Handled smartly, small lapses won't derail your Real Appeal weight loss success.

In fact, little interruptions are important check points—they give you an opportunity to practice the coping skills that can fuel a lifetime of weight maintenance. The danger, however, is that little slips can sometimes spiral into big skids that may lead to relapse and weight gain.

The key to long-term success? Nipping little lapses in the bud: When Brown University researchers looked at the habits of members of the National Weight Control Registry—people who've lost at least 30 pounds and kept it off for a year or longer—they found that those who *caught* inevitable little slips the soonest *sidestepped* relapses most effectively. This session will help you do the same so you can steer out of a weight-loss “spin” expertly.



Why Relapse

Detours Happen

Negative thoughts can send you in the wrong direction.

What you tell yourself after a little slip can either help you get right back on track, or set you up for a big relapse. If you miss a workout and trash talk yourself (“I’m no good at sticking to an exercise schedule!”), you may believe it and act accordingly. All of a sudden, you’ve missed a whole week! The good news: Research proves that positive self-talk is a top relapse-prevention tool. Turn back to Session 25 for ways to recognize and combat negative thoughts, then use the tips below to stay on track.

Roadblocks can lead to slip-ups if you don’t have a plan.

Life throws curveballs in your path all the time. (Remember Session 14?) Even if you’ve successfully tackled negative thinking, a bad night’s sleep or change in schedule could throw you off. Suddenly, you can’t fit in exercise. Your food-prep time is gone. Changes in your mood can also lead to little lapses. In a Bowling Green State University study, researchers analyzed “temptation and relapse diaries” kept by women who completed a six-month weight-loss program—they discovered that dieters were more likely to give in and overeat when their mood was either low or very high. No matter the cause, you could skid, slide and relapse...or you could problem-solve a brilliant Plan B. In fact, a California study that followed relapsers and weight maintainers found that 95% of maintainers said they confront and fix problems compared to 10% of relapsers, who were also more likely to “wish the problem would go away” and less likely to seek out support or talk through problems. Keep reading for ways to problem-solve and stay on track.

Heading a Relapse

Off at the Pass

It’s time to identify the curveballs that trigger you to lapse and pinpoint solutions. The outcome: You’ll recognize “caution” signs sooner and have the road map ready so you can keep moving forward with momentum. The charts on the next page list common risky situations and powerful coping strategies. Of course, triggers are as individual as fingerprints, so if your most challenging circumstances aren’t here, use the blank spaces to write them in, along with ideas for avoiding or minimizing the slip-ups.

Weigh Yourself to Nip Small Gains in the Bud





A gain of a few pounds is much easier to reverse than a big one—trust us on that! To head off large gains, try our suggested twice-weekly weigh-ins; if you find your weight is up for two consecutive weeks, consider that a *real* gain (instead of water weight fluctuation). Use the steps in this session to get back on the road to success. With Real Appeal, you’ll be losing pounds again in no time.



Emotional Triggers

Research shows that low moods, boredom, arguments and even good moods can all lead to slip-ups. Here's how to cope.





TRIGGER	HANDLE IT BY...
Feeling overwhelmed and stressed out 	Taking a deep breath to relax and stop negative thinking (relook at Session 25: Trashing the Trash Talk). Then figure out how to lighten your load. Do you really need to clean the <i>entire</i> house? Why not delegate a few tasks to family or co-workers? Good time management will also help. Use the tips in Session 29 (Manage Your Time, Manage Your Weight) for guidance. Or download a free meditation app to learn how just a few minutes a day can calm anyone's crazed mind.
Feeling down or depressed 	Popping in any of the Real Moves workout DVDs! Exercise increases levels of mood-boosting endorphins. Or, reach out to a Real Appeal buddy or your coach for a heart-to-heart. If feelings of depression persist—such as sadness, emptiness, loss of pleasure in things you love, difficulty sleeping, appetite changes or even thoughts of suicide—contact your healthcare provider right away.
Boredom 	Calling or emailing a friend, watching a comedy (while doing some of your favorite moves from the Real Abs workouts), or starting that home improvement project or even just a new Pinterest board to inspire you to get started!
Happiness, elation, time to celebrate! 	Treating yourself to something you love that <i>isn't</i> dessert or alcohol—a manicure, a new music download. Or go shopping and splurge on some new workout wear. If you're watching your budget—a phone call is free! Hop on it to share your joy with a friend or family member.
Add your own emotional high-risk situation here _____ _____	Come up with a way to deal with it that does not involve food or missing a workout. _____ _____

Change-in-Routine Triggers

Shifts at work or at home can throw off your eating and exercise routine. Here's how to right the balance.





TRIGGER	HANDLE IT BY...
Job changes. You've been switched to night shift...or have to punch the clock at 6 a.m. It's tough to continue to prep healthy meals and fit in workouts!	Leaning on Real Appeal fast meals or shakes. Try fitting in a few short 5–10 minute walks every day (it adds up!). And try to get in your seven to eight hours of sleep—hitting the sack and waking up at the same time each day—to help control appetite and lift mood. Use blackout shades and other ways to create the good sleep environment described in Session 11.
Family upheaval. A new baby. A loved one in the hospital or in need of your care at home. 	Now's the time to ask loved ones to help out so that you have time for short workouts and to prepare healthy meals. If friends want to help, ask them to prepare Real Appeal quick meals for you or watch the baby while you exercise.
Vacation. Too much eating out, umbrella drinks and no time to exercise. 	Planning a vacation in a spot that lends itself to physical activity, such as mountains (hiking), the beach (swimming), towns you can explore on foot or by bike. Check menus ahead of time to find healthy options—and savor the occasional treat. Revisit the vacation tips from Session 14 to help prepare.
Add your own high-risk, routine change situation here. _____ _____	Come up with a way to deal with it that does not involve food or missing a workout. _____ _____

Social Triggers

We're profoundly influenced by what the people around us are eating, says a recent research review from the UK's University of Liverpool. Here's how to navigate tricky situations.





TRIGGER	HANDLE IT BY...
<p>Parties. Whether you're toasting a birthday or another event, it's easy to say "yes, please" to whatever's on the buffet table.</p> 	<p>Eyeballing the spread first and prioritize—maybe you want a slice of apple pie, so you'll make up for it by piling the rest of your plate with veggies. Then find a seat far from the buffet table, so you can't see the alluring spread. When you've finished eating, tell yourself "that's it" and move on to socializing, dancing or another distraction (brushing your teeth right after eating helps make the transition more definite). Your favorite trainer, David Jack, says:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"Step away from the buffet table!"</i></p>
<p>Eating out. Big portions, cheese- and sauce-slathered entrees and all that bread!</p> 	<p>Asking for a second helping of steamed vegetables instead of fries. Order a garden salad right away, so you won't be tempted by the bread basket. Choose a meal most like your favorite Real Appeal meals. If portions are huge, ask for a take-home box right away and put half of your meal in it. (More tips in Sessions 13: Eat Out and Still Lose Weight! and 19 (Restaurant Rescue 911).</p>
<p>Add your own high-risk, party situation here.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Come up with a way to deal with it that does not involve overeating.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

Physical and Medical Triggers

A tummy virus, a muscle strain or lack of sleep... body changes can also cause a detour. Here's how to stay on track.



TRIGGER	HANDLE IT BY...
<p>A health problem. You've caught a cold... or the flu...or sprained your ankle. Now your favorite exercise routines are on hold.</p> 	<p>Giving yourself a few days to rest—the sooner you recover, the quicker you can resume Real Appeal. Otherwise, do what you can. Follow a Real Appeal upper-body strength routine if you have a leg problem. Take a walk and do lower-body strengthening workout if you have a shoulder issue. And talk with your doctor before resuming regular workouts.</p>
<p>Lack of sleep. Plenty of things can interfere with refreshing shut-eye. As a result, you may experience more cravings or feel too tired to exercise.</p> 	<p>Trying some of the sleep strategies from Session 11 (like having a caffeine cutoff time, powering off technology an hour before bedtime, or avoiding alcohol 2 hours before bed). You might also find time for a short power nap—some research suggests 26 minutes is the perfect amount of time for a refresh!</p>
<p>Add your own high-risk situation involving a physical problem here.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Come up with a way to deal with it that does not involve overeating.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>



*I'll prevent myself
from relapse* 



Commitment Contract

I recognize that the benefits to losing and maintaining my weight loss are too great to let slip away, and that little interruptions—while minor—can lead to greater ones. To help prevent relapse, I'll:

- Be aware of what situations lead me astray and use the suggestions in this session to cope with them constructively. My worst triggers are: _____
- Deal with lapses by skipping the negative self-talk and going right back to my Real Appeal program. My new mantra when facing triggers is: _____
- Have a plan for times when life gets stressful and implement alternate ways of sticking with the program.
- Continue my other healthy habits (weighing in, tracking, staying within my calorie range, and so on) to the best of my ability.

My signature: _____