

50 New Ways to Break Your Weight Loss Plateau

Have you successfully lost weight but are now wondering why it's still not dropping off, even though you've not changed a thing? Fear not and as long as you pick some of these tricks and combine a few of my methods, you should find your weight loss battery is recharged and you'll be well back on track!

Our bodies are bizarre aren't they? They react well to one method, not so well to others and it causes our emotional state to go up and down like the latest roller-coaster ride; one time spiralling into an emotional darkness, another beaming with energy and life into the sunlight. Don't worry, I've been on this path most of my life and having been a personal trainer for some years, I've learned what it's like for lots of people. But we're all different, so not one approach will work for everyone.

Fortunately when I created The Lunch Box Diet, I managed to hit on something that worked for a high-percentage of people who have used it, and continue to benefit from easy optimum nutrition out of a box! But there does come a time when the weight loss can grind to a halt and we need a way to shift that bit extra, whether it's to fit into a nice bit clothing for a party, prepare for the beach or just feel that more slightly tight around the waist line.

What do I mean by a "weight loss plateau?" Well, for a number of reasons, you stopped losing weight using the exact same methods that previously were allowing you to lose weight. One of the chief reasons is that your body is designed to *maintain*. It would be fantastic if our bodies could sense that we were overweight and force us to lose weight, but that's just not so. Everything the body does is about regulation. Our bodies attempt to replace damaged or dead cells to *maintain* tissue integrity. If one chemical or hormone is too high, your body releases other chemicals or hormones to lower the one that is too

high. When your blood glucose levels drop, your brain sends out signals which will in turn let you know that you are hungry. If blood glucose is too high, insulin is triggered to help transport blood glucose into the cells. When we run a fever, our bodies shiver to lower the body temperature. When we are cold, our body reserves heat for the core and our extremities may even be a bit pale because of it. We sweat to cool the skin and release the excessive waste that is being formed from the demands placed on our bodies.

Literally every function is a form of maintenance because our bodies require certain conditions for optimum health. This relates to a weight loss plateau because your body becomes used to your weight loss efforts and adjusts accordingly whether this has to do with exercise or eating. I have plenty of suggestions that will help you shake up your body a bit and get back on the weight loss path.

There are other reasons for a weight loss plateau as well. There are reasons you gained weight, and not all of them have to do with merely consuming too much or exercising too little. Remember, MIND/BODY/SPIRIT! There are reasons you overate that had little to do with physical needs and more to do with emotional needs or issues. Sometimes, it's all about modifying your mindset and refocusing your energies. Let's conquer those demons once and for all because these barriers to weight loss may be what's holding you back from achieving your dream body.

Speaking of "modifying," have you done all you can to modify your lifestyle and offer yourself the appropriate environment for weight loss? Are you still encountering folks that drive you bananas and thwart your weight loss efforts? Do you need solutions for continuing to lose weight even though you have to travel frequently or have difficulty finding affordable veggies?

As well, I say “We’re never, ever done learning and trying to improve our lives!” Not only does conventional medicine and science uncover new things about health and weight loss on a regular basis, but sometimes, it’s about “discovering” ancient practices that have benefited different cultures for centuries. Keep an open mind and not only will new avenues of weight loss come to you, but you may just find that your health, quality and richness of life will improve as well! Truly, it’s a win/win situation when you gain knowledge!

All of us have certain obstacles that we need to overcome in order to obtain the body of our dreams. For some of us, it’s an emotional issue. For others, it may be an innocent lack of knowledge in the exercise arena. Perhaps your weight loss plateau stems from a lifetime of habits that you’ve not realised. Whatever it is, the following 50 ways to break the weight loss plateau will offer some insight on how *you* can finally drop those last pounds.

It’s my advice that you read each of the 50 tips in full but then concentrate on each one for one week. Try and set up each one as a habit or and implement the particular strategy in that week. Put a sticky note on your fridge with the topic of the week. By the time you’ve completed even 10 of the 50 tips, I think you’ll have a massive smile on your face. Let’s get started....

1: Exercise Virgin? Lose it!

Simon Says: “Feel the burn, and feel it drop off”

It seems like a simple place to start doesn’t it? But you’d be surprised how many people opt to avoid this very simple approach to losing that extra chunk of weight. If you don’t currently take part in exercise whatsoever then you’re in for a treat. Just by getting active, your body will react like a spark does to a firework; explosive results are on the way. A simple 20 minute jog around your block three times a week could help you to shift that tummy weight that’s been crying out to be lost. How about a regular swim with the kids? Maybe it’s time for

you and your friend to ditch the mid-day coffee and cake meeting and have a game of badminton, walk instead of using the bus or just getting down to the gym, facing those fears and going for it like the first time you set eyes on the love of your life. Embrace exercise like you would a new born child into the world, because it can and probably will become a dedicated passion once you really start. If you're 'not so sure', then let's look at it like this: If you're not currently exercising, aren't you running the risk of not really knowing and feeling the benefits! It can be that addictive once you find the right exercise style and there are so many variants, you're bound to find a real passion! I'm excited for you!

2: Reduce Your Box Size

Simon Says: “Drop it and drop a dress size”

On the basis that you've been using The Lunch Diet, this trick is one that has been overlooked by quite a few people. Are you still using the same size lunch box that you had when you started the diet? If so then it's time to go down a size. So if you're currently using a 2 ½ litre box, drop down to a 2 litre box and so on. Now I don't want you to be hungry, but ask yourself the question, if you put less in your box, would you really still be hungry? Really? Try it tomorrow, either reduce the size of your box or put less in. If you're currently eating a whole chicken breast then half it. Where super-sizing in McDonalds will help you to pile on the pounds, doing the opposite will do just that.

3: Drink Green Tea

Simon Says: “Go green and your body environment may change”

It was only recently that I changed my regular fluid intake and I feel a lot better for it. If I'm honest, I was gulping down about 10 cups of tea a day. With a sugar in each and with milk, this can equate to quite a lot of tea and calories. I made the switch to green tea which sprouts bucket loads of health benefits. First,

it's rich in antioxidants, so it fights off those nasty free radicals which affect aging and potential nasty diseases. Green tea boosts metabolism, so that's where the weight loss benefits come in. Green tea helps to promote oral health by destroying the bacteria that forms plaque, lowers blood sugar levels and prevents Type 2 diabetes. There are many variants of green tea and it's more and more common in the big supermarkets. In fact, you'll not have trouble finding it these days. There are all kinds of flavours to pick from so don't think that it's going to taste bad! So try swapping your regular brew for the green type and those few extra pounds may just fall off. Beware though; keep up your healthy eating in addition to drinking green tea!

4: Write Everything Down

Simon Says: “The food diary is the essential free tool”

I've been using food diaries with my clients of years and it works wonders. People come to me and I ask them how healthy they think they eat. Normally the reply is “pretty well”. Then I ask them to fill in a food diary for seven days and when they return it they're normally really surprised at what I can pick up on. It's also great for the client to understand how eating frequently can really change the way our bodies convert food into energy and burn it, this is normally where I recommend my diet. Plus they have to tell me about all alcohol intake and this is another sign where extra pounds can be shifted, but then it comes down to how much they really want it. Can you knock your regular glass of wine on the head, or maybe it's a regular weekly drinking session? Write down everything you eat for a week, including the times you eat. Look back at it and mark out the areas you think can be improved and maybe find alternatives for those unhealthy bits and bobs.

5: Get Social

Simon Says: “Get a group together to chat”

There's nothing like a good chat, and especially if you're around people who have similar goals, it's a great place to share tips, boost each other's confidence and come up with new ways to reach your goals together. Don't wait for the advert to spring up in your local paper. Why not set something up yourself. Of course, there's always my online community at <http://community.lunchboxdiet.co.uk> if you get stuck – there's loads of people in there with exactly the same goals of you and you can search through their profiles. Maybe *YOU* could place a small advert in your local shop or start something at your local gym – speak to them and see if there's anything running already. Community centres and social clubs are also great places to start looking. Be inventive and get a bunch of you together. It could just be what you've been looking for and you could make some great friends along the way.

6: Ditch 'Eater' Friends

Simon Says: “Are you being fed by someone else but yourself?”

Picture the scene. You've been doing really well on your goal to lose those niggling pounds, but then, you remember you're meeting (cue shock horror music), Mrs so and so who keeps on pressuring you to have just one more cream cake. Maybe this person is someone at work who always wants to tell you you'll never lose weight and you might as well delve into the cookie box anyway. Maybe it's a friend of a friend who has got another selection of horrid comments up her sleeve and you rebel every time by reaching for the comfort of an ice-topped bun. Whatever the story, it's time to eliminate these niggling people who are seriously putting you off track. Think about how best to (nicely does it), avoid bumping into them. Maybe you just need to stand up for yourself more and put a few choice words in the direction of the person who's just been winding you up all year long. Go on, you can do it!

7: Do the 'All Green' Lunch Box

“All green vegetables and only fish for 1-2 weeks”

Okay, another Lunch Box Diet tip for all of you out there who have been grazing your way to more energy, a better figure and general all round goodness. I want you to try for 1-2 weeks; each of your lunch boxes has to contain only green vegetables. This is because green veggies are less starchy and have a lower glycemic index than most other vegetables, which means they'll keep you fuller for longer. You can also try having a fish only week on-top of this to help you break that plateau. This little trick has worked for quite a few clients of mine. So, your box could consist of Group A) Spinach, Sugar Snaps, Steamed Brussels, Avocado and Green Beans. Group B) Peppered Mackerel. Group C) Chopped Garlic & Coriander.

8: Modelling Yourself, On You!

Simon Says: “Model yourself on your successful days and weeks”

It's track back time. Can you remember when you felt your best? When your clothes felt the slimmest and you were really happy and had the most energy? If you can, then great, try to model your days ahead based on those experiences. But if you can't then the trick from here is to keep a track of when you're are feeling great and write down what you have eaten on this day, at what times, how much exercise you've had and how much sleep and even what time you went to bed. You can then start modelling yourself on you! It's hard to model on other people when it comes down to this stuff because we're all individual, so how one person reacts to one type of food will be slightly different to the other.

9: No Carbs After 6pm

Simon says: “Watch it late at night...”

If you've not already tried this one, it can be quite effective. Remembering that we need carbohydrates as a source of energy, most of us are very non active in the evening, so we don't have

the requirement of large amounts of pasta, rice, a side dish of garlic bread. Do you get the picture? By eliminating carbs after around 6pm this will allow you to burn off the carbs you may have had earlier in the day and force the not to be replenished in your evening meal. It's not so much whether you eat at night which is a common weight loss myth; it's about *what* you eat. We tend to snack on fattening foods in the evening and far too many of them. So, choose wisely and you can enjoy a little snack such as a bowl of berries with nonfat, sugar-free whipped topping or a handful of spicy almonds.

10: Set Targets & Beat Them!

“A weight loss plateau is most likely an exercise plateau”

Ok, back to the exercise. It's very important that in order to battle against your weight loss plateau, you take extra steps to put your body beyond its normal demands. It's easy to do this. Rather than moving from one machine to the other, working on each one of 10 minutes here and there, you should start setting mini targets which you can achieve to beat over time. For example, do you already use the bike and work at your own pace? Why not setup a time challenge and try and get even further on your next trial. Or maybe you're currently rowing for 2000 meters. Why not up that by 500 meters each time you go, or maybe see how fast you can do 2000 meters. You can normally setup the machines for this easily. If you can't work it out, just ask one of the fitness team if you go to a gym, or read the instructions in your manual if you have a machine at home. If you're using a normal bicycle, then you could make checkpoints in your head and use a watch to try and get there faster each time. You can also do this when jogging. So the general rule here is beat your cardiovascular times, distances and intensities and you're likely to break the weight loss barrier as well as the exercise one too. Oh, and every time you beat a personal favourite, it will put a big smile on your face.

11: Eat Breakfast

Simon says: “...then get up earlier!”

Yeah yeah, I’ve heard it all before. “I don’t have enough time”. “I don’t like to eat that early”. Well if you want to shed that extra weight, I’d seriously advise you ditch watching the late-night movie or get up when the alarm goes off! Missing breakfast is a common mistake for a large amount of people. We need breakfast to give ourselves that morning boost and it kick-starts our metabolic rate. Also if you miss breakfast, you’re likely to snack on bad foods early in the morning and make uninformed choices at lunch. But what’s a good breakfast? Try a banana if you’re new to eating breakfast, maybe with some natural yogurt. Muesli will provide you with sustained energy though the morning, as well as porridge and other oat based cereal. Stay well clear from the ones aimed at children with loads of added sugar. Why not try some rye based crackers with ham and cheese. Wholemeal bagels and spreads are another good choice or poach an egg and have that on top. With your breakfasts, try cutting down portion sizes and see whether you’re actually still hungry. A large glass of water after may help too, or combine your breakfast with a mug of hot green tea.

12: Eat More

Simon says: “By eating too little your metabolism could be slowing down”

If you’re restricting your calories by too much then you could put your body into starvation mode, which means that your metabolic rate could be shuddering to a halt. When this happens the body can start to play tricks and you may find that when you do eat the right number of calories again then the body will store those calories. So the real answer is to eat a regular amount of quality calories regularly to keep the body running at its optimum rate. It’s easy to get into the mind-set of starvation to lose weight, but the ultimate long term result is that we get hungry and binging because of previous diet restrictions is the ultimate outcome. Getting into a regular routine of healthy

eating, snacking on protein, vegetable and good sources of good fats will enable you to break a weight loss plateau if your current eating patterns are not healthy and within a sensible routine.

13: Read Labels Properly

Simon says: “You probably think it’s okay when it’s not!”

Food companies are clever you know. They know that people are looking for healthier options these days and as a result it’s not uncommon for foods that are unhealthy to be labelled as healthy. Examples of these are ‘health bars’ and ‘low fat yogurts’. We see the packing which shows fruits and we instantly make the connection with healthy but often these types of foods where they are low in fat, are rammed with sugar to satisfy our taste buds. Remember that if we’re not burning off sugar, it will be stored as fat, so where a health bar can be a good pre-exercise snack to get your energy levels up, if you’re being non active these are simply not healthy options. Always look on packaging properly and ensure that you also read the sugar content, salt content and other additives. A good way to start is by looking on the ingredients. If for example ‘Sugar’ is the first listed item then this is ingredient that features most heavily in the product so therefore should be avoided. Stick away from saturated fats more than 5.0g per serving.

14: Lift Heavy Weights

Simon says: “And I’ll even promise you won’t look like Arnold Schwarzenegger or ‘that big man over there’...”

The more muscle in the body, the higher the metabolic rate, so this makes sense that lifting weights can really boost your chances of breaking that plateau. However, it’s a very common problem that women tend to not lift light weights for the fear of building up big muscles. Women don’t have the same testosterone levels as men, so it’s very unlikely that you’ll

generate the same build as a man. However, your shape may change once you start lifting weight and in 9/10 cases, women love their new muscles, especially in their arms, both biceps (front of the arm) and triceps (back of the arm). It's important when you lift weight to work hard so that the muscle is put under enough strain that the muscle fibres are broken down and need to recover. You may feel some discomfort for some days after a training session and this is normal especially if you're starting out. If you're not feeling anything after your sessions then chances are you have not worked to the correct intensity. My advice would be to get a personal trainer to teach you how to lift weights properly in a 1-1 scenario as this is by far the safest way to perform strength training.

15: Drink More Water

Simon says: "Hydration could be holding you back"

It's simple. We need water for our bodies to function properly. A way for you to get over that weight loss plateau that's been bugging you for month is to ask yourself, are you really drinking enough? My simple rule is to try and get through at least a couple of litres per day. You can do this by buying a large bottle and ensure that you take sips regularly until it's completely gone. If you've still got quite a bit left at the end of the day then make sure you neck the rest before bed time! Instead of reaching for the crisps and chocolate bars, try an extra large glass of water, give it a few minutes and then see if you're still hungry, it could actually be because you're in need of hydration, not food. By filling you stomach with water, they'll be less room for food, so it works as the perfect appetite suppressant. Where fizzy drinks do contain water, unfortunately they're packed full of sugar, so get a taste for the original stuff and leave Mr Cola in the supermarket fridge where other people can take them. If you're heavily drinking these kinds of drinks then you need to wean your way off them gradually instead of cutting them out completely, unless you're super motivated!

16: Drink Less Alcohol

Simon says: “Calories with no weight loss kick”

It seems simple, but this is where those calories really hit the stomach, leave us feeling bloated and force us to eat unhealthy foods which then pack on even more around the stomach. If you're drinking most evenings then you need to ask yourself why. Is it habit? If you're saying “I just like a drink”. Do you really just “like a drink?” Find the underlying cause of why that is, tackle this and you could tackle those calories that are leaving you with the need to fight that weight loss plateau.

Why not try cutting down on your weekly intake or swapping those high calorie and sugar laden drinks for more healthy spirits with soda instead of lemonade and cola. Why not try sticking to alcohol free for a while and see whether you're happier with your new slender body rather than a night and a sore head the next day. Which is more important to you? If you know the answer already then you know the route to take!

17: Good Fats Essential for Weight Loss

Simon says: “Know the right from wrong”

When we talk about healthy fats or good fats, we usually refer to unsaturated fats such as olive oil, avocados, salmon or flaxseed, but probably the most talked-about good fats are the long-chain omega-3s found in fish oil. Studies show that the omega-3 fatty acids in fish help your body function well in many areas that are vital to health and fat loss. Deep-coloured cold-water fish such as salmon, trout, mackerel and sardines are especially rich in omega-3s. Although some prefer to use flax instead of fish, studies show that the long-chain omega-3s (EPA/DHA) such as those found in products like Maxi EFA are superior to the short-chain omega-3s found in flaxseed oil and various other 'essential oil blends'. To add more healthy fats to your diet, drizzle olive oil over your favourite salad... lightly grill a salmon fillet and have it for dinner along with some mixed vegetables and new potatoes... or sprinkle some freshly ground flaxseed on your breakfast cereal.

18: Smaller Packs & The Healthy Option

Simon says: “Let your healthy little voice get a look in you when you’re on a downer”

Let’s picture the scene. You’ve eaten your healthy meal. Eight o’clock arrives and you suddenly get ‘that craving again’.

You’ve used my tip to drink some water, but the little voice says ‘nip to the shop for a bag of crisps and chocolate’. Yummy!

You’re in store, almost skating with joy down the aisles as you pre-decide whether it will be the cookies tonight, the bumper 12 pack of crisps or even both. Been there? Well here’s a thought.

Your little healthy voice is there somewhere and you’re listening, but you’re thinking ‘well if I’m going to do it I may as well go all out’. Well how about this. Instead of picking the 5 pack of chocolate bars which you know will be gone by mid-day tomorrow. Pick the small bar and also a healthy snack too. This could be a packet of nuts or some veggies to nibble on. You’re now going 50/50. You’re going to get your 50% naughty fix and fill the rest of yourself up on something good. Add all this up over a month and I bet that plateau will soon become a thing of the past!

19: Take the Mind-Set of Someone Healthy!

Simon says: “Become a fit and healthy person in your head, not someone who is struggling to lose weight”.

If you’re current world of thinking is ‘I need to lose weight’, ‘I feel fat’, then your mind-set could do with a bit of altering for the better. By placing your head in the ‘I’m a health person’ and ‘Can’t wait for my exercise session’, then your subconscious mind will come into play which means that all the unhealthy decisions you make will be less likely. Imagine yourself after you’ve exercised and how you will feel as you go ‘yes’ I did it. Imagine when you’ve overcome your plateau and you’re going out to buy those new clothes. Keep your mind healthy and your

actions will be healthy too. Drop the negative stuff and become mind-fit and you quite simply, will become fit!

20: Your and Your Partner's Portions

Simon says: “He doesn’t need what you need, so portion control to your requirements”.

Sitting down with the family is great. The family meal is a social occasion and it’s a time to embrace and enjoy. But if your plates are all the same then chances are you’re probably portion matching incorrectly. A man’s requirements of food are generally a lot higher than a women’s, especially if she’s trying to break the weight loss plateau. So dish up accordingly and remember not to eat until you’re full. As soon as you eat until you’re full then you’ll bloat, then feel tired, down and more likely to snack later on in the evening when your dip ends and you need your fix again. Maybe it’s time to get different sized plates. And remember that the kids need different portions too. If your children have weight issues, be sure to look into their portion sizes, when they last ate before their evening meal and how many snacks are in the house ready to be invaded!

21: Go Vegetarian

Simon says: “A good week of eating “clean” may do the trick.”

I’m a meat eater, and I understand completely if you are too. However, there’s something to be said for a vegetarian’s diet. Too much animal protein can lead to an acidic environment in the body. Your body is naturally a bit acidic, but when it ebbs past the norm even in the slightest, there are health consequences. Though protein from animal sources is the easiest way to obtain all the essential amino acids your body requires, you can achieve the same through eating a variety of clean, alkaline plant sources. Try going vegetarian for one week. Replace your usual lean protein sources with plant sources and combine them appropriately. For instance, you can receive all essential amino acids by combining beans with one or more of

the following: corn, brown rice, seeds, nuts & wheat. You can also combine brown rice with beans, nuts, seeds or wheat to achieve the same results.

22: Fix Your Sluggish Digestive System!

Simon says: “As they say, ‘death begins with the colon,’ so it’s imperative that you make sure *yours* is working at optimum level in order to drop those pesky pounds.”

The Lunch Box Diet is a good way to keep your colon healthy chiefly because you are consuming adequate fibre and staying away from the junk foods and fatty meats that are associated with poor colon health. However, if you’ve been eating poorly for several years, your colon may need a little cleansing. When you eat a poor diet for a long time, your colon becomes lined with faecal material and causes a few things that contribute to weight gain. For one, the digestive system works more slowly allowing for more fat storage and less fat burning. As well, an unhealthy colon is not able to absorb essential nutrients. For this reason, your body puts in a “request” for more food, even if you’ve just eaten, in an attempt to gain the nutrients that aren’t being absorbed properly. There are various ways to cleanse your colon. You can use a colon cleanse program or simply add a fibre supplement to your daily regimen such as psyllium husks (available at many health food stores).

23: Rid Your Body of Toxins!

Simon Says: “Your body may be resistant to weight loss because of nasty toxins that have built up over the years, so get rid of those toxins and start with a clean slate.”

In the same vein as the above tip, poor diet over the years, excessive alcohol consumption or tobacco use may have left your system in a worn out state, full of toxins and very resistant to weight loss. Though I don’t recommend *starving* oneself to

lose weight, I do think that a good one to three days of detoxifying is great for your body. Set aside one to three days that will be fairly light in terms of stress, work and physical demands. I recommend a live juice fast rather than simply “not eating” because the juice will detoxify and cleanse your system while still providing your body necessary nourishment. Because the juice is partially digested and full of live enzymes, your digestive system will be given a break. Using a juicer is best, but if you cannot, you may use a blender or food processor to prepare your juice but you’ll have to strain the pulp and just drink the juice that is left. Clean your veggies OR fruit (only apples may be used with the vegetables, otherwise keep veggies and fruits separate), chop them down a bit and place them in your juicer. There are some lovely recipes available on the internet for live juicing. To sweeten up your veggie drinks, try using beet root or apples. As soon as you’ve prepared your juice, drink it immediately because it’s at its most nutritious right at this point. “Chew” it slightly in your mouth. Have four to six 8-ounce glasses of fresh juice throughout the day and drink plenty of water or green tea in between. You may exercise *very lightly* such as walking, going for a mellow bike ride or practicing yoga, but stay away from strenuous exercise! Spend some quality time with yourself and relax!

24: Replace the Good Bacteria

Simon Says: “Improve your weight loss efforts by building your “good bacteria” that fights infection and aids in digestion by using probiotic sources.”

Probiotics found in yoghurt or supplement form will boost your body’s natural bacteria that are necessary for optimum health. If you’ve been susceptible to numerous infections, it may be directly related to a depletion of these little guys. As well, antibiotic use and/or poor diet over the years may have ruined the balance of good bacteria versus bad bacteria. Your gut may have far too many bad bacteria that are actually causing you to

gain weight because they cause the body to store excess fat. One way of restoring balance is to increase the amount of good bacteria through probiotics. This can be as simple as having a nonfat organic yoghurt with your breakfast every day. If you've been experiencing a lot of digestive upset with bloating, cramping or gas, you might consider detoxing first and then using a probiotic supplement.

25: Improve Your Dental Health

Simon Says: “You may have difficulty losing weight if your mouth is unhealthy because oral health affects your overall health!”

Have you seen the dentist lately? I know, it's not always a fun thing, but even if you're not experiencing any tooth pain, gum disease and hidden tooth decay may be wreaking havoc on your overall health. We have thousands of bacteria in our mouths. When we eat, these bacteria mix with the food (especially sugar) and form plaque on the teeth. Overtime, this results in tartar build up that only a dentist can remove. If left untreated, the tartar (and the bacteria within the tartar) destroy the tooth enamel and also invade the gums. The bacteria form little protective pockets called microfilm that harbours the bacteria. The bacteria can then spread to other parts of your body. Most cases of gum disease and tooth decay are asymptomatic until it's too late. The noticeable symptoms in later stages may be a loose tooth or a toothache indicating an infection. All of that bacteria sabotages your weight loss efforts for similar reasons as the above tip, but also because they deplete your overall health. Your digestive and cardiovascular systems may be sluggish causing you to gain weight and making it difficult to exercise. So, try to get to the dentist to have your teeth professionally cleaned, and then follow basic oral hygiene at home by brushing at least twice a day and flossing at least once a day. Not only will you find it easier to lose weight, but once you do, you'll have a gorgeous smile to match your new, lean physique!

26: Get Your Zzzz's

Simon Says: “Sacrifice sleep and watch the pounds go up on the scale!”

Busy, busy, busy we all are! So much so that we rarely get the amount of sleep we require maintaining optimum health. When we sleep, our bodies have a chance to recover from the day's events, building bone and replenishing cells. Sleep is your body's maintenance time. Without adequate AND quality sleep, your body will begin to run poorly. This can lead to all sorts of problems with weight loss such as lack of energy to exercise, excessive fat storage and even a poor mental state that leaves you wide open to cravings and temptations. If you want weight loss and optimum health, you need to sleep solid for 6-11 hours per night. This is a wide variation, but we are all very different when it comes to our sleep requirements. Here's a great indicator. If you've had a good night's sleep, you'll be able to wake up in the morning without the use of an alarm clock. Frightening, I know, but try it on a weekend when you don't have a boss to answer to! You can improve your sleep in a number of ways including getting a bit of light exercise in the early evening, relaxing in the bath, keeping your bedroom tidy and devoid of work related items, and avoiding any sort of caffeine in the afternoon and evening. Avoid using alcohol or sedatives which can disrupt your sleep cycles.

27: Fight Free Radicals

Simon Says: “Optimum health creates a physical environment PRIMED for weight loss.”

We are exposed to free radicals on a *daily* basis. They come from our environment in the form of pollution, car exhaust, UV rays, industrial chemicals, household chemicals, pesticides, herbicides, and carcinogens such as cigarettes. We even produce free radicals naturally through digestion. Saturated fat and trans fat produce the most free radicals which are part of the reason diets high in these fats cause so many health troubles. You see, free radicals attack your health at the cellular level destroying

cellular membranes and altering genetic material within the cells. This leads to poor tissue health and the damage can be seen in sagging, wrinkled skin and felt with poor cardiovascular, digestive, neuromuscular health and so on. When your body is not working properly, it will be FAR more difficult to lose weight. Antioxidants which are abundant in the Lunch Box Diet, can fight free radicals and repair the damage they incur. If you are continuing to follow the Lunch Box Diet, fantastic, but *make sure* you follow the advice of getting a RAINBOW of veggies in your box. The phytochemicals in fruits and vegetables are the antioxidants, but they are also responsible for the colouring of the fruit or veggie. Each one has a unique group of antioxidants, and they work best when they are complemented by antioxidants in other fruits or veggies. So, if you've been sticking with the same veggies in your box, try to be more adventurous and try some new veggies! As well, you may consider adding a fruit to your breakfast such as a cup of blueberries or having a delicious bowl of mixed fruit alongside your dinner. Once you begin offering your body a huge array of these wonderful antioxidants, you'll be able to break that weight loss plateau with loads of renewed energy!

28: Deal with Emotional Troubles

Simon Says: “Based on MY experience and that of my clients, I would have to say that 99% of the time a person indulges, it’s for PURE emotional reasons.”

You know that I recommend allowing for an occasional indulgence. Life is too short to never enjoy wonderful treats such as sinful chocolates, a lovely glass of Pinot Noir or a slice of pizza; HOWEVER, when you're trying to break your weight loss plateau, this is not the time to indulge. You're at the last mile, kick it in gear and deal with those emotional causes for eating. Perhaps you're miserable at your job. Consider new options or improve your work environment by addressing problems. Maybe your relationship has been circling the drain

for some time. Is it time to seek counselling? Maybe there's not a relationship and your loneliness is causing you to eat a pint of ice cream every night. Get up, get out and enjoy your passions. Stay out of the pub and see if you happen to bump into Mr. or Mrs. Right at the museum, library, a book club or botanical garden. If you are living your life and pursuing your passions, you are bound to run into the perfect match. The point is, deal with your emotional problems logically instead of drowning them in chocolate cake and pastries!

29: Sneak in Exercise

Simon Says: “No time to exercise? Sneak it in and watch the scale go down!”

Although I highly recommend getting in regular exercise for decent durations, I realise that many people are simply too busy to devote time at the gym. Also, we all have those incredibly busy weeks from time to time and end up falling off the exercise wagon. So, use what little time you have wisely! If you have a sedentary job, for instance, take 5 minutes out of every hour rather than your full breaks and move around! Do some jumping jacks or lunges. You can even take out an imaginary jump rope and “jump rope.” This way, you can even do all those fancy moves that you see boxers perform without tripping over the rope! How about TV time? We all have our favourite shows that we'd hate to miss so that we can head to the gym. Put your treadmill in front of the television if you can and use earphones to hear your show. Perhaps you could take every commercial break to work up a sweat by jogging in place, running up and down the stairs or performing a little shadow boxing. The point is, be clever and use what *seems* to be down time to your advantage!

30: Dump the Sugar and Artificial Sweeteners

Simon Says: “If you have a sweet tooth, avoid the bad stuff and head to the health store for nature's best choice: Stevia!”

Sugar is one of our major evils in the Western diet. Even if a food item that is loaded in sugar manages to cut the fat and lower the calories, you are **STILL** negatively affecting your body's ability to burn fat. Over time, a diet high in sugar causes your body to become insulin resistant which is why sugar contributes to diabetes. You see, insulin is released in the body as a response to high levels of blood glucose because it works as a key to unlock the cells and allow the glucose into the cells and out of the bloodstream. Sugar is converted to glucose in the body rapidly and hits the blood stream straight away. Your body becomes used to a *higher* amount of glucose in the bloodstream than what is healthfully normal. More glucose remains in your blood making it thick and stickier. This leads to all sorts of cardiovascular problems **AND** causes the body to store more fat. Artificial sweeteners *seem* to be the better choice, but there are studies that indicate otherwise. Quite simply, we don't know exactly what the future health implications are going to be due to artificial chemicals such as aspartame and sucralose. Brain tumours? Birth defects? Autism? These are all *suggestions* from different studies. There is, however, a sweetener that has been used for centuries in South America called Stevia. Stevia comes from an herbal bush and it has *zero calories* and it **DOES NOT** cause insulin resistance. You can use Stevia cup for cup as you would sugar in different recipes. You can use it to flavour your tea or coffee without the negative chemical effects of artificial sweeteners. Check your local health food store or order it online.

31: Find a New, Fun Exercise Program

Simon Says: "Has your exercise routine become a bore? Switch completely or spice it up!"

Some people are very routine oriented and they enjoy sticking with their exercise routine, but I know far more people that really need to switch up their routine in order to stay in the weight loss game. As well, sticking with the same routine may not challenge your body enough. If you've reached a weight loss plateau, it may be time to explore new exercise routines. There are literally hundreds of creative, innovative exercise programs,

routines and ideas. Are you a martial arts fan? Try any number of programs from Kung Fu, Muy Tai, kickboxing, mixed martial arts or Tae Bo. How about dance? Bali, belly dancing, pole dancing, hip hop to name a few. There are interval training programs galore that combine weights, cardio and kickboxing. Maybe yoga is more your style. Pilates? If you cannot make up your mind, try yogalates. How about power yoga? Maybe move your workout outdoors and find a great place to bike or hike taking in nature's wonders as you burn those last pounds! Buy a new piece of workout equipment. Do you have a stability ball yet? How about a chin up bar? What you need to do is add some pizzazz to your workout gig to find renewed interest and new challenges to break that weight loss plateau!

32: Pick up a Hobby

Simon Says: “Are you eating because you’re hungry or BORED?”

I have so many clients who confess that they ate a whole bag of crisps the night before out of sheer boredom. They say “Well, the crisps were there and there was nothing better to do!” Stop! Pick up a hobby that will take your interests away from the kitchen! Have you ever been interested in learning how to play an instrument? What about learning a foreign language? Pottery? Photography? Maybe it's a good time to better your computer skills for work, start a blog or catch up on family photos. Think back to thing you enjoyed before your life became too busy. Whatever you do, break old habits of vegetating in front of the television for entertainment. There are plenty of wonderful things to do that will get you away from the kitchen and into a healthier lifestyle!

33: Needles for Weight Loss

Simon Says: “Don’t worry, I’m not suggesting anything strange here! Acupuncture has helped

many people lose weight and it may be the edge you need!”

Acupuncture is an ancient Chinese practice that involves improving overall health by unblocking channels (meridians) that are meant to carry Qi (vital energy) to all of your organs. The Chinese believe that all disease and conditions including obesity are related to blockages that disrupt the balance of Yin and Yang in the body. It's not unusual to be sceptical about alternative health practices that seem “too good to be true,” but studies have shown improvement for many patients, who've used acupuncture to overcome illness, quit smoking, lose weight and overcome pain. Western medicine can't quite explain it because most conventional practitioners simply don't believe in Qi. A licensed acupuncturist uses very thin needles that do not hurt when placed at different points on your body. Many people experience a pleasant sensation that stimulates and energizes the body. Others feel extremely relaxed and at peace. Whatever your beliefs, you might want to check out a reputable acupuncturist in your area. It just might help you drop those pesky pounds!

34: Try Massage Therapy

Simon Says: “Relax, de-stress and lose weight!”

Who doesn't love a massage? Personally, I don't need a *reason* to have a nice, relaxing massage, but what if I told you that a regular massage may be your ticket to achieving your weight loss goals? Dieting can be extremely stressful. Couple that with all the other stressors in your life and you may find yourself overeating because of stress. A massage is a great way to relieve stress and work that tenseness right out of your body. Did you know that stress can actually *cause* you to gain abdominal fat? Studies have shown that chronic stress forces the body to release cortisone in the body which overtime, will cause the body to store fat right in the worst possible place! Belly fat is the most dangerous type of fat because it contributes to the development of cardiovascular disease. Despite all the other dangers out

there, cardiovascular disease remains *the* number one killer! Have I convinced you to have a lovely massage to better your chances at losing weight? The next time you have a gift receiving opportunity, let your loved ones know that you'd LOVE some gift certificates towards regular massages! You won't regret it.

35: Try Hypnotherapy

Simon Says: “Watch the pendant and repeat after me... I am powerful, strong and I CAN lose the weight!”

Okay, whereas hypnotherapy might come in handy some days as I train clients, I'm not a hypnotherapist; however, I've heard *wonderful* things about its ability to help people overcome obstacles that are preventing them from losing weight.

Emotional eaters tend to eat to make themselves feel better. Eating is often a form of instant gratification. Poor eating habits are often, just that, *habits* that need to be broken. Compulsive eaters tend to pop snack foods in their mouths without even thinking. You may not even realize how often you do this in a day's time. Donuts in the break room, snack foods set out for the kiddos or that bowl of bread they place in front of you at the restaurant; all of these are avoidable if you have the will power that hypnotherapy may offer you. A credible, licensed hypnotherapist will often offer free consultations to determine whether you are a good candidate for hypnotherapy. You cannot be hypnotized if you don't choose to be, so don't be concerned that you will *lose control* of the situation. You are in control the entire time. You are merely placed in a very relaxed state where predetermined (between you and the therapist) messages are placed directly with your subconscious to help you later when you need that extra boost of confidence or willpower.

36: Are You Eating Without Thinking?

Simon Says: “Have a Think before You Satisfy a Craving”

The above tip made me think of this one. You may not need a hypnotherapist if this is the first time it's dawning on you that you do eat compulsively or choose to eat for emotional reasons. The Lunch Box Diet is set up to help stay satisfied all day long on healthy foods so that temptation is nil. However, if you're distracted by something stressful and pop things in your mouth out of habit, you may just need to stop and have a think before you do. What would help you do this? We tend to look at our hands when we reach for something to eat. Is there a ring that you normally don't wear that you would notice as you reached for a handful of M&M's? Could this be a little reminder that says “Wait, do I really want these?.” At that point, give yourself ten minutes before making your choice. If you really, really still want them, then have a bit or you'll likely binge on a whole bag later; HOWEVER, most of the time a craving passes quickly. If a ring isn't your thing, then try painting your nails a striking colour (try fuchsia or orange!) to snap you out of it. Us chaps try putting a rubber band around our wrists. Anything that will make you take notice and think about what you're about to do.

37: Minimize the BIG Picture

Simon Says: “Take each day at a time instead of getting frustrated with the big picture!”

There are times on the weight loss road where you may begin to feel like that little kid on a car trip who keeps begging the question “Are we there yet?” Weight loss is a difficult path and when you reach a point where the hill seems to be getting steeper, you may wonder if you'll ever get over that hump and reach your goal. You will! Don't let the frustration cause a backslide. Every step you take forward is just that, a step *forward*, even if it's a small step, you're still a bit closer to your goal. Think about ALL that you've accomplished so far. It's sort of like when you're doing a chore that seems to be taking forever, like painting a room. Just when you think you're going

mad with the monotony of painting, you glance around the room and realize how great it's starting to look. You're nearly there! You can do it and just like with every brush stroke, every exercise you do, every indulgence you resist, you are getting closer to the end goal!

38: Change Your Boot Camp Mentality

Simon Says: “You may be losing lean body mass in the gym *instead* of body fat if you are working out like a maniac and not supporting yourself nutritionally.”

Exercise is necessary for weight loss; however, if you're working like a dog in the gym and failing to support your workout, you run the risk of depleting lean body mass rather than body fat. When you reach a certain level of aerobic exercise, your body begins to use anaerobic means to provide the body with fuel. This is okay if you are supplying your body with the necessary fuel it needs through whole grain carbohydrates and lean protein. Most dieters, however, are lowering their caloric intake in order to lose weight. There's a fine line between over-exercising and exercising enough to make a difference. My suggestion is that you make sure you eat healthfully throughout the day and then work out using interval training.

39: Tell the Negative Voices to Go on Holiday and NEVER Come Back!

Simon Says: “Do you speak kindly to yourself?”

Think about all the negative things we might say to ourselves that we would *never* say to anyone else. If you had a friend trying to lose weight, would you scream at that person saying ugly things like “You fat cow, why did you eat that box of biscuits?”. Would you call him a loser? Would you hurl insults at a dear friend? We all have down days, but you cannot allow troubled times to allow you to be so horrendously *mean* to

YOU! You wouldn't tolerate this behaviour from someone else (I sincerely HOPE you wouldn't!), so why do you allow yourself to say such terrible things? I guarantee you that the very minute you begin to view yourself in a positive light, dump the guilt and start speaking in a kind, encouraging tone to YOURSELF, that you *will* have the STRENGTH and SUPPORT to lose weight once and for all! I cannot stress how important it is to maintain a positive attitude in order to achieve ANY goal including weight loss and physical fitness!

40: Why are You Doing All of This?

Simon Says: “When you’re up to your arse in alligators, don’t forget your goal was to drain the swamp!”

An American expression that holds true for many situations, weight loss being one of them. The point is that sometimes we get so caught up in the chaos of things that we forget about the main goal. If you start beating away the alligators and focusing on getting away from them, the swamp will remain and so will the alligators. Stop, drain the swamp and the alligators will GO AWAY! Don't worry about the birthday cake you ate at the party over the weekend. Don't worry about the extra glass of wine you had last night. FORGET about the co-worker who snickered at your snug blouse today. Did you skip your work out this morning? So what! Workout now. Think about showing up at the company picnic looking FABULOUS! Run an extra lap and sweat red wine! Chuck the leftover birthday cake! Get back on track and remember why you're here!

41: It's for YOU Baby!

Simon Says: “Your weight loss goals need to be for YOU, not your spouse nor your overly critical mum, nor to one-up the sexy new neighbour who's hogging all the attention!”

Who are you losing weight for? It better be for YOU because YOU are the one who has to do all of the hard work. You are the one who has to stay focused and workout when you don't want to or resist puff pastries when you've had a horrendous day. Break your weight loss plateau by *empowering* yourself! When you take ownership with any task, you are likely to have success. If you begrudgingly face a task that you feel you are doing for someone else's benefit (charitable acts aside), you probably won't work as hard at perfecting the project. This weight loss endeavour is for you. Don't worry about what Mum says or whether your spouse will be pleased. He or she probably loves you with or without the weight. Do this for you and nobody else!

42: The Lesser of Two Evils

Simon Says: “When you're not in control of food choices, do the best with what you've learned.”

There are certainly times such as when visiting family or travelling that you may not have your usual healthy choices. Maybe your dad loves to grill juicy T-bones or smoke and BBQ a brisket to perfection. Add to the meal by grilling a big batch of veggies or roasting some corn on the cob. Enjoy your dad's culinary creation, but in a smaller portion, skip the bread and fill the rest of your plate with the veggies or corn. Travelling? We cannot always take along foods that need to be chilled, so do your best and take along some almonds or even a healthy (check the label!) fibre bar. Is the only restaurant along the road a diner with fattening “home-style” cuisine? Can you ask for a slight modification such as taking away the cream sauce? Choose the plain baked potato over the mashers, and if all else fails; ask for a double side salad and fresh lemon wedges for dressing. The point is to do the best you can. Speaking of travel, do you find that you don't exercise when you travel? Choose a hotel accommodation with a gym or pool AND stop along the way to get out and walk about a bit (if it's safe) or make it a point to

veer off the beaten path to a nature sight that offers hiking trails. Don't forget to keep bottled water on hand at ALL times while travelling as many of us end up dehydrated when we're outside our natural routine.

43: Dealing with the Rest of the Family

Simon Says: “Your family loves you, but they might inadvertently be sabotaging your weight loss efforts!”

You've just worked out and are feeling fantastic when your spouse arrives home with the most delectable looking box of chocolates you've ever seen! Your thoughts may range from gratitude to rage! Perhaps your sibling invites you to lunch and eats a giant bowl of your favourite pasta while you nibble at the only healthful thing on the menu which is a far cry from your flavourful lunch box. What about your mum who thinks “you've lost enough weight dear.” If truly, you haven't made it to your *healthy* weight loss goal (some dieters certainly do go overboard and I'm not vying for them here!), then these sort of comments can be very frustrating. You are working so hard and you have family members, though well-intentioned, sabotaging your efforts. Time for a sit-down! Explain to your loved ones that this is *really* important to you and hopefully, they'll shape up. Maybe you can get them involved with your weight loss efforts. Listen, exercise and healthy food isn't just for people trying to lose weight. It's the right way to live for optimum health! In a way, you'll be switching up that “if you can't beat them, join them” philosophy. If you can't beat them, make *them* join YOU!

44: Reward Positive Behaviour

Simon Says: “Do you reward yourself as you do others for positive behaviour?”

Just where in the rule book does it say that only children deserve gold stars for their efforts? Guess what? So do you! And of course, with age comes *better* rewards. By now, you've probably gotten the idea that using food for a reward is a *big* no-

no in weight loss. So think in terms of better things that might inspire you to run that extra lap or pass on dessert. Make a list of little rewards such as music downloads, books or perhaps inexpensive jewellery for your daily or weekly rewards. Did you do *really* well today? You got up on time and had a healthful breakfast, packed your lunch box, worked out on your lunch hour, and had a healthful dinner? Great! Break out the reward box and pick something. What about the *big goal*? Do you have something special planned for when you look at the scale or in the mirror some day soon and find yourself at your weight loss goals? If you don't, plan it now and plan it BIG! Maybe there's a vacation you've been wanting to take. What about a new entertainment system? If you have a smaller budget (many of us do these days!), then plan to buy several new pieces of clothing for your new sexy body! How about a new pair of shoes to exemplify your taut calf muscles? Maybe a new swimsuit? A make-up consult, make-over or teeth whitening? Once you've set your goal, plaster pictures that represent this goal all over the place! Every time you see it, you'll be reminded of the fun reward you'll reap along with healthy weight loss!

45: Gem Therapy (I have NOT lost my mind! Read on!)

Simon Says: “Gain strength from the ancient ones!”

Are you picturing me in a tee-pee out in the Western United States, chanting and puffing a peace pipe? Well, maybe I'll venture there someday, but for now, I may just borrow some knowledge that America's Native Indians have brought to us. What they call Stone People are what we call gemstones. The belief is that gemstones such as amethyst, quartz and hundreds of other stones contain massive energy that has been absorbed over the centuries of their existence. If you believe at all in universal energy that flows through all of us, this makes perfect sense since that these stones that have been here forever would contain quite a bit of energy. When you wear these stones as jewellery,

keep one in your pocket or throughout your home, you absorb this positive energy. Different stones are said to produce different types of energy and many people who follow gem therapy or crystal therapy claim that they can aid in weight loss. Let your “Stone Person” choose you as you wander through the store and pick up the gemstones. Whatever feels right and appeals to your senses is probably the right one for you. Make sure you purify your gemstone after purchase to wash away any negative energies that the stone picked up from people touching it in the store and do this periodically after purchase. Simply place the stone in a container of sea salt for a few days. Does it work? Some folks *swear* that their gemstone helped them lose weight. I guess it’s all in what you are willing to believe, but worst case scenario, you’re only out a tiny amount of money and you’ve gained a beautiful gemstone.

46: Read Something Inspirational

Simon Says: “There’s *always* someone out there with a tougher plight, tougher life and more difficult story to tell. Use this to your weight loss advantage!”

We all need a little inspiration. I hope that *I’m* inspiring you as you read this book. If you’ve reached a weight loss plateau, it may be that you need some SUPER inspiration that can only come in the form of a story. When you read a story about a remarkable person who succeeded under extraordinary circumstances, you will view your weight loss efforts differently. You gain a sense of “If so and so can overcome THAT, then I can *certainly* achieve my weight loss goals.” There are inspirational stories lining the shelves at the bookstore. Pick something you’re passionate about. Perhaps a person who sacrificed all to save a child. Maybe it’s somebody who risked everything to right a wrong. Maybe a community who overcame a natural disaster. Not only will you gain the strength to overcome weight loss hurdles, you’ll also be a better person for it by opening your mind to other people!

47: Involve Yourself in a Charity

Simon Says: “Is self-absorption killing your weight loss efforts?”

I’m not saying this is you, but I’ve known people who had one problem or another, and they absorbed themselves in their problem *so much* that they failed to see that the problem really was more of a “situation” than something major. Especially in economic times like these, there are people out there who truly are struggling with problems that many of us couldn’t imagine. Look, weight loss is a difficult path and your efforts deserve proper kudos. However, I’ve found that when I obsess about one thing or another, I tend to lose proper focus to overcome the situation. It wasn’t long ago that I was dealing with quite a bit on my plate between work and family, and then I did a TV show with Jamie Oliver that helped me realise that my problems were minute. For 24 hours, I and others stayed with pigs in a cramped pig sty to bring awareness to animal cruelty that is exacted upon most of the pigs being raised in the world today. When you do charitable things, it brings a sense of reality to *your* life and to *your* problems. Spend a day at a soup kitchen feeding the homeless and tell me that skipping dessert is a big deal. I’m not lecturing; *we all tend to be self absorbed*. Involving yourself in a charity will strengthen your soul and place your weight loss efforts in proper perspective.

48: Zig Zag your Calories

Simon Says: “Readjust your metabolism by alternating high calorie, low calorie days.”

Zig zagging calories is a method that many body builders have used for years to build lean muscle and keep their body fat low. It’s a very effective way to break a weight loss plateau. While you’ve been losing weight, you lowered your caloric intake. It’s your body’s natural tendency to want to stabilise itself. Your body learned to live on less and adjusted your metabolism (the rate at which you burn energy) accordingly. Though you *were*

losing weight on 1800 calories per day (or whatever *your* intake was), your body is now *maintaining* at that amount. You can force your body to change this rate by zig zagging your calories. The basic premise is that by raising your caloric intake, you will force the body to adjust metabolism accordingly. After a few days of eating more, your body will go back to losing weight on the 1800 calories (again, whatever your weight loss level was). There are a few different philosophies on this, but I personally recommend eating high calories two days, low calories for four days and repeating. To do this with the Lunch Box Diet, follow the active carbohydrate advice for your high calorie days and then go back to eating what you were when you were still losing weight. Another way of accomplishing this is to keep a food diary for a week and figure your daily intake that allowed for weight maintenance (in other words, your weight did not change this week). Then, add 300-500 calories more for the two high calorie days with healthy carbohydrates such as oats, brown rice or couscous. This is not an excuse or a time to indulge and eat fattening, poor quality foods, so choose wisely. After the two days, go back to your normal intake which should now allow for weight loss rather than maintenance.

49: Grow a Garden

Simon Says: “Make eating healthfully a hobby!”

Gardening is gaining in popularity because of the massive benefits of having fresh produce on hand that hasn't been tainted with pesticides and other meddling. Environmentally speaking, gardening has benefits towards the welfare of the planet, but it also has benefits towards your weight loss goals. For one, it takes a bit of muster to garden so it's a good way to get outdoors and burn some calories. As well, there are times that fresh produce prices in the stores are difficult to absorb and seed packets are very inexpensive. The nutrient value of super fresh veggies grown in your own garden is higher than it could possibly be from veggies that were harvested, stored, transported and placed on the shelves at the store. As good as all of that sounds, the best part of gardening is how it will engage

you in eating healthfully. Something fantastic happens when you take the time and care to tend a garden and then proudly prepare healthful meals with the bounty of your work. This is also a FABULOUS way to get children into eating vegetables. You know what a child's face looks like when you place a dish of slimy, canned spinach at the table. Now imagine allowing your child to pluck a spinach leaf from a plant he or she grew from a seed, rinse it off and give it a try. Gardening helps us all to learn to love healthy eating and make it a part of our existence, and this as you know, is a crucial piece in the weight loss game.

50: Change Your Dishware

Simon Says: “Fool your eyes and your stomach by changing *what* you eat on and *what* you eat with.”

There is certainly some gorgeous dinnerware on the market these days, but some of the plates are simply humungous! Placing proper portions on one of these plates may make you feel as though you're not getting much to eat. Conversely, if you use a smaller plate, the portions (though the same size) will seem adequate. Try this with many of your plates and bowls. Instead of using a huge cereal bowl that rivals a mixing bowl capacity, use a very small bowl. Are you going to have that bit of ice cream you've been craving? Fine, but use a tiny spoon (such as a toddler spoon) to eat it. You'll take smaller bites and the ice cream will last longer. Using chopsticks is another clever way to make a meal last longer, force you to eat more slowly and stop eating sooner. Don't cut your meat all up before you eat it, rather, cut as you eat or you're likely to gobble down the whole lean protein serving quickly.

So there you have it. You're now armed with 50 top techniques that I have used successfully with my personal training clients over the years. Get going, and remember, implement one per week and you'll be on the road to a new you!

Take care and I'll see you soon. If you're not already, get signed up to my weight loss circle at www.lunchboxdiet.co.uk

Cheers

Si

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