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# **PILLARS FOR SUCCESS IN REACHING AND MAINTAINING YOUR NATURAL WEIGHT**



**Neshama Mousseau, MSW**

Board Certified Holistic Wellness Practitioner | Certified Wellness Coach | Certified Mindful Eating Coach

[www.coachneshama.com](http://www.coachneshama.com) and [www.clergywellnesscoaching.com](http://www.clergywellnesscoaching.com)



# **Pillars for Success in Reaching AND Maintaining Your Natural Weight**

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# INTRO

When is the last time you looked in the mirror and felt like you could smile back at your reflection because you looked great and had the energy and vitality to live the life of your dreams?

If it has been a while, ask yourself if any of the following sounds like you:

- The scale has been going up, your clothes are tight and you are at a loss as to what to do...
- You have tried every diet you've seen online and they don't work, or the results don't last...
- Your energy is low, and you don't feel like you can get off the couch...

If this sounds like you, read on for cutting edge tips to get you out of hopelessness and back on the path to abundant energy, vibrant health and the body you envision.

Today we are going to talk about some powerful techniques and concepts that bust the myth that weight loss is all about a simple math equation, i.e. calories in and calories out. You will walk away with things to try today that really work and will help you reach your natural weight and keep it there in a sustainable way. These techniques are designed to be simple, nourishing and not punishing.

Diets don't work because they set up a system of deprivation that results in a rebound whereby the dieter "goes on" then "goes off" a specific food plan. After she goes off the food plan the dieter often runs amok grabbing all of the forbidden foods they fought against eating during the diet. The result is weight gain, often gaining back more than what was lost in the first place. Has this ever happened to you?

What diets don't take into consideration is that how and when we eat is as important as what we put on our plates. Stress physiology, rest and joyful movement also powerfully affect the body's ability to lose weight. Are you ready to learn more and get started?

## The How of Eating

Take a moment to ask yourself the following:

- Are you a slow, moderate or fast eater?
- Have you ever gotten to the end of your meal and not remembered eating it or whether you received any satisfaction from the experience?
- Do you often feel unsatisfied unless you have seconds?
- Do you typically finish your meal before your table-mates?
- Is your fork “loaded” with your next bite before you have finished chewing and swallowing?
- Are you often hungry an hour after eating a meal?
- Do you multi-task while you are eating? This includes: reading, surfing the internet, checking email or social media, completing work watching TV or streaming Netflix.

### **If you are a moderate or fast eater, that’s great!**

Why? Because this gives you a concrete place to start to work that does not involve giving up any favorite foods or forcing yourself to restrict.

If you are a moderate or fast eater it is really important to learn how to slow down with your food. Why? Because when you slow down with your food, you naturally start to eat more mindfully, more intentionally and with more awareness. You eat with less stress and are able to digest what you are eating more fully. You will feel more satisfied with what you eat and ultimately eat less, but not feel any sense of deprivation.



If you are a distracted (multi-tasking) eater, that is another great place for you to be able to work from. I know it is scary to just sit and eat. It may be one of the hardest things you ever learn to do, but it is really important. The reason it is so important is because when you eat while engaging in other activities your brain does not register that you are actually eating. This is one of the things that can account for overeating and feeling hungry a short time later. When you are multi-tasking you are unable to effectively digest your food. You are unable to feel truly satisfied.

Start with just one meal a day that you dedicate to eating without activity. Then add a second meal and eventually you will eat all of your meals with focus.

**Note:** Eating with friends, loved ones or colleagues is not considered multi-tasking. While it can get easy to get distracted while eating with groups – the social benefits of eating with others are enormous.

## ACTION

**Experiment:** Learn to eat more slowly, mindfully and with awareness.

First, ask yourself:

- How hungry am I?
- What do I really want to eat?
- Do I want food that is sweet, salty, sour, spicy, crunchy or smooth?

Second, try the following:

- Take a deep breath and really bring yourself to the table
- Notice your food. What does it look like, smell like, what are the colors, does it seem nourishing? Is this something you really want to eat right now?
- Take a moment for gratitude. You can try a moment of silence, saying grace, a prayer of thanks for the food and all of the people who worked to get it to your table (the farmer, the person who transported, the people in the store).
- Take a bite and truly taste it. Is it pleasing? If it isn't, what would make it better?
- Chew thoroughly while putting your fork back on the table.
- Swallow
- Breathe again
- Continue eating, trying to savor the experience and going slowly. As you eat, check in with yourself and ask the following: Is this still satisfying? Do I want to continue eating this?
- Check in with your feelings of fullness. When you feel like you are at the point of feeling full, put the fork down and stop. If there is still quite a bit of food on your plate you can take a break and come back to it in 5, 10, 15 minutes and resume if you feel you need more to feel full enough. If you have food left on your plate, remember, you can always wrap it up and eat it at another time.
- When you are done, congratulate yourself for your mindful eating practice at this meal.

***Extra credit! Set a beautiful table with flowers and use the “good dishes”!***

**Resources for deeper learning:**

*Mindful Eating* by Jan Chozen Bays

*Graces: Prayers and Poems for Everyday Meals and Special Occasions* June Cotner

## What to Eat

It is not my goal to tell you specifically what to eat. I will not provide a list of “good” and “bad” foods because, for the most part, I don’t see food that way. It is just food. Some foods are more nourishing and some are less nourishing.

Ultimately it is important for you to eat more whole (real) foods and fewer processed (fake) foods. This will help your taste buds and palate become more discerning to what is satisfying, nutritious and delicious. The goal is to eat for nourishment, satisfaction/ fullness and energy.

**What you eat should not leave you feeling tired, sluggish and depleted afterwards.**



## ACTION

### Experiment:

- Shop the outside aisles of the supermarket for live, real foods. The outside aisles typically have the produce, dairy, meat/fish, eggs, olives, seeds and nuts. Make this the biggest part of your shopping, and know there are additional steps to take, but the goal is for you to take action, not get overwhelmed!
- Eat the rainbow!
- That means: eating a wide range of vegetables and fruits of different colors.
- Make a list of your favorite 10 “go to” meals. Then assess – is this a nourishing meal that gives me pleasure and is made from real ingredients? When I eat these meals, how do I usually feel afterwards? Energized or sluggish, satisfied or hungry?
- What “hacks” can you make to your favorite foods to make them more healthy and nourishing: examples include substituting spaghetti squash for wheat pasta, cauliflower rice for rice, banana “ice cream” for regular ice cream. What small changes can you make right now that will leave you feeling satisfied?

**If you're not sure what to do, send me an email and list a few of your comfort foods and I'll make some simple suggestions!**

- Plan your meals for the week based on your “go to” list. Meal planning (finding recipes, shopping, prepping and cooking) is the secret weapon for successful and sustainable weight loss. The meals don't have to be complicated and in fact there are many websites to peruse that have recipes with 5 ingredients or less. If you don't see yourself as a cook, keep it simple and start with a recipe you know you can master. Start a file of recipes you like and want to make again and make notes on those that you don't like.

### Resources for deeper learning:

*From Junk Food to Joy Food: All the Foods You Love to Eat...Only Better* by Joy Bauer



## When to Eat (Rhythm)

If you are someone who finds yourself insatiable with hunger in the evenings, you might have a “rhythm” problem. How do you know if this is you? Ask yourself the following:

- Do you find yourself in the pantry foraging after eating a satisfying dinner?
- Do you find yourself with an empty bag of chips and no recollection of eating them?
- Do you eat a carton of ice cream, yogurt, or X in a sitting late at night? In front of the TV or in bed?
- Do you feel like, no matter what you eat for dinner and into the evening, it never feels like it is enough?



**If this is you, it is highly likely that your rhythm or timing is off with your eating earlier in the day.** This means that you might not be eating enough sustaining and satisfying food, beginning with breakfast and throughout your day. It is likely that you are not eating enough protein, high quality fat and healthy carbohydrates.

# ACTION

## Experiment:

- Try eating a more satisfying breakfast that includes protein, healthy fats and carbohydrates. Think: frittata (eggs) with veggies, avocado slices and a tangerine. Eat your orange, don't drink it as juice.
- Be sure to take time to eat a balanced, nutritious lunch. If you are working, it is really important to eat away from your desk and to eat with awareness.
- Plan a mid-afternoon snack. Some great suggestions are: an apple and nut butter, hummus and veggies, cheese and crackers.
- Eat dinner at a reasonable time using the suggestions in the pillars above.
- Notice whether employing these techniques results in your decreased hunger or binging in the evening.
- If you do find yourself having to eat chips or ice cream (or whatever your go-to evening food is) that is OK. Eat it! One caveat: **put it on a plate or in a bowl and eat it at the table, without distractions.** Don't eat it mindlessly in front of the TV or computer.
- Remember! When you eat, eat.

## Resources for deeper learning:

*The Slow Down Diet* by Marc David, 2015



## Breathing

A person can go for weeks without food, days without water, but only a few minutes without oxygen.

Breath = Life

There is more than one way to breathe. When we are going through our day, we tend to breathe into the upper chest, which is constricted breathing. When you feel the least bit of stress, pay attention to your breathing and bring it down into the belly, blowing the belly up like a balloon, then breathe out slowly. This has the added benefit of bringing your attention down into your body and out of 'busy mind' mode, so you will feel calmer and more focused.



Oxygen is also imperative for healthy digestion. The more you train your body to breathe deeper, the easier it is for your body to process your food and get the most nutrients out of it. So focus on breath to make your life better!

## ACTION

**Experiment:** The simple 3-6-6-3 breathing technique

Get comfortable in a seated position, feet on the floor and back supported.

- Breathe in through your nose to the count of 3
- Hold for a count of 6
- Exhale for a count of 3
- Hold for a count of 6
- Repeat the process
- Continue the process for 5 cycles or as long as you need to feel centered and calm

**Suggestions:**

- Use this technique first thing in the morning when you wake up, to energize your day.
- Again, use this when you are eating – before and after – to help process food.
- Insomnia? Never again if you use this technique at bedtime until you fall asleep! An additional benefit is that when you do this at bedtime, it trains your unconscious mind to help you breathe deeper all night long.



# PILLAR 5

## Movement - What Moves You to Move?

Let's face it, fitness matters. And exercise is important if we want to be healthy. That said, it should not be punishing.

Why? When exercise becomes punishing your body experiences a physiological stress response. That means that it goes into "fight or flight" and that your cortisol gets jacked up. When your cortisol kicks in, many things happen to your body, including: decreased oxygen supply (which influences metabolism); decreased ability to burn fat or build muscle; and increased insulin resistance. These are just a few of the reactions in your body that do not support your ability to reach and maintain your natural weight.

At the end of exercise you should feel better, more energized, happy and excited. You should not feel depleted, worn down, tired and fried. What are you drawn to do?

### CHECKLIST:



- When do you like to exercise?
  - Morning
  - Afternoon
  - Evening
- How do you like to exercise?
  - Classes
  - Solo
  - Video/DVD/Online classes
- Where do you like to exercise?
  - Inside
  - Home
  - Gym
  - Outside
- With whom do you like to exercise?
  - Alone
  - Friends
  - Group setting
- Do you like to participate in sports?
  - Team sports
  - Solo

There are so many options, based on your personality and interests. You probably live near rec centers and private health clubs, yoga, dance and martial arts centers. Group options include everything from kickboxing, weight lifting and CrossFit, dance (Zumba, Nia), water aerobics, classes for seniors, all kinds of yoga and so much more.

Try different things and see what you like at this time in your life. There are all kinds of “Meetup” groups (meetup.com) where you can make friends and try out different activities.

Individual options include:

- Walking
- Hiking
- Running
- doing solo routines at the gym
- biking
- X country skiing and more.

If you like to work out at home, you can do a lot with very little space and equipment. Exercise bands can provide a range of resistance moves. If you have a computer or smart TV you can stream almost any kind of activity. The most important thing is to find a form of movement that gives you joy and that you will do on a consistent basis.



### Resources

Some unusual (and FUN) workouts can be found at:

[www.nianow.com](http://www.nianow.com)

[www.Intensati.com](http://www.Intensati.com)

[www.t-tapp.com](http://www.t-tapp.com)

[www.Yogafit.com](http://www.Yogafit.com)

[www.yogainternational.com](http://www.yogainternational.com)

## Sleep

Sleep is often the unsung hero in achieving and maintaining your natural weight. In today's high speed 24/7 world most people do not get enough hours of sleep or quality rest at the end of their busy days. What is the impact on weight? Not getting enough sleep is a stressor - and stressors kick your body into "fight or flight" mode.

**Sleep is meant to be restorative so that you wake up energized, refreshed and ready to live fully for another day.**

### ACTION

#### Experiment:

1. Go to bed earlier. While every person's rhythm is unique, the ideal hours for optimal sleep are 10PM until 6 AM.
2. Keep electronics out of the bedroom. This includes: TVs, smart phones, kindles, tablets. The bedroom should be a retreat for sleeping and sex only.
3. Eliminate any extraneous lights.
4. Prior to bedtime, try some of the following:



- a warm bath (with Epson salt and a calming essential oil such as lavender)
- a relaxing tea
- a few gentle, restorative yoga poses such as child's pose (modified with your head on a bolster, towel or yoga block); legs up the wall with restorative breathing

**Here is a link to see how to do them:**

<https://www.yogajournal.com/poses/yoga-by-benefit/insomnia>.

5. Listen to a calming audio - yes, this conflicts with #2, but for some folks, the benefits outweigh the downside. You can use your Ipod and mini-speakers instead of using earbuds or a headset - experiment and see what works for you. There are many free or low-cost apps today like Insight Timer.
6. And, of course, you will want to watch how much caffeine you are consuming during the day! Ideally, you will have no more than 1-2 cups of coffee or caffeinated tea and none after 12 noon.

## Joy

What does joy have to do with weight and wellness? Everything! From a place of joy, gratitude and happiness, all things are possible. Don't be concerned if you are not coming from a place of joy right now. It can be learned!

To get started, check out the following book for easy-to-implement techniques:

*Happy For No Reason: 7 Steps to Being Happy from the Inside Out* by Marci Shimoff and Carol Kline

### **Pulling it all together:**

This is where the rubber meets the road. You've experimented, you have found some improvements to implement, now it's time to set up a structure so you KEEP doing them!

What works for you?

- Calendaring workout time
- Planning food for your week
- Have a 'cooking day' a couple times a week and setting up the leftovers for an easy 'grab-n-go'
- Setting a 'time for bed' timer
- Putting reminders in your phone
- Scheduled hourly breathing and movement breaks throughout your day
- \_\_\_\_\_ fill in the blank with YOUR transformational "to do"



### **Having trouble getting started?**

For a complimentary 1-1 'Uncover Your Infinite Health' Discovery Session, email Neshama at [coachneshama@gmail.com](mailto:coachneshama@gmail.com). In this session, you'll have a chance to talk about what's getting in your way of great health, what you want to be experiencing instead, and we'll create a step-by-step map to get you from where you are to where you want to be.

**You'll come away feeling much more clear, focused and empowered, with a plan to move forward to the life you'll love.**



### **About Neshama Mousseau, MSW:**

As a Board Certified Wellness Coach, Neshama brings deep compassion and integrity to help clients create a lifestyle that is empowered, designed for longevity and fantastic health and energy, and helps them put quality of life back into their own hands. She received her Master of Social Work from Arizona State University, her Certification as a Mindful Eating Coach from the Institute for the Psychology of Eating and her Certification in Wellness Coaching from the International Association of Wellness Professionals.

Visit Neshama at [www.coachneshama.com](http://www.coachneshama.com) \* Call (303) 907-0906 or Email [CoachNeshama@gmail.com](mailto:CoachNeshama@gmail.com)



### **“Neshama is an awesome coach**

who carefully listens to our personal issues around food and weight, and recommends specific short- and long-term strategies to develop eating habits that transform the way we think about food, our diet, our body image and our weight issues. Through her coaching, I have learned to slow down, enjoy my food more and be more mindful about what I put in my body, and where and how I am eating. She has helped me select better food choices that cut down on stomach upset. As a result, I feel healthier; food tastes better; and I am making better decisions around eating regularly in a relaxed way rather than rushing through meals in my car. I am more satisfied with less food intake.” - Marilyn, 70, Colorado



“I have struggled for years with constant upset stomach and digestive problems and nothing seemed to explain it or help fix it. **Coach Neshama introduced an entirely different approach to my eating habits** that not only changed how I felt but that was also actually doable and easy to make into a lifestyle change. Through her coaching, I began to realize how simple things like slowing down and really enjoying my food not only affected my digestive problems but also increased my energy and helped with chronic stress and anxiety. Neshama completely changed my approach to food and now I really enjoy what I eat and love seeing the way nutrition impacts my life in all areas. Neshama is an excellent coach and will take the time to truly understand your needs and listen to what works best for you. She provides a practical approach and turns healthy eating into such a positive experience.” - Becca, 28, Georgia

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