



THE 21 WEIGHT LOSS HABITS THAT HELPED ME DROP 60.8 LBS

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THE SUFFERING MINDSET

Forcing yourself into shape will NOT form better habits



Habits are neural pathways your brain forms when a **cue** (e.g., waking up) triggers a **routine** (e.g., drink coffee) which is followed by a **reward** (e.g., energy.)



When your brain wires a habit, the behaviour becomes almost automatic. If a behaviour *doesn't* become a habit, it will not last long-term.



Most people believe that the only way to lose weight/get healthy is to force themselves to do things they hate (this is the Suffering Mindset.)



But this mindset only works short-term because habits need rewards in order to be wired (suffering is obviously not a reward.)

Bottom line: The Suffering Mindset is when you think you need to suffer to lose weight/get healthy. This mindset doesn't wire habits which makes whatever endeavor of yours not last for the long-term. Doing things you enjoy and celebrating your wins, no matter how small, helps wire habits faster.

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The secret of permanent weight loss lies in creating good, healthy habits you get to do automatically, *without suffering*.

Ditch the “Suffering Mindset.” The Suffering Mindset inhibits your brain’s habit-making process. Suffering is a clue that what you’re doing is not the right thing and you need to tweak your approach. Suffering is a sign you’re getting context wrong. What do I mean by context? Let’s discuss...



Hi, I'm Maria Brilaki, founder of Fitness Reloaded, certified personal trainer, and author of *"Surprisingly...Unstuck: The power of small, healthy habits in a world addicted to instant results"* and *"Flat Belly Firm Butt in 16 Minutes."*

This is my story. It's about how I lost the weight and the habits that led me there. I lost 15 lbs after grad school and then 6 years later I dropped the 45.8 lbs baby weight.

Yes this is a total of more than 60 lbs! But this is not the power of this case study report. The power lies in the fact that I get to describe what I did differently back when I left grad school vs. after giving birth - when I was way more "advanced" habit-wise but also had 3 times the amount of weight to lose!

In other words, in both cases I needed to lose weight but context was very different. Context is what many people miss when starting to lose weight and it's also what makes weight loss look very different from individual to individual.

- Context is why some people may need to start with exercise while others may need to change their diet as soon as possible.
- Context is why some people do better losing weight slowly while others get better results losing weight fast.
- Context is why these habits produced these results for me, but the chances that these exact habits that I followed will produce the exact same results for you are really, really low - after all, we're different people, with different goals, different lives, different starting points, different needs, different, different, different.

Context is also why an approach that may have been perfect for you in your 20s is no longer a good fit for you now in your 40s. Get context wrong and you walk a frustrating path that usually involves one or two of the following:

- You do what you think is right but can't seem to get it work. It looks like you can't lose weight.
- You lose weight frustratingly slow compared to the effort you're putting in.
- You lose weight successfully but then take most of it back in the next year or two.

Let's avoid these, shall we? By focusing on habits you'll get to dramatically decrease the risk that you'll gain the weight back. And by better understanding context you'll get to make wiser choices when it comes to the particular way you should be losing weight incl. what habits to go with first and what pace is right for you.

Sounds interesting? Let's get started by reviewing the basics of weight loss that way too many people get wrong - the need for a calorie deficit. I'll then move on and walk you through the habits that helped put me in a calorie deficit and hence lose the weight, while also showing you the differences in context between "after grad school Maria" and "new mom Maria."


To your healthiest, most fulfilled life,

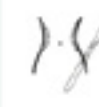
Maria Brilaki





CALORIE DEFICIT: the real cause of fat loss


HOW TO LOSE FAT WITHOUT A CALORIE DEFICIT:


**Ways that work:**


Cosmetic surgery (e.g., liposuction)


**Ways that don't work:**

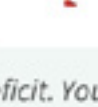
Intermittent fasting without a calorie deficit

Clean eating without a calorie deficit

Detox diets without a calorie deficit

Essential oils without a calorie deficit

Ketogenic diet without a calorie deficit

Exercising and then "rewarding" yourself with quite a lot of food

Bottom line: The only way to lose fat is a calorie deficit. You can achieve this in many ways by manipulating how much you eat and how you exercise, but without a calorie deficit you simply will not lose body fat. Note: We don't recommend cosmetic surgery as an alternative to a calorie deficit.

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Many gurus promise making your body a “fat-burning machine” but this is marketing BS. You lose fat ONLY if you’re on a calorie deficit, i.e., when you consume less calories than your body needs. If you’re not losing fat, then you’re not on a deficit.

There are many ways to induce a calorie deficit, like reducing added sugars, eating less fat, exercising more, just to name a few. This is why we’ll be discussing multiple habits.

"BUT I LOST WEIGHT WHEN I QUIT SUGAR..."

**What actually caused weight loss:**

Eating fewer processed, yummy foods that are high in both sugar and fat

Eating more veggies & wholefoods

Cooking more at home and eating out less

All the above bring you to a calorie deficit that is then responsible for weight loss

**What you think caused weight loss:**

The specific reduction in sugar consumption, as if calories from sugar are more fattening than calories from other foods

Bottom line: The decision to reduce sugar from your diet may result in a chain of events that causes weight loss. However, sugar itself is not inherently fattening.

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There’s nothing particularly fattening about calories coming from sugar compared to other foods. Calories are calories.

Will you lose weight when you reduce your sugar consumption? Possibly, because the decision to reduce added sugars from your diet may result in a calorie deficit or it may cause a chain of events that causes a calorie deficit - i.e., *what actually causes fat loss*.



THE WEIGHT LOSS HABITS
that helped me drop 60.8 lbs



Habits Overview

THE 21 HABITS THAT HELPED ME LIVE HEALTHIER & LOSE FAT

01 EXERCISE 4-5 TIMES EVERY WEEK

06 LIMIT ALCOHOL (EVEN ON SOCIAL SITUATIONS)

02 COOK AT HOME CONSISTENTLY EVERY WEEK

07 HEALTHY MINDSET: ONLY DO THINGS THAT FEEL GOOD

03 MEAL PLAN ONCE A WEEK

08 TRACK WHAT I WAS EATING ON MY FOOD JOURNAL

04 GROCERY SHOP ON A WEEKLY BASIS

09 LIMIT OLIVE OIL IN MY COOKING

05 MOVE MORE DAILY IN ADDITION TO MY EXERCISE ROUTINE

10 MAKE SURE I DON'T OVEREAT WHEN SNACKING

- 11

DO NOT BUY “TEMPTING” FOOD
- 12

COORDINATE WITH HUSBAND TO AVOID UNINTENTIONAL SABOTAGE
- 13

INCREASE BARRIERS TO “TEMPTING” FOOD THAT’S AVAILABLE AT HOME & BROUGHT BY OTHERS
- 14

EAT TWO FRUITS SERVES DAILY
- 15

EAT GREEN SALADS AT LEAST 3 TIMES A WEEK
- 16

FOCUS MY EXERCISE ON STRENGTH-TRAINING AND WEIGHT-LIFTING
- 17

LEARN NEW HEALTHY RECIPES ON A WEEKLY BASIS
- 18

DO NOT RELY ON THE SCALE ALONE TO MEASURE FAT LOSS
- 19

AVOID LETTING MYSELF GO HUNGRY
- 20

TRACK MY WORKOUTS TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE AT THE GYM

- 21

BECOME A MORNING PERSON TO ACCOMMODATE FITNESS GOALS

Notes about my habits

First, my primary motivation has been to live a long and healthy life. While losing weight gave me a prompt to make some of these healthy changes, fat loss was not the one and only motivation to rule them all.

Second, my starting habits were not great but also not terrible. That’s why you don’t see things about avoiding processed food, cutting down on soda, etc - I was not doing these things anyway!

Finally, I want to really emphasize habit #7. I never did anything that I found restrictive. If anything had even the slightest connotation of suffering then I wouldn’t do it and instead I’d look for another way to get to my goal.

But let’s differentiate between suffering and discomfort. Discomfort can be OK. E.g., becoming a morning person was something I was not very fond of at first, but my fitness goals were exciting enough for me to do it anyway.

Suffering though is just that, suffering.

It’s natural to encounter discomfort as you’re making changes to your life. Actually it’d be weird if you were to make a lot of changes and never encounter any discomfort!

But if suffering shows up, take a pause, and review - what is causing it? Is it your thoughts? Your strategy? Your organization? What could have prevented this?

Sounds good? Now let’s move on to describing each habit in more detail!

01. Exercise consistently every week



I was not a big exercise fan back in 2010. I was the type of person who would exercise when it was convenient but would then skip it when anything out of the ordinary arose.

The result was I'd sometimes exercise twice a week, sometimes once, sometimes I wouldn't go at all.

I was not making any real progress fitness-wise, in fact, I was gaining weight.

So that's when I decided that this attitude was over. I made it my **ONLY** goal to exercise consistently no matter what.

At first I focused on doing it twice a week. After a few months I increased to 5 times a week.

Note that I didn't have any performance goals - just showing up was cool with me even if that meant I'd sit on the leg press machine reading a magazine for 45 min (I've actually done that.)

But like I said, the goal was showing up, week after week.

I've never stopped exercising since then. Other than the immediate post C-section period when I couldn't exercise, I don't think I've had a week when I didn't at least work out three times (and it's been 8 years as I'm writing this report!)

And I love exercise! I freaking love it. More on that later.

02. Make cooking reg- ularly a habit



Cooking was really hard for me back in 2010. I hated it. HATED it from deep within. I actually also hated eating out, because that took time too. If only food was a pill and I would just take the pill and not have to worry about eating..!

That's where I was. Yet I recognized that cooking would allow me to eat better food along with managing my weight more easily. If living a long and healthy life was important to me then I had to nail cooking, period.

Boy I didn't like that fact, but facts don't just go away just because you don't like them!

So what was I to do? I realized that if I was the type of person who enjoyed cooking then cooking would be a no-biggie for me.

Of course, the problem I was not that person. But that didn't mean I couldn't become one!

So I started by nailing one recipe (Greek lentils!), and then doing that, only that, week after week, for months.

Only then did I try to do more dishes.

As of writing this report, I don't love cooking but I don't hate it either. I cook almost every day of the week. And I have a family which adds complexity to the whole cooking process.

But cooking is actually a habit that doesn't come alone. To nail cooking, you have to nail meal-planning and grocery-shopping as well.

03. Meal plan every week



Meal planning was just so easy when it was only my husband and I and we were both cooking. As a mom it's exponentially harder.

Because it was so easy back then, I didn't have to put meal-planning on my to-do list as a separate activity. My husband and I used to grocery-shop together, so we'd go there and make it up as we were walking in the aisles.

But now I no longer have that luxury. First, we cannot both go together. Only one of us can go. And that person needs to have a grocery shopping list on hand or a week's worth of food will be in jeopardy.

The day I've found works best both for me and my weight loss clients are Thursdays. Thursday night is usually a good time to map out what's on the menu in the weekend and then during the week ahead.

Then grocery shopping can happen on Fridays or on Saturday morning.

Figuring the meal planning -> grocery shopping -> cooking chain is tricky but it's worth it, so don't back away just because it seems a bit complicated at first!

04. week Grocery shop every



Grocery-shopping was a very easy habit back in 2010. Because I went together with my husband it was a fun activity and a way to spend time together.

Today, I still like grocery shopping, even though I now mostly go alone.

But I like seeing the different options at the store and I like imagining all the dishes and the flavors that will surround me during the week ahead.

I tend to shop on Friday evening or on Saturday morning.

05. Move more in addition to exercising



SITTING FOR 8+ HOURS EACH DAY? THESE WILL HELP!



1. Walking/riding instead of driving.



2. Take one stretching break during the day.



3. Take the stairs.



4. Go to the work bathroom that's furthest from your desk!



5. Throw baby in the air for 3 sets of 10 reps (just kidding!)



6. Have walking meetings with your manager.

Bottom line: Sitting for 8+ hours every day is not doing your health any good, regardless of whether you're already exercising or not. But even doing one of those is going to be worth it.

If you spend 8+ hr sitting every day, then increasing moving is essential for good health. I did this any way I could back in 2010, and I still do nowadays.

To clarify, I don't do these things to burn calories (even though they do burn calories and those calories add up.) I do it for health and because I plan to live a long life.

Specifically: after I had lost those original 15 lbs I bought an exercise bike at home - not to use for my workout time, but to use as my "added movement" bike.

I no longer need an exercise bike because as a mom I have to walk my daughter on a daily basis. If you're a parent, a dog owner, a public transportation commuter, a carpenter, a farmer, etc., you get to benefit from "obligatory" added movement too.

Saying "no" to 06.alcohol



I used to drink socially back in my early 20s. But since 2010, I don't do that anymore. That was not something I planned on. But my husband persuaded me. He said alcohol was not good for health, it was actually the definition of empty calories, so why drink it?

He challenged me - did I need alcohol to have more fun?

He got into my head. So I credit him for no longer drinking. Years later I'd find out that even the benefits of red wine are way overhyped. I realized that alcohol is a toxin and a carcinogen.

And the calories add up. I had a client who said she didn't drink her calories. Indeed, no sodas or juices in her food journal.

But I counted 3 alcoholic drinks for a total of 500 cal per week. 500 cal per week add up to 26,000 cal in a year. That's equivalent to not losing (or gaining) 7.4 lbs.

Ultimately this is a personal choice. You don't have to stop it completely like I did. But if fat loss is a goal, weigh the pros and cons. Do you prefer to allocate some of your calories to drinking or would you rather you allocated those calories into something else? 500 cal can be a chocolate bar...just sayin'.

The choice is yours.

07. Mindset: Only doing things that felt good



How I feel is my weight loss compass. If I'm doing it right then I feel good. If I'm doing it wrong then I don't feel good and I have to change something asap!

In fact, I credit my inherent repulsion at anything that makes me feel deprived or restricted for discovering habits and what habits can do for us.

If it were not for me standing my ground and refusing to follow mainstream fitspiration that dictates suffering as the way to success, then I'd probably never have discovered the magic that habits bring.

Because of habits I went from not being into exercise to loving exercise and wanting to do it almost every day of the week!

Because of habits I easily lost the pregnancy weight and at this point I'm on track to getting in the best shape of my life (and it's pretty awesome to think that your best body is not the one you had in your 20s but the one that's in your future!)

But back to mindset. Anything I do, I don't do it because I hate myself or my body, I do it because I love myself! I want to give the best that I can to my body, whether that is about food or about movement!

It's an important goal of mine to live a long and healthy life, and this is what allowed me to not get unhealthily obsessed about weight loss, no matter how much I wanted to lose weight, esp. after giving birth!!!

I just couldn't wait to wear my normal clothes and store the ugly maternity clothes! I'm so happy with where I am right now and I know I wouldn't have been here if I was only focused on shedding the fat and didn't care about health first.



THAT'S ALL I DID!

when I dropped my first 15 lbs!

Back in 2010, I got to lose the weight simply by switching from eating out all the time to mostly eating at home, and then getting consistent with exercise.

I did not diet. I did not count calories. I was not tracking what I was eating. I was only rarely weighing myself.

In fact, I didn't care about all that. I just knew I needed to improve my habits, so that's what I did.

Fast forward in 2017, I've gained 45.8lbs during my pregnancy, I've just given birth, I had a C-section, I'm not allowed to exercise for 6 weeks, I still need to wear my ugly maternity clothes, and I have a baby that will not sleep for more than 3 hours to take care of.

But I have things going for me. The cooking habit is instilled. I may not be allowed to exercise but because I love exercise, I just can't wait for the doctor to say "go ahead!" My mindset is healthy and pumped. I'm so excited to start dropping fat - even though 45.8 lbs sounds like a lot and that's something I'd rather not think about.

There was one more big difference compared to 2010. Back then I'd gained weight because of my not-so-good habits. Fixing those habits fixed the weight too.

But in 2017 I had gained the weight mostly because I was extremely nauseous during pregnancy and didn't know how to relieve the pain in my stomach.

There were no habits to fix, because my habits were fine.

And I had gained a lot of weight! So I knew I had to up my weight loss game. Here's what I did on top of what I was already doing.



TO LOSE THE PREGNANCY WEIGHT

I had to up my game!






08. Journaling To Track what I was eating







SHOULD YOU COUNT CALORIES?



✓ Reasons to count:

-  It can be very helpful to learn about nutrition
-  It makes you quite aware of what you are eating
-  It makes losing fat & improving body composition more predictable
-  It can be flexible & easier to stick to for some
-  Can lead to a long-term, moderate weight management solution

✗ Reasons *not* to count:

-  If it makes you extra stressed
-  If you forget about food quality
-  If you have a very obsessive/perfectionist personality
-  If you can't or aren't willing to measure or track anything

Since I had 45.8 lbs to lose, and since I just couldn't wait to shed all the weight, I knew I wanted to waste exactly zero time and instead lose weight as fast as possible.

Enter food journaling. I was writing down - nothing fancy, just on a sheet of paper - everything I was eating along with estimated calories.

Of course a benefit I had in 2017 was that I had a quite good grasp of how many calories were in my food (e.g., I knew little about that back in 2010!)

And that's why estimating was fine for me and I didn't really need to track. Now that I no longer need to lose weight, I no longer track. Yet this temporary habit was critical for my post-partum weight loss success.

09. Limiting olive oil in my cooking.



An easy way for me to slash 100-300 cal from every meal was to decrease my olive oil consumption. As a Greek I was just used to pouring it freely on my food.

But as someone who wanted to lose fat as soon as possible, and who knew that as little as 1 tablespoon of olive oil includes almost 120 cal, I knew I had to stop this practice.

So I limited olive oil in my cooking to 1 tablespoon per serving. So for example, if I was making a pan full of food for 5 people, then I'd use up to 5 tablespoons of olive oil and no more than that.

Personally I didn't feel that the food became more bland or tasteless. Instead what happened was that I quickly adjusted to this change and at this point I find it greasy when I eat food with more oil.

10. *Take it easy with easy to overeat snacks*



I really love hazelnuts. The problem is that just one hazelnut has almost 9 calories. This is the definition of calorie-density! Hazelnuts are almost pure fat.

They're extremely easy to overeat if you just grab some without actually counting them first. Yes, I resorted to counting. Not fun, but losing fat fast was more important to me than the inconvenience of having to count how many were in my hand.

If you're a nut fan like I am, and if you have a fat loss goal, nuts are amazing snacks but they have to fit your calorie budget for the day and you cannot let yourself be fooled by their small size.

If you're not a nut fan, but say, you're a cracker fan, and you want to lose fat fast, then similar rules apply to you - you cannot just grab a handful here and there without knowing how many calories are in there.

11. Do not buy "tempting" food.



I'll be honest. In the first few months of losing weight post-baby, tempting foods did not tempt me at all! I was just so excited to see the fat go away and gradually go back to the way I used to be, that nothing, nothing, tempted me.

Yet 5 months later I no longer felt the same way. I was not already "there" but I was at a pretty good place and most of my clothes fit.

That's when tempting food started being tempting again!

An easy way to bypass this issue is by not having the food around in the first place.

For example, pizza used to be a food that I found difficult to only stop at one slice (I say used to because at this point I'm past that!) So why have pizza in the freezer anyway? No pizza around, no seeing pizza and thinking how nice it'd smell, no baking pizza, no eating the first slice, second slice, etc.

12. Coordinate with husband to avoid sabotage



Coordinating with my husband was tricky. He would bring food home without letting me know well in advance about it and accidentally put my diet in jeopardy.

Sometimes he'd even bring some of favorite, calorie-packed meals, like paneer masala, because he thought I'd be delighted to have some!

Indeed, I'd be delighted to have paneer masala - if I was not trying to lose weight!!!

He'd just bring food in the evening. By that time I'd already have dinner but, you know, because I was losing fat it's not as if I was full!

So imagine what an unplanned paneer masala would do to my diet...

A few things to note here is that at the beginning of losing weight post-baby, even paneer masala could not tempt me. That's how focused I was.

But 5 months later when I was more relaxed, unplanned yummy meals entering the house after I had already eaten for the day were a problem.

It was difficult for me to change my husband's attitude that he was not taking care of me by bringing me food. That this would count under "caring" at any other point in time when I was not trying to lose weight.

But because I was trying to lose weight, caring for me would mean supporting my goals.

It took a bit of time, but ultimately we got to coordinate better and not have any more accidents.

13. Increase barriers to "tempting" food



When you live alone, it's easy to organize your kitchen pantry in a way that fits your goals. But when you live with others, you have to collaborate and coordinate with them.

So if, say, my husband brought croissants at home, then I'd tell him to hide them somewhere.

It's not as if I'd look for them.

But if I were to accidentally bump into them, then I could be tempted to have one, and one croissant is like 300 cal that if I were thinking rationally at that point I'd rather allocate differently.

He's done that for me, and I've done that for him when he wanted to lose weight and I was the one bringing yummy, easy-to-overeat items at home.

14. Eat 2 fruit serves daily consistently



3 WAYS TO SATISFY YOUR DAILY FRUIT REQUIREMENT BEFORE LUNCH!


The recommended minimum daily intake for women aged 31-50 is 1.5 cups fruit per day. Here are 3 examples of what meeting the guidelines looks like!

1

Breakfast:

 1 small apple

Snack:

 16 seedless grapes

2

Breakfast:


 1 large banana

Snack:

 1 large plum

3

Breakfast:

 4 large strawberries

Snack:

 1 large orange

Bottom line: Meeting your daily requirements is not that complicated but it may need some planning!

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While I was doing well on the vegetable department, my fruit intake was not as consistent as I wanted it to be. So one change I made post-baby is to get to two (or more) fruits a day no matter what.

Goal achieved.

More info on RDI of fruit and examples of what you could eat:
<https://www.choosemyplate.gov/fruit>

15. Increase salads eaten every week



While my vegetable game was hot, and I need to credit my heavy legume consumption about that, my “greens” game was not yet up to that level.

So one of the decisions I made was to incorporate more green salads into my diet, and have at least two or three a week.

Who knew that I could get to like kale so much?













Also, notice that my primary focus is still health. While you can create a calorie deficit in multiple ways, I chose to do it in a way that made me eat even healthier.

And these are all habits I’ve kept on with since I dropped all 45.8 lbs!

16. *Make lifting heavier a goal*



BEST FAT LOSS EXERCISES FOR MEN & WOMEN:

Women:		Men:	
	Squat		Squat
	Deadlift		Deadlift
	Push up		Push up
	Pull up		Pull up
	Row		Row
	Lunge		Lunge

Back in 2010 my only goal with exercise was showing up. Fast forward in 2017, I've had a C-section. 6 weeks pass and I get clearance to exercise. I cannot even hold a plank. It'd take months to do my first sit-up - and keep in mind the doctors told me I had very strong abs when they were operating on me! A problematic post-baby core is a pregnancy side-effect.

Yet my fitness level improved. And I started setting goals, fitness goals, and in particular, lifting goals!

I did not set those goals to lose weight. I set them because that's what I wanted to do. My workouts got longer and required quite a bit of effort. Yet I enjoyed them, I felt pumped to do them, and I so love their effect on my body!

17. Learn new healthy recipes



There was just no way out of it. Having a family pushed me to up my cooking game with more variety. It's one thing to have to cook for yourself, but when you need to cook for more people, then cooking gets more complicated and you can't just cook huge quantities and eat from that food for 3 days straight.

Learning new recipes was not something I specifically did to lose fat, but it was a needed step to bridge my fat loss goals with my family's needs.

At this point, part of meal planning every week, includes either discovering new recipes on the web, or looking through my cookbooks.

18. Measuring fat loss in multiple ways



HOW TO MEASURE YOUR FAT LOSS PROGRESS



1. Body weight (scales)



2. Body fat % (calipers, DEXA etc.)



3. Progress photos



5. Body measurements



5. Performance in the gym (strength/endurance/skill)



6. Ability to say NO to dessert/alcohol/fries without suffering



7. Ability to say YES to dessert/alcohol/fries without guilty

Bottom line: There are many ways to measure your fat loss progress beyond the scale weight! We often get frustrated when we can't see the number moving, but sometimes a mental win is as big a success as a physical one!

When you want to lose fat as fast as possible, it's critical to be able to measure fat loss accurately.

And the scale is just not a good enough tool, because it doesn't account for your menstrual cycle, it doesn't account for water retention, and it does not account for changes in body composition - like building muscle while losing fat!

Measuring myself with a tape became my go-to method to track results when I was losing my post-baby weight. I'd take my stats at least once a week to verify I was making progress as expected.

19. Not let myself go hungry.



Managing hunger appropriately is a much-needed skill for successful fat loss, esp. if you're losing fat fast. A small 300 cal daily deficit will not require much hunger management from your end.

But as you go to 500 cal or more, you may need to plan appropriately to avoid you feeling like you really should eat, like right now, like your stomach is growling.

That's not a fun place to be. Plus the consequences are you'll most likely end up eating more than you'd like. But there's a way out of it.

Most big hunger episodes happen because either because you think you have to be really hungry to lose fat (no, don't do that!) or because of lack of planning. E.g., you have lunch and then by the time you're back from work and about to start cooking dinner, you're so hungry you eat anything you find in front of you.

Then you then go on and eat dinner you just made, even though you're satisfied from eating anything and everything while you were making it.

This was not hunger's fault, this is just bad management.

Feed yourself appropriately and no longer let episodes like that happen. Personally, I found I had to up my planning and organization game if I wanted to have good food available for me to eat in advance of hunger setting in.

20. Tracking each and every workout



I didn't need to track my workouts. In fact, I didn't need to exercise to lose weight, I could just lose the fat without it. However, I wanted to exercise. And I wanted to achieve my lifting goals.

And this is why I tracked. I tracked (and still do) the exercises I do - number of sets, repetitions, and weight lifted.

This way the next time I hit the gym (or work out at home) I know how I should be increasing the weights I lift to keep my body challenged and those gains coming.

As you see, the once reluctant gym goer is now not just a personal trainer but also a gym enthusiast! That's what habits do to you.

21. Becoming a morning person



Earlier I talked about how I upped my fitness goals post-baby and made lifting my primary objective. Well, lifting weights requires a gym.

Working out at a gym is exponentially more difficult compared to working out from home (which is what I used to do for the most part pre-baby.)

Working out a gym while also having a baby is even more difficult from a logistics standpoint. You cannot “just go,” you now have to coordinate with your partner or your sitter, because someone needs to take care of that baby!

But back to my gym goal. There was just not a good time to go. I couldn’t go during the day because I was working. I either had to go in the evening or early in the morning.

In the evening I was floored, so that left mornings as my only option.

And by morning - I had to be back before 9 am at the latest to pick up baby duty as my husband left for you.

But to be ready to take on the baby at 9 am meant I had to be at the gym by 7.15 am. So I had to wake up at 6.30 am at the latest.

I made that happen by sleeping earlier at night. No, I wasn’t going to bed earlier. Instead, I taught myself to sleep fast, and no longer having to wait for 30 min to fall asleep.

If you’re waiting for 30 min or more every to fall asleep, then that’s 3.5 hours wasted every week. If you’re busy, then there may be better ways to spend that time.



STEP BY STEP,
HABIT BY HABIT,
SLOW OR FAST,
KEEP ON &
KEEP CALM