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When you can ditch the scale and when it can be risky

Saturday, February 23, 2013

Since I'm the type of person who tries to see both sides of an issue, this topic fascinates me.

As I've written before, I weigh daily, every morning. It's just like brushing my teeth. It's no big deal.

Yet, I understand the frustration of those who can't stand to do this. It's a mental thing. It's not about the number. It's our reaction to it.

TinaJane67 described this very well in 2 recent blog entries.

- www.sparkpeople.com/mypublicjournalindividual.asp?blog_id=5258262
- www.sparkpeople.com/mypublicjournalindividual.asp?blog_id=5259546

Just like binge eating. It's not about the food. It's our mental state and emotions that need adjustment.

As I read all the blogs and comments, I'm beginning to see that the scale serves a different purpose for each of us although there are some similarities.

This raises the question:
Does your attitude toward the scale vary with where you are in your weight loss journey?

- On the way up?
While you want to ignore it here, denial rarely ends well
- On the way down?
If you see progress in NSVs, especially great progress, an occasional weigh-in may suffice, as long as you are honest about those other means of measurement.
- At a plateau?
This can be frustrating, but at least the scale can verify that you're not on the way up.
- In maintenance?
The scale is the fastest and easiest method of catching an upward trend before it gets really hard to undo.

"It's just a number." Absolutely right.
The air pressure in my tires is just a number, the gas gauge gives me data too, but if I ignore either of them, I'll be stranded by the side of the road.

The weight of the clothes in my suitcase is just a number, but if I ignore it, I'm going to be charged a fee by my airline.

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My blood pressure is just a number and it fluctuates just like my weight, but ignoring it can have dire consequences.

My weight on the scale is just a number, a number I worked hard to achieve by changing my lifestyle. If I ignore it, I'm going to be back where I started.

Yo-yo dieting is a way of life in our society. I've read the stories of so many sparkers. That's reality and I'm going to use any tool I can to avoid it.

Yes, it's just a number. So is my waist size, my waist to hip ratio, my percentage of body fat, my blood pressure and even my IQ or my yearly income. None of these "define me" and if I let them, then it's my mental attitude that needs adjustment.

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CD12629461

I used to live by what my scale said.. If it stayed the same or went up I had a bad day. Then I decided to start focusing on other numbers, like how many push ups I can do, how heavy is the weight I can lift, how long can I walk, etc, etc... Now the scale doesn't have that power over



me.
3032 days ago



MJZHERE

I weigh daily and the scale truly is a tool. Still trying to "settle" into maintenance (not sure what I really want to weigh yet), it has helped me in the learning process. I know that when I have gained the weight back in the past, I would stay away from the scale until I was ready to face the truth (and by then it was many pounds I had to lose once again). So determined to not yoyo anymore, the scale is necessary for me.

3032 days ago



STRIVERONE

I tried weighing only once a week and got some ugly surprises, so I'm back to weighing daily. That's what works for me so I'll stick with it no matter what other advice I get.

3032 days ago



CELIAMINER

Daily for me. Same ritual...empty the bladder from the night, then step on the scale, followed by daily meds and shower. There's comfort in the ritual.

3032 days ago



ROSEWAND

I successfully lost over sixty pounds without weighing once. I did not weigh until well into maintenance when I was concerned I might be still losing.

Now I weigh occasionally. My clothes are a more gentle guide as to how I am doing. I can tell if I am up a little or down a little by how comfortable they feel. I do wear my skinny jeans at least once a week to check!

We each can find the feedback system that works best for us. There is no right or wrong here. The key in this journey to find what works for us and consistently do it!



The magic in all of this is persistence and consistency.

3033 days ago



CD988070

"At a plateau?
This can be frustrating, but at least the scale can verify that you're not on the way up.
In maintenance?"



The scale is the fastest and easiest method of catching an upward trend before it gets really hard to undo."

I really needed to read this as I'm close to maintenance but on a plateau! Thanks :)



3033 days ago



DONNA5281



I don't even own a scale!

I get weighed when I go to the Doctors.

Enjoy your day!
3033 days ago



ROSE-GARDEN



3033 days ago



DR1939

I weigh daily. If I don't bad habits sneak up on me.
3033 days ago



MNNICE

Yes, some people do thing I'm obsessive because I need to weigh every day. I have learned that sometimes the numbers on the scale have absolutely nothing to do with how well or poorly you've done on your eating and exercising and I don't let it control my mood. I just know if it sneaks up a couple pounds I need to do something about it before it turns into a couple more pounds! We're all different and thanks in part to SP, we learn that whatever works for a person is the "right" way for them!
3033 days ago



GINIEMIE

Numbers are not lying. I don't attach an emotional feeling to it unless my checkbook is in the red. I'm on the scale daily! Thyroid med, bathroom, scale, prayers w/ coffee-in that order. After that I adjust my daily intake slightly dependant on where the weeks average is taking me. Now I'm not a saint, when I've hit a goal in the middle of the week for two days, but put enough ounces back on to not be able to record it at the end of the week I'm disappointed-but not distraught. I'll do better next week.

Thanks for balancing "la balance" as a scale is called in French!



3033 days ago



SUZYMOBILE

I weigh daily, too, and it has served me well over the years. Like TinaJane, this isn't just an OCD activity for me. I use the numbers to track trends--particularly when my weight is on the upward crawl. From that tracking, I've discovered that it takes MONTHS for an increase in calories to be reflected in a significant increase in weight. Insidious! Just when I'm getting in a strong habit of eating more, I have to cut back!

So, obviously I believe in using the scale as a necessary maintenance too. Just as a diabetic would take blood sugar levels and adjust insulin accordingly, I need to record my daily weight and adjust food intake accordingly.

3033 days ago



CD13227574

I visit the scale twice a week, once on Thursday morning at my TOPS meeting, and usually on Monday morning to make sure progress is going in the right direction. If it's not there is still time to get it back on track before Thursday. That schedule has served me well. Whatever works and works consistently is really what it's all about.
3033 days ago



WILSONWR

I use all the tools available to lose weight, and the scale is one of the most important. You can't depend on it for everything, but it's a great gauge of overall progress (and it's a lot quicker than taking measurements!) You're right about attitude also - you know if you need to react to an increase in weight because of overeating. You also should know not to get down on yourself if it went up slightly when you're doing everything right!



3033 days ago



NELLJONES



I have written about this same thing. I weigh every morning and write it on my calendar. That way with a glance I can see my weight going back years, and though it's the months and years that count, daily weighing is part of my routine. It's my indicator for the day. If it's up, I sweat the aromatics in less oil, if it's down, I can use more oil. As long as I keep the drama out and the day in focus, I am fine and never need to go back to the dreadful obsession. I am not a hand wringer. As long as I can lay out a task in a To Do list, I can just check each item off as Done.

3033 days ago



JENNIEQKA



I did weigh-in every day and it started discouraging me when the numbers went up. It happened when I started intensive strength training and my coaches said it is normal in the beginning. It was very damaging to my emotions so I kept doing what I was doing but avoided the scale for more than 2 weeks. However, I agree that we must not 'strand' too far. It probably depends on the person. When I stepped back on the scale I was down again, even broke my

lowest SP achieved number



But I definitely don't want to do it every morning! It would kill me!

3033 days ago



FITFOODIE806



Standing ovation!!! You and Tina are able to put my feelings into words. I weigh everyday. I feel that I do it in a sensible, logical way. Same as you: every morning. I would never step on the scale multiple times a day. I don't believe big ups OR downs. I notice patterns and trends. And I'm honest with myself. That's the key!

3033 days ago



CD11934124



I agree 100%! The scale and I have a love/hate relationship.....it is mostly due to my emotional feelings during my journey and depends greatly on how I feel that morning.

The scale on a bad day is like.....when your doing such a great job and then "something" slaps you in the back of the head and says, try harder...lol!

I do weigh every morning but I have learned to stay away from the scale when my emotions are fragile.

Great blog! Thanks for sharing!

3033 days ago



MISCHAKEO



I weigh daily also. When I gained weight in the past, it was when I also stopped weighing myself. I like the comment, the scale simply tells you what you have to do. It is a tool.

Nice blog.

3033 days ago



BOILHAM



Another great blog. We need to use the numbers produced wisely. Doing so, those numbers will help us, rather than hurt us.

3033 days ago



KWEEKWEK



3033 days ago



COCK-ROBIN



There are times I want to take dynamite to that scale, especially when it just doesn't budge at all.

3033 days ago



TORTOISE110



This is great. A home run of a blog post!

I don't weigh every day, but at least once a week. I know me. I know me now and know I need to keep an eye on that figure or lose my focus on what it takes to stay on track.

Your truth is:



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