

The 7 Problems That Can CRIPPLE Your Weight Loss Efforts

By Derek Gordon

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Please Note:

The information contained in this report is intended as advice on starting a weight-loss program, and is not intended to substitute for specific medical advice. **Always consult a doctor before starting any type of weight-loss program.**

Problems are not the solution to problems, *solutions* are the solutions to problems.

This is a ridiculously simple phrase. Unfortunately, I was forced to write it after seeing how frequently people responded to a weight problem by a) starting and quitting a weight-loss program in the blink of a lash; b) beating themselves up mercilessly over their weight problem; c) starving themselves in a counterproductive attempt at solving the problem; or d) a combination of the above.

Hopefully it's needless to say that **quitting, self-abuse, and starvation are further problems and NOT solutions to a weight problem.**

I love problems, but not because I have a passion for worrying. I love them now because they force me to think in different ways to find the best solutions. I used to hate them because I responded with anxiety, which caused me to inadvertently pile more problems on top of a relatively simple one until I had a 'problem mountain' that I couldn't see past - or climb over.

Because of my own history with weight problems, I have a passionate, personal and ongoing fascination with seeking out the most effective and efficient solutions to the litany of obstacles that can arise when fighting fat. To that end, I've compiled this e-book addressing the problems that I've encountered along the way, as well as the problems I've seen others deal with.

The one crucial thing I've learned is that sometimes a stubborn problem requires a shift in thinking *the likes of which we may not be initially comfortable with*. Life is a maze, my friends, and even though you may like to pursue a certain path because the weather is warmer and the air is fresher, it's not necessarily the way to the end.

It's very important to me to know I have included here the most relevant and persistent problems that we face on our way to better health. It is my hope that you will find in this book what you are looking for, with a method (or the seeds of a method) that will help you solve your problem.

Without further ado, let's look at the most common problems you may encounter in your weight-loss efforts – and suggestions on overcoming them.

1. I Can't Motivate Myself to Exercise

There are several different reasons why people find it hard to exercise regularly. It's important to acknowledge them and tip them back into your favor. For example:

- **I'm a Workaholic with 3 Jobs and Six Kids:** OK, so everybody is busy, and those among us who aren't *pretend* to be busy to avoid looking lazy. But let's play a little math game for a moment. If – at your peak - you are able to commit 30 minutes a day, 4 days a week, then you are giving up 1.2% of your hours in a week to transform your body. If you *really* commit and do 45 minutes a day, 6 days a week, then you are giving up a grand total of...2.7% of your time each week. For many of us, sacrificing this tiny amount of time each week means *seeing a dream realized*. Think of how many more hours you spend per week in activities that do absolutely nothing for you.
- **Dirty Words:** Most people aren't aware of how crippling or enlightening words can be. You may prefer not to use the word 'workout' if you associate the word 'work' with something others force you to do for little pay. If you refer to an exercise period as a 'routine', you may feel less than inspired to take action if that word rubs you the wrong way. Find other phrases to describe an exercise session, like your 'fat-burning championship game', or something creative that will inspire you.
- **The Elephant is Too Damn Big:** The phrase, "The only way to eat an elephant is one bite at a time" should be foremost on your mind when attempting any task. As I spoke about in my e-book, *Essential Fat Loss Tips for the Hopelessly Unmotivated*, the most common thing that causes people to quit is that they get overwhelmed thinking that they have to do everything at once, and do things a certain way that are going to cause them great pain and possibly risk their health. You don't need to exercise for even 20 minutes a day when you start out. When you begin, you just need to get acclimated to the lifestyle changes. Your body is smarter and more of a friend to you than any weight loss expert. Listen to it closely.

- **The Pain:** When you're going through the adjustment period, it is not only crucial to ease your way in with the amount of time spent, but also with *how* you're exercising. Again, break it down into steps, which may be to a) just get your body moving, b) do 5-10 minutes of a fun, goal-oriented physical activity, c) do 5-10 minutes of an aerobic activity, d) increase your time, e) increase your intensity, f) introduce resistance training. Your first step is always to associate the activity (exercise) with **enjoyment** rather than pain and 'work'.
- **I Get No Respect – From Myself:** Consider this question: how often do you feel really inspired to do good deeds for people whom you neither like nor respect? If you have trouble with low self-esteem, and think that losing weight will solve that problem, then consider how difficult it is going to be to motivate yourself to self-improvement of any kind when you don't really believe that you deserve the results you seek. This matter requires an honest look at yourself and some hard questions to pull you from the muck that you may heap on yourself. A good start is to begin setting yourself small goals and making sure you achieve them.
- **The 'Immediate Results' Syndrome:** Often people lose their motivation because they don't see big losses in the first week or month. Countering this means engaging in some 'big picture' thinking. One method is to take a photograph of yourself prior to beginning and keeping it handy as a 'before' reference. Remind yourself that the exercise you're about to do is a crucial connecting point between the 'before' picture you have and the 'after' picture that you *will* have – as long as you continue with the day-to-day steps.

2. I Don't Have Time for Healthier Eating

Lack of time is often the #1 reason people will give for not improving themselves, and as a result denigrate the importance of the quality of their lives. If you think you're too busy, consider that Oprah Winfrey runs a media empire and still manages to exercise 5 days a week, as well as maintain a low-fat diet. The point is that there is a way to do this, you just

need to commit yourself to the initial practice of it and it will get easier as you learn what you need to do. So, even if you cannot prepare meals the night before work and must eat out every meal, you can still:

- **Avoid Fried Foods:** This may seem unrealistic if you are accustomed to fast food burgers and chicken, but you **always** have alternatives like grilled chicken sandwiches, chicken salad, whole wheat wraps, and baked potatoes. Anything else broiled, steamed, grilled, or baked will lower your fat intake considerably.
- **Avoid Loads of Condiments, Sauces and Other Toppings:** Those slices of cheese and tablespoons of mayo, sour cream, butter, and tartar sauce just seem so darn innocent on our entrees, don't they? Trouble is, many are loaded with saturated fat and the calories that come with it. Request alternatives like low-fat mayo, dressings, etc, and use in moderation.
- **Avoid Large Portions:** Yes, they want to push the larger portions on you at all times, and no, you don't have to accept them at any time. If you're ordering something that you can eat later, you can always order a larger portion to go and divide it into two meals. Otherwise, keep an eye on calorie intake as usual.

3. I Have to Lose 60 Pounds in 30 Days (or some such variation)

There may be a wedding, birthday, vacation or reunion right around the corner, but unless you disown your family and cut off contact from all of humanity, there will be others. It's understandable that we want to look our best on these occasions. It also needs to be understood that if you have started too late, employing 'starvation' techniques will succeed – in stripping you of lean muscle and water weight. This will not only do you no good, but a loss of muscle means that your metabolism suffers along with it.

The flipside of this is that you can use a future event as a deadline, as long as it's realistic. For example, if you're planning a trip to the Caribbean in 7 months, you can use the exact date that you plan to leave as a point when you will be 50 pounds lighter. If the prospect of attending a special occasion

at your present weight is nightmarish for you, use one down the line as a motivator for healthier behavior. It doesn't even have to be a set date; you may decide that you want to be married in the next year and lose 100 pounds for that day. Let your imagination spur you on.

I have seen the 'I must lose x pounds in x days' syndrome many times before, and there is always strong emotion behind it. But in order to lose fat and maintain the loss (for the next event) you must think scientifically, and scientifically speaking, you're in for a mighty fall if you attempt haphazard dieting techniques. You will see a slower metabolism, dehydration, muscle loss, a loss of energy, and possibly effects like constipation and hair loss. But *fat* loss? Not so much.

4. I Eat Because I'm Bored

One of the things that people don't consider about the state of boredom when they're in poor health is that it is not about not having anything to do, it's about not having the energy and therefore the motivation to do anything. This is exactly why it's so crucial to not turn to eating when you're bored; you then create a cycle that keeps you from ever moving forward. The truth is, in this vast world we should *never* be lacking for things to do.

The reason why I bring up lack of energy as a cause is that we are more able to keep our minds focused on a task when engaged in **full body activities**. What activity do you think would more likely keep your mind off of food, a game of racquetball or a game of checkers? The point is that any physical activity where your whole body is engaged in trying to accomplish a goal is going to require more concentration, and therefore allow less distraction, than anything else you can do.

Of course, we can't simply go and play a game of racquetball or basketball whenever we're bored. So, another thing to consider is that **you could be frequently confusing the hunger mechanism with that of thirst**. This is an especially glaring point if you are on a good fat-loss program in which you are eating several small meals a day, since your hunger should be more or less satisfied with this type of frequency.

You may find it an effective strategy to 'binge-hydrate' rather than binge-eat at these points. In fact, there's a very good chance that if you fight boredom

and the resultant binge-desires with a simple, enjoyable activity and a liter of water by your side that you will calm the urge to gorge yourself with excess calories. If you make it a habit to chug 4 or 5 glasses of water when you get the desire to binge, you may be surprised by the change that it causes.

You may also find it useful to help yourself by using the principles of *alchemy*, or the process of turning base metals into gold. One of the most constructive things you can do at any time is to transform your negative feelings into positive ones, and if you want to lose weight because you're disgusted with yourself, then exploit that for greater motivation.

One way you can do this by taking the most unflattering 'before' picture of yourself that you can, and then use it for constant reference. This means you must NOT use the one of you in your baggiest clothing, but in the most *revealing* clothing, the bathing suit that will show off every fold of fat that causes your most excruciating inner turmoil. With this, the thought of a much more flattering 'after' picture in the future can be connected with the choice to alleviate your boredom in a healthier way – like through more exercise.

You may be surprised by the results of the above technique. A couple of years back, I had a picture taken for my passport, and noticed in it for the first time that I had discernible wrinkles on my face. Being still in my late 20's, I was horrified. I quit smoking, began consuming more water-rich foods and carried a copy of the picture around with me to remind myself to keep committing to better health.

By the way, it's worth reiterating that you do constantly **have the choice to do whatever you want**. You must never forget that. You do yourself a disservice to do *anything* to trigger your 'inner rebel', those thoughts that will justify your decisions to eat like there's no tomorrow to 'show them that you're free to do whatever you want'. You *are* free to do whatever you want, but do yourself the service of always being accountable by realizing truthfully what it will do to you physically and mentally. 'Free will' must always be balanced with responsibility, but responsibility does not mean listening to criticism or judgment. It means making the effort to be aware of the truth, and when you do that, it will tend to lead you down the richer path.

Radical suggestions are often the best way to solve conventional problems, so here's a way of both alleviating boredom and crushing your cravings that you may find very effective:

Buy yourself a notebook or scrapbook. Go to the library, or if you have a printer at home, you can do this online. Compile a list of your favorite junk foods and their ingredients. From books and magazines find as much factual information as you can about the different components (eg, trans fats, refined sugar), and photocopy or print out the information that gives you the best idea of what the components do to you physically and otherwise. What you're doing here is compiling a document that reminds you of the TRUTH of your favorite foods, foods that you've romanticized out of proportion to how they *actually* treat you. This truth can be a very powerful weapon against the delusions that you've formed in your thinking, if you're willing to open up to it. When you get a craving during a period of boredom, review exactly what is in your favorite junk foods, and make an informed decision from this rather than an emotional or delusional one. Make this an ongoing project if needed.

5. I'm Confused: Is a Low-Carb or High-Carb Diet More Effective?

For those of you who don't have a crystal clear idea of the benefits of a high-carbohydrate diet compared to a low-carbohydrate diet, I promise you will after reading this section. This is a very important point, as in recent times low-carb diet plans like Atkins and South Beach have gotten a great deal of press and popularity. Although its popularity has waned dramatically at this point, the Atkins' diet was instrumental in sparking this dialogue in recent times, so it will be used as the primary example of the low-carb diet in this section.

The first thing to address is that there are a few discrepancies among people concerning what a low-carb diet entails, and in fact even Atkins changed his mind dramatically over the course of the thirty year life of his bestselling book. The most crucial point is that not all carbohydrates are made equal, a point which was fuzzy for Dr. Atkins when his book was first published in 1972. The fact is that fibrous carbohydrates – in the form of vegetables – are crucial for proper functioning, particularly when it comes to avoiding constipation. Although the Atkins diet now encourages the consumption of

fibrous carbohydrates, the initial phase of even the recent program limits them severely enough that an alarming majority of participants find themselves suffering with problems like constipation.

The other point that causes discrepancies in opinion is in the immediate weight loss that occurs when people start on the low-carb diet, and which some feel justifies the means. Unfortunately, the initial weight loss from a low-carb diet has much less to do with *fat-loss* than with water loss. How so? A report by the Tufts University School of Nutrition regarding the low-carb South Beach Diet explains it well:

“Consider that carbohydrates are stored in the body attached to water molecules. When carbs are not taken in with the diet, every carb that comes out of storage to fuel the various organs and other tissues releases water, which ends up in urine and creates weight loss on the scale that can be confused with fat loss.”

Obviously, water loss is not healthy, it's not sustaining, and it's not what people on a *fat-loss* program should be content with. As if to drive the final nail into the coffin of the Atkins diet, in a 12-month comparison study of Atkins diet, the Zone diet, the Ornish diet, and Weight Watchers, Atkins came in last place in the amount of weight lost in the year, according to www.atkinsexposed.org. It also had a relatively high (50%) drop-out rate – especially for a diet that allows indulgence in fatty meats, cheese and butter.

The main reason for this would be that many participants on a low carb diet complain of frequent food cravings, likely due to the lack of energy that carbohydrate deprivation causes. Some of the other common side effects – like headaches, halitosis and hair loss – likely caused more concern. On a bigger scale, this same type of lack of loyalty was reflected by the fact that it went from being a craze where nearly 10% of North American adults were on the diet at its peak, to being bankrupt by July 2005.

Nobody is arguing that certain types of carbohydrates – like white bread and rice, honey and syrup - cause an increase in blood sugar, and therefore insulin, and that fat stores increase because of this. The problem lies in the misnomer that *all* carbs have this effect in equal measure, which you would believe by following Dr. Atkins' original book. The other, bigger problem for the Atkins people is the insistence that you can eat all kinds of fattening

foods, like steak and cheeseburgers, as long as you avoid certain carbs (like fruits, since they contain fruit sugars).

Carbohydrates are necessary due to the fact that they are converted to glycogen when stored in your muscles, where they are held until needed for extra energy. This is made more necessary when you are on an exercise program, which you surely must be to lose significant amounts of weight. As stated, carbohydrates also provide fiber in your diet. The damaging effects of the Atkins low-carb diet have been noted by such institutions as the National Academy of Sciences, the American Medical Association, the American Dietetic Association, the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, John Hopkins School of Medicine, and the American College of Sports Medicine, among others.

So what accounts for the enormous popularity of low-carb diets if they ultimately are neither effective nor healthy? As mentioned above, there is a great deal of initial weight loss, so participants become ecstatic with their results and tell others about it as they dehydrate dangerously. By the time they realize they can only lose so much water, and that it doesn't improve their appearance in a bikini, others have already bought the products. This system works very well – for those making money from it.

For more information about the effects of the Atkins and other low-carb diets, I strongly recommend checking out www.atkinsexposed.org.

Now, please note that I'm not saying that you *must* go on a high-carb diet and stay there. What you need to know is that there are very useful fibrous and starchy carbs (oatmeal, potatoes, yams, brown rice, veggies) that are going to help you fulfill your weight loss goals. One recommendation is to start at a point where 55 – 60% of calories are coming from carbohydrates and work from there. If you experience bad results due to carbohydrate sensitivity (as happens in some endomorph body types), go lower. Just don't ever put yourself at 20 grams a day as Atkins would have you in the Induction phase of their program.

6. I Can't Stop Binge-Eating

If you spend any amount of time with groups of people trying to lose weight, you find that this subject touches a nerve like no other. I've read a statistic

that approximately 2% of all American adults have binge-eating disorder, but I would think it even higher. Of course, like alcoholism, there can be differences in how it is defined. Generally, it means eating an abnormally large quantity of food in one sitting, eating beyond being comfortably full, eating when not necessarily hungry, not feeling in control of eating habits, and maintaining secrecy with the activity followed by feelings of guilt and shame.

Oh, boy. Guilty, guilty and guilty.

The first thing to note is that binge-eating is often tied in with emotional eating, and has been linked to depression. If you suffer from severe emotional problems that cause overindulgence, you need to consider getting professional help, in whatever form is acceptable to you. Any psychiatric advice is outside the scope of this book. One thing you may want to do immediately is go to a free online source where you can interact with like-minded people, such as <http://eatingdisordersforum.com/>.

Another thing I always suggest, regardless of how deep your problems run, is to start an online daily food journal. One of my favorite forums for doing so – because it's very active and supportive – is at <http://weight-loss.fitness.com/>. They have a section called 'Weight Loss Diary' in which you can post everything you eat in order to keep yourself accountable.

This may sound daunting, but the main problem that you have if you binge-eat is that you manage to justify away your actions and never get anywhere because of it. A food diary keeps you accountable in a public forum, and you will be so embarrassed by the prospect of posting generous helpings of pizza, burgers and ice cream that you will be that much more motivated to avoid them. Again, this is using a negative emotion – embarrassment – to get a positive result. It's also a popular and effective strategy, so take advantage of it.

If you think deprivation of the kinds of foods that you love is at the root of a binge-eating habit, then you need to consider whether you have properly adapted your diet to your tastes. As much as possible, you must always figure out how you can satiate the taste buds while getting enough food in your body to keep you from cravings. At the same time, you must also maintain a calorie intake below your maintenance level.

You do this partially by eating several small meals a day, by not skipping breakfast, and by following some of the suggestions made in my e-book, *Essential Fat Loss Tips for the Hopelessly Unmotivated*. If your meals are flavorful, this can help you from feeling deprived, and you can do this by such tactics as the use of herbs and spices, Molly McButter fat-free cheese and butter sprinkles, grilling your poultry and toasting bread for sandwiches, and whatever else helps you without taking you into unhealthy eating.

Finally, you may be binge-eating due to being overly strict and not allowing yourself a couple of ‘cheat’ meals a week. Allow yourself a little room for indulgence in each week; just don’t go so hard that you set your fat-loss goals back by several days.

7. I’ve Hit a Plateau That I Can’t Get Past

The first thing to do when you reach a frustrating plateau while trying to lose weight is to go through the following basic checklist to sniff out what the culprit may be. Are you:

- Eating 5 or 6 small meals a day?
- Getting enough calories, meaning no less than 15-20% below your current weight calorie ‘maintenance’ level?
- Sticking to a good nutrition plan?
- Performing regular aerobic exercise?
- On a weight training program?

These are the basics of an effective and healthy fat-loss strategy, so the first thing to do is make sure that you’re not starving yourself, overeating, eating fatty foods, avoiding exercise, and that you’re doing the extra things to kick up your metabolism, like weight training, and eating a small meal every few hours or so. This is the straightforward stuff.

Beyond that, you may also be *over*-training. If you think that is the case, give your body a few days of recovery, and go back into it on day 4 or 5 with a different strategy.

If a ‘different strategy’ sounds vague, that’s simply because there is **no quick answer to how to overcome a plateau**. I have seen many different

strategies work for different people, so the best thing you can do is be honest with yourself and adjust to what you're currently doing.

I will tell you this: If you want to know of a strategy that has a particularly high success rate, it's zig-zagging. If you're unfamiliar with this term, it means that you take your daily calorie allowance and, for the short term, throw it out the window.

Well, not *exactly*. You will use it as a point of reference for the zig-zag period. This means that if your fat-loss calorie level is at 1600 calories a day, you will want to take a period of 2 or 3 days where you bump that up closer to your current weight *maintenance* level, let's say 1900. After a few days taking in 1900 calories instead of 1600, you go to the other side by taking in 1300 calories, so that over that period of 4-6 days you're balanced out. Try this out for a while and see how it works for you.

Of course, upping your calorie intake does not mean that you're consuming a pint of ice cream or a few slices of pizza, but eating a little more of the type of foods that you're already having. At the other end, don't go so low on calories that you're triggering the starvation response (roughly below 1200).

Another effective trick is to *really* stun the body into a reaction by graduating from more casual aerobic exercise to high intensity interval training (HIIT). Please note that this strategy is NOT recommended for beginners; it requires a certain amount of progress made first for it to be effective without possibly causing an injury. If you're ready, you will benefit from shorter, more intense workouts that will also super-charge your metabolism rate to the point where it will still be steaming ahead after your workout is over.

For a more comprehensive look at HIIT, I encourage you to check out <http://www.turbulencetraining.com/>.

Another strategy that may yield results is to play around with your macronutrient percentage intake. As noted above, you don't want to *drastically* reduce your carbohydrates, but - as an example - you can afford to take the percentage down from 55% to 40%. At the same time you can increase your protein intake by 10% and fats by 5%. Again, this is merely an

example; fiddle around with this, just making sure that you're not carb-depriving yourself to a point of sluggishness.

If you think you may be having a problem with fluid retention, drink more water and/or consume more water-rich foods. Two liters of water a day should be a minimum to keep yourself going properly.

It's crucial during plateau time that you avoid getting too frustrated and emotional, and approach it truthfully and scientifically. If you're just getting started on a fat-loss program, do yourself a favor and accept right now that you will sooner or later hit a plateau. By accepting this as a fact now, you won't allow aggravation to take over by letting this surprise you later. As sure as tax season, it's a' coming.

A final note: I'm surprised how frequently I hear people say, "I've been at a plateau for 3 weeks now, what should I do??" If you go a week without any fat loss while doing things correctly, switch it up! Don't wait to see if doing the same thing will get you out of your rut in week 4 or 5. If you've switched it up and tried different tactics after the first week and it still prevails, it's possible you just need to be patient and give it time. Some have reported that this lesson was the most valuable thing they learned in their experience with plateaus.

FINALLY...

I'm sure that no matter what point you're at in your weight-loss efforts, you're aware that there will be obstacles ahead. This is perfectly fine, because the greater the achievement, the greater the sensation of power you will have **NOT JUST AT THE END**, but as you hit the smaller goals along the way. There are a couple of things I would like you to think about and remember along the way as temptation frequently taps you on the shoulder:

When you commit to healthy, natural weight loss methods, your body rewards your sensibility by providing you with greater energy and a feeling of contentment as a way of telling you that you're on the right path.

When we start a fat-loss program, we assume that we will have to wait a period of x amount of weeks or months until we get rewarded. However,

when you do things correctly, you are actually rewarded in different ways much sooner as you feel both your body and soul becoming more effervescent with your commitment to cleaner habits. You feel yourself becoming more comfortable in your skin, even while that skin is not yet as firm as you'd like it. Remember also:

The world does not care about your weight problem. It does, however, care about your mood and personality. Being dour and self-loathing because of low self-esteem can have a negative ripple effect. Being energetic and inspiring because of pride in your accomplishments can positively impact hundreds, thousands or even millions of others.

You may find it helpful to remind yourself that your **primary** goal is not to lose weight, it's to find contentment. However, thin does not automatically equal happy. What the above statement means is that you will actually find what you're looking for in your commitment to self-discipline. NOTHING, NOTHING, NOTHING in this world is more gratifying to the soul than taking on a **huge** task and accomplishing it. Finally, allow yourself to be one of *those* people.

OH, JUST ONE MORE THING:

The best way to target your mind for success in your weight loss goals is to learn the habits of the most successful 'fat-burners'. With certain principles in place, and a desire to succeed, it's amazing the extent to which people can transform their bodies and lives. I set about studying these habits and compiled my findings into a FREE e-course entitled:

'The 14 Habits of Highly Successful Fat-Burners'

You can sign up for this free course at my website,
www.FatLossLetters.com.

I hope to see you in class!

