

## Lesson #7: Pre-Planning

### The #1 Weapon in the Battle of the Bulge

#### Pre- Planning

**T**he majority of problematic eating is of the impulse variety. That is, you feel frustrated by your inability to control the impulse to eat. Once the eating behavior has begun, this feeling is compounded by a sense of helplessness. It is then followed by self-depreciation, self-denunciation, and guilt. Repeated similar episodes lead to a sense of indecision, an uncertainty whether or not you will give in to your impulses, and an eventual sensation of defeat. The struggle to control weight seems too overwhelming and impossible to conquer.

The most powerful tool available to overcome such a disconcerting situation is the technique of *pre-planning*. It is probably the single most potent method to improve your lifestyle, not only for weight management, but also to achieve better health and happiness. And, that's what this program is all about.

#### Why it's so important

Pre-planning minimizes any last minute decisions you might be faced with when confronted by having to make choices about eating. When you pre-plan, you think about and decide in advance –

everything you are going to eat during an anticipated, troublesome eating situation. This means, however, that you must devote some time to give the anticipated event some thought.

You must reserve time to think about the upcoming occurrence and decide not only what you are going to eat, but also exactly how you are going to conduct yourself, in as much detail as possible. By giving some forethought as to how you will handle a problem situation, you do not have to rely on hoping that you will be able to muster enough “will power” to control yourself when already confronted by the situation. By using the technique of pre-planning, you no longer need to desperately hope for the impossible. Will power is never strong enough to overcome an overwhelming food cue when already faced with it. Will power must be used before the encounter. That is, will power means you are willing to set aside some time for pre-planning. That kind of will power has a full measure of strength because it is not based on defiance, but on a simple decision – namely, to take a positive step in your weight control effort: to pre-plan! There is absolutely nothing to prevent you from doing so if you make the choice to pre-plan. Thus, you will no longer be vulnerable to uncontrolled impulses. By pre-planning you will have removed the indecision and reduced the strength of the temptation. By knowing in advance how you will conduct yourself and what you WILL eat (not “what you will NOT eat” – that’s negative – you must plan positively as described below), you

### Contents:

---

- Why it's so important . . . . .1
- Clean up your crooked thoughts . . . . .2
- Organize your day . . . . .3
- Pre-planning must be in writing . . . . .3
- What and how to pre-plan .3
- Special meals and snacks .4
- Food shopping . . . . .4
- Part 2 . . . . .6**
- Pre-plan for the next time – do it now! . . . . .6
- How to handle leftovers . . .6
- Restaurants and parties . . .6
- Vacations and business trips 7
- Get right back on . . . . .8
- The difference between success and failure . . . . .9

will generate a feeling of self-control and self-confidence that will do wonders for your self-esteem. This is the best device to counteract the feeling of helplessness and guilt that accompanies impulse eating.

#### Another plus (taking charge)

Not only will the impulse effect be diminished when you minimize your need to make last minute decisions, but pre-planning will assist you in obtaining another

*Clinical Nutrition Center*

7555 E. Hampden Ave., Suite 301, Denver, CO 80231  
303-750-9454

Ethan Lazarus, MD • [www.ClinicalNutritionCenter.com](http://www.ClinicalNutritionCenter.com)

major benefit. You will feel that you are taking some positive steps in overcoming your apparently uncontrolled behavior. Note our use of the word “apparently”. By pre-planning, you will find your behavior is very much controlled. The only difference will be that *you* will be the controller rather than external influences. Such pre-planning can change your entire outlook on food. When a feeling of confidence replaces one of insecurity, you will have adopted the attitude of a “thin person.” It can change the psychology of the “fat person” with a sense of failure – mainly due to a lack of “taking charge” by pre-planning – to that of the secure and optimistic individual who feels she is learning and attaining techniques of life-long weight control.

## Working your way up

Achieving the worthwhile goal of controlling of your eating behavior requires paying the price, namely, pre-planning. Eventually, you should pre-plan everything you eat. Nevertheless, as in all techniques of lifestyle change, you must take it in little steps. A sudden and complete overhaul is too difficult and will only lead to another defeat and reinforce your sense of total failure. This is a serious mistake that must be avoided when implementing the technique of preplanning. On the other hand, if you follow the step-by-step procedure outlined here, you can work your way up to excellent control. The overall benefits derived from applying the technique of pre-planning are well worth the considerable time and effort that it requires. You will probably have to pre-plan everything you eat for several months until the food cues get

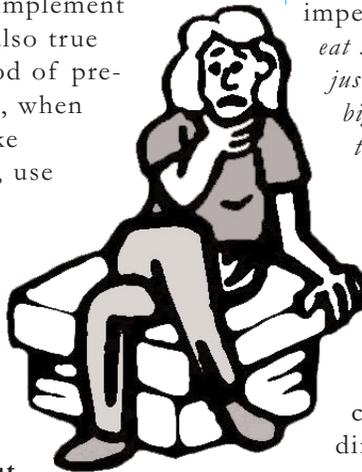
sufficiently weakened so that it becomes easier to ignore them. As correct eating styles are more firmly established, your need to pre-plan will decrease. Proper eating behavior will become more spontaneous. Eventually, you will need to pre-plan only for the most difficult problem situations and for any new ones that you have not coped with before.

## Clean up your crooked thoughts

The first step to proper pre-planning is to take stock of some self-defeating thoughts you might be having. We want to remind you of our oft-repeated statement: *Your thoughts precede emotions, feelings and attitudes.* “Crooked” thoughts are probably the most common cause of failure in those trying to control their weight. The reason, of course, is that we never really get started with the multiple techniques for lifestyle change. We are defeated by our crooked thinking before we can ever fully implement them. This is also true with the method of pre-planning. Thus, when starting to make effective plans, use these five fundamental steps in cleaning up some harmful notions:

### 1. Analyze the facts about the situation.

First, separate fact from fiction. What do you actually know about the problem? Which are beliefs and which are really true? Take a balanced view of your previous behavior during a similar incident.



There is often a tendency to focus only on your weaknesses. Be sure to include your strong points too (*e.g., crooked idea: “I must be hungry to be successful.” “Bread is more fattening than meat.” “Toast has fewer calories than plain bread.”*)

**2. Avoid thinking in terms of total victory or total defeat.** All things in life are neither all black nor white – there are shades of gray! Think in terms of partial success in your pre-planning (*e.g., crooked idea: “If I have an extra bite from what I planned, it’s a sign that I am weak-willed.” “If I deviate from the plan, all is lost; I just can’t change.” “If my plan doesn’t work I am just a failure; I’ll always be fat.”*)

**3. Rather than pondering over all the obstacles posed by the event for which you will pre-plan, view them as challenges that you can take advantage of to improve your lifestyle.** We have a tendency to hyperbolize and magnify difficulties while, at the same time, exaggerating our errors and imperfections (*e.g., crooked idea: “If I eat something that I did not plan, it’s just terrible and awful.” “It’s just too big for me to cope with all the food that will be present at that party.”*)

**4. Clear your head of fatalistic thoughts.** Instead, delineate as precisely as you can why you have gotten into difficulty in a similar situation. Ponder how you could handle yourself differently. Rather than asking yourself “why” you acted erroneously, ask yourself “how” you could solve this problem the next time it comes up. The answers to “why” tend to direct attention away from remedies and do little more than attempt to justify failure (*e.g.,*

*crooked idea: "I just don't have any will power. I was just born to be fat." "I'll never be able to control myself in this situation."*)

**5. Don't paint yourself into a corner and figure that you'll pre-plan the next time, when you're in a better mood.** That day will never come. This is **CROOKED** thinking because you have reversed the normal sequence of events. *Your mood will not change until you change your behavior.* First you must change the way you think so you can change the way you act. To feel better, you must change what you do. These steps come first, before you can reach your goal. Your moods are the result of your actions; and, actions are determined by your thoughts. To get to the top of a mountain, you must climb up there first. Positive thinking is NOT: "I'll feel better tomorrow." Positive thinking must suggest some new ACTION: "I'll get enough sleep and rest, and I'm going to be more faithful in my exercise program, and occupy my time with something interesting to do." Think in terms of steps, not in terms of goals (*e.g., crooked idea: "I feel too depressed right now to do anything about my weight."* "Other people think I make a pig of myself at parties. They think I'm just awful. I'm so embarrassed. I'm just such a terrible person.")

## Start thinking straight

The second step to pre-planning is to outline precisely how you are going to accomplish your goal. This involves the following triple strategy:

A. Determine exactly what you wish to achieve.

B. Make a thorough examination of your starting position. Analyze your current behavior. How do you react to such an event now?

C. Ascertain what small, positive steps you must take, and in what direction, to get to your final goal. Make the achievement of each step toward your long-range goal a short-term goal. Fragment the problem so it is manageable in individual segments. Don't expect results before having taken action in a series of small steps.

## Organize your day

The third step of pre-planning is to set aside some time each day for this technique. Allocate a specific five- to ten-minute segment daily to think ahead about problem eating situations. Decide how you can best handle them. Write down exactly what you plan to eat. Mentally rehearse what you are going to say (*e.g., to an insistent hostess*) and how you are going to act (*e.g., move to the living room for coffee at the end of dinner – to avoid the food cues of leftovers*). Plan for all details. Even though it may not actually happen that way, at least you had a plan. With no plan at all, you're back to your old technique of depending on "will power," which never worked very well for you in the past, and won't work any better this time.

## Pre-planning must be in writing

The use of the food diaries is an essential part of pre-planning. Just planning in your head what you're going to eat is not enough of a firm commitment to obtain the full

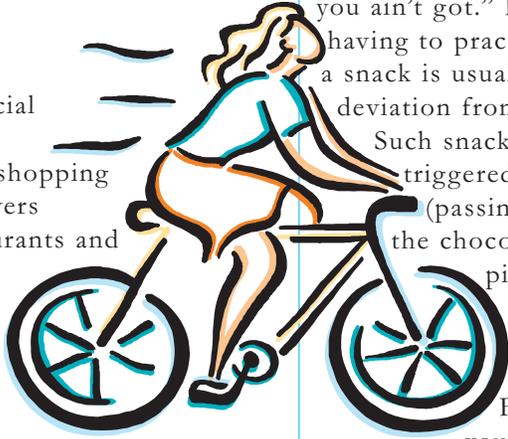
measure of effectiveness from this technique. Pre-planning is done long before the event arises. It may be done several hours, days, or even weeks prior to a specific event. Pre-planning also involves planning for activities – in addition to what foods you plan to eat (as described above) – and may also be for a series of similar events (*e.g., Saturday night dinners for the next month*). You should then check off on the prewritten diary what was actually eaten (no need to write it twice). If anything different was eaten, it is preferable to use a different color of ink. Thus, when reviewing performance at the end of each week (an essential part of the technique), it makes it easier to see in which areas further improvements and streamlining is still required. Feedback analysis like this is very important for continuing to make progress in lifestyle changes.

## What and how to pre-plan

As mentioned previously, it is not recommended that you make an all-at-once attempt to pre-plan your eating life. Pre-planning should begin in small steps. Perhaps pre-planning one meal each day is a good place to start. This can then be extended to other meals after you succeed with the first step. It may take a while. Do not move on to other areas until you are successful with your initial plan. Don't try to tackle too much at one time. The knowledge about yourself (and selfconfidence) that you will gain from having successfully completed a single preplanned meal, can then be applied to other events. As in other learned skills, the more you pre-plan, the better you will become in implementing this method. The

following are some situations for which pre-planning is an ideal technique:

1. A special meal; snacks
2. Food shopping
3. Leftovers
4. Restaurants and parties
5. Vacations; business trips
6. Holidays



manipulation is not part of pre-planning. In other words, it's not good pre-planning "to spend what you ain't got." For most persons having to practice weight control, a snack is usually looked upon as a deviation from the food plan.

Such snacks are usually triggered by either external (passing a candy store with the chocolate odor being piped out to the sidewalk) or internal cues (unable to erase the image of a French pastry from your mind). There are

many techniques available for handling snack eating (e.g., avoidance, delay, tuned-in eating, duration and location control, alternate activity strategy, etc. – printed directions available on request in the "Step-by-Step Densensitization to Danger Foods" handout), but pre-planning is especially useful in this instance. Snacks should be planned with the same care as meals. If you feel they are important, they can be included within the range of the food plan you are following. They should be scheduled just as carefully, within 30-minute, daily designated time slots. Scheduling snacks within longer time designations would defeat the purpose of your lifestyle reconditioning program. By pre-planning snacks, you remove their impulsive nature and avoid feeling deprived.

## Special meals and snacks

If you anticipate a large meal, the best method of pre-planning (in addition to your routine method of pre-planning for any meal) is to save up some calories prior to the event. That means not only earlier the same day, but may also include "saving up" earlier during the week. The concept of a "savings account" is quite sound from a nutritional standpoint, since your energy intake is best calculated on a weekly basis to allow for daily variations. On the other hand, this does not imply a "credit card system" where you pay back what you "borrowed" following the event. Such a technique is valid only "after the fact" – that is, it's okay to use after it has already happened, but you must always "pay back your loan" as soon as possible. That is part of the RIGHT BACK ON technique, to be described later. Nevertheless, such a

Since some of them are especially high-risk situations we will discuss them individually and point out how pre-planning can most effectively be used to handle each of their inherent peculiarities.

manipulation is not part of pre-planning. In other words, it's not good pre-planning "to spend what you ain't got." For most persons having to practice weight control, a snack is usually looked upon as a deviation from the food plan. Such snacks are usually triggered by either external (passing a candy store with the chocolate odor being piped out to the sidewalk) or internal cues (unable to erase the image of a French pastry from your mind). There are many techniques available for handling snack eating (e.g., avoidance, delay, tuned-in eating, duration and location control, alternate activity strategy, etc. – printed directions available on request in the "Step-by-Step Densensitization to Danger Foods" handout), but pre-planning is especially useful in this instance. Snacks should be planned with the same care as meals. If you feel they are important, they can be included within the range of the food plan you are following. They should be scheduled just as carefully, within 30-minute, daily designated time slots. Scheduling snacks within longer time designations would defeat the purpose of your lifestyle reconditioning program. By pre-planning snacks, you remove their impulsive nature and avoid feeling deprived.

## Food shopping

Whether you realize it or not, if you do not pre-plan your trip to the supermarket, you are a "sitting

duck," an unwary consumer who is very likely to spend many dollars for unnecessary food for which you have been carefully programmed. It all starts with the advertisers creating a demand for their products. Television is probably the biggest monster in this carefully designed entrapment, calculated to make it very difficult for you to resist the potent sales pitch. In the privacy of your own home, you are constantly being brainwashed with tidbits of information about various foods, all urging you to partake of the pleasures awaiting you if you buy and eat a specific advertised food item. You are the target of some very deceptive messages which, by clever innuendo and inference, urge you to make purchases which as an otherwise knowledgeable consumer you would not make.

The techniques are many and varied. Commercial food products are associated with beauty, sex appeal, health, strength, and love. Incomplete statements and promises of vividly-described taste thrills accompanied by mouthwatering, multicolored pictures are contrived to lure you to buy the food product on your next trip to the market. When you arrive there, the plot thickens. Food packagers spend huge sums of money to entice you to purchase their wares. See-through containers, multicolored wrappers with attractive pictures

***Pre-planning also involves planning for activities - in addition to what foods you plan to eat.***

of the contents, and fancy lettered wording all imply the phrase "eat me." But wait, the brainwashing doesn't end here. Now, the store manager takes over. Point-of-sale

advertising is most crucial to assure your downfall. Tricks such as storing temptations on the shelves between your eye and waist level, open display cases, sales bins at the end of aisles with large signs you cannot miss as you round the corner – those wicked open racks next to the checkout counters (containing items you would normally pass up) – catch your attention during several minutes of inactivity and boredom while you're waiting in line. They have been ingeniously placed there to entice you to drop them into your shopping cart indiscriminately.

The best way to avoid all these traps is to come prepared, armed with your preplanned shopping list. Your list should include not only brand names but also quantities. Pre-planning should also include cutting down your exposure to food commercials, training yourself to be critical of advertisers' messages – thus increasing your immunity to their influence – cutting down the number of weekly shopping trips (avoid picking up unnecessary items to “round out” your purchase), and shopping only after a satisfying meal (never when hungry). Pre-planning also means shopping when you are calm and relaxed (if you feel hassled or frustrated, you are more likely to pick up a few “treats” for “rewards”), and only



walking through the aisles containing food on your list. Pre-planning who you shop with can also affect what ends up in your basket. Mates and children can often have a very detrimental effect on your shopping habits. In fact, doing your shopping with a weight control friend may have a mutually positive effect. You can each take turns in questioning the other: “Do you really want this food in your house?”

These examples illustrate that pre-planning often involves much more than merely deciding what foods you plan to eat.

### The job isn't over yet

Pre-planning for your shopping trip may also have to include your activities when you first bring the groceries into the house. Experience has taught us that the best planned shopping may collapse unless you pre-plan for a method of storing the food once it is in your home. Consider this scenario:

You arrive home, harried from standing in line at the checkout stand. You may be upset over the food prices or crowds. You empty all the bags on the counter and in the sink. Since you don't know where everything is, you like to spread it all out to facilitate putting it away. Yet, seeing all that food spread out can be a very powerful cue to nibble. The Romaine lettuce is crushed because the bag boy dropped the cantaloupe on top of it, and you think it looks pretty terrible. Moreover, the cookies have gotten in the way of the cantaloupe – so you tear open the bag – to sort

out the crushed ones. You feel pretty tense and tired as you sort out the crushed cookies. Next, you put a few pieces in your mouth as you think: “I'll just eat the crushed ones.” As you put the meat away, you notice that some blood has leaked out and is all over the lid of the cottage cheese. While you're

washing it off, you notice that the lid of the cottage cheese container is partially open. You open it all the way to inspect if any blood has gotten inside. It didn't, but since it's open, you

think: “I better taste it, to make sure it's all right. That first spoonful tasted pretty good. So, I'll have a few more crushed cookies.”

The bread was squeezed between two cartons of cereal. You try to fluff it up – it's just flat – more frustration. More crushed cookies. Finally, all of it is put away. Yet, you find only 15 cookies that are not crushed. You try to reconstruct how many cookies you actually ate from the crumbs – this can't be done. You feel bad about “eating all these cookies.” You're pretty depressed now – so, you eat the rest of the cookies. (“If my family doesn't see the remaining cookies, they won't know that I bought any.”) Pre-planning could have helped avoid this episode.

## *Snacks should be planned with the same care as meals.*

## Pre-plan for the next time – do it now!

Forget the guilt. It's a freeloader. Start to pre-plan your next shopping trip. That will get rid of the guilt quicker than anything else you could do right now. Next time, ask that your meat, dairy products, frozen items, fresh vegetables, etc. are all bagged in their separate bags – you will do it yourself, if necessary (putting like items on the checkout belt together can help insure that they get bagged together too). When you arrive home, bring all the bags containing perishable items in first – leave the rest in the car. Empty only one bag of items at a time (e.g., put meat away first, fold up bag; next put dairy products away, fold up bag; next frozen items, etc.). By emptying one bag at a time, there will be less visual stimulation. You might also plan on drinking a glass of water while putting the food away (keeps your mouth busy).

Next, go out to the car and bring in the rest of the groceries. Again, unbag one bag at a time. Rather than putting everything out on the counter, take each item out of the bag – one at a time. You will put the item away, before taking the next one out.

Prior to leaving, make a *Contingency Contract* **not** to tear open any packages that you have purchased – either while still in the market, in the car on the way home, or while putting them away. Post the contract in the kitchen prior to leaving, as a reminder when you get back. Plan your reward also – and, collect it!

**Remember,  
“waste” can be  
spelled two ways!**

Finally, **GOOTKF** (Get Out Of The Kitchen Fast) as soon as things have been put away. If you clip and save coupons, don't do it in the kitchen. Do it in another room of the house. It should be apparent, that with this kind of careful preplanning, you will be much less likely to repeat such a maladaptive eating episode. That's why pre-planning is such a powerful tool. That's why we call it the No. 1 Weapon in the Battle of the Bulge.

### How to handle leftovers

With proper pre-planning, leftovers can often be avoided. It is best to dish out portions in the kitchen, directly onto the plate, and then carry your plate to your designated eating place, leaving the serving container in the kitchen. If you must keep the serving container on the dining room table, keep it at the opposite end of the table because open containers are an invitation to have a little more.

If in spite of these precautions, there is still some food left over, do not allow it to lie free in the cupboard or refrigerator. Immediately wrap leftovers in opaque wrapping or place them in opaque containers and label them. Write on the label exactly when it is to be eaten. What you are in effect doing is pre-planning how the leftover is to be disposed. Occasionally, throwing leftovers out is the best procedure. It automatically avoids possible future problems, but it also teaches you to discard food – a very difficult but important exercise for the person who has a weight problem.

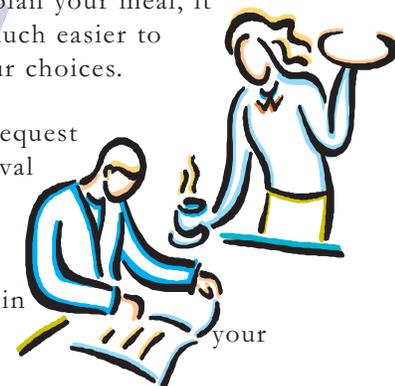
Remember, “waste” can be spelled two ways!

### Restaurants and parties

In order to decide in advance exactly what you are going to eat (again, this should be done in writing) you will need to pre-plan a number of other actions. First of all, try to select a restaurant that serves foods that are on your program. You may not always have that choice, yet there are times when you need to assert yourself and make your wishes known. That's one of your rights. Plan to be the first one to place your order with the waiter. By ordering your own foods first, you are less likely to be influenced by the choices of those eating with you. Making the effort to call the restaurant in advance to find out what variety of foods are available is part of good pre-planning. This will also allow you not to open the menu to make your choices.

Many menus have been scientifically designed to induce you to order more than you need (note the trend towards attractive, colored photographs of various entrees pictured next to the food choices). Furthermore, do not let yourself be influenced by the verbal descriptions of the waiter who will entice you to try the most delicious and fattening items on the menu. If you pre-plan your meal, it will be much easier to make your choices.

Also, request the removal of foods that have not been included in



preplanning. One of the downfalls of many individuals having a weight problem is the breads and rolls that are brought while waiting for the order. Either tell the waiter not to bring them at all, wait until the main course, or place them to the far side of the table (out of your reach) so others eating with you can have them. By all means request that they be removed after others have had their fill. Restaurants will often accommodate you in filling an order for foods that are not on the menu (or preparing them in a different manner). Nevertheless, you must SPEAK UP! The waiter cannot read your mind. By knowing exactly what you want (because of proper pre-planning), you can make your wishes known, and, more often than not, you will come close to getting what you had planned in advance. Without advanced planning, you are a helpless target – just as you are a “sitting duck” in the food market – if you do not come prepared.

### Let's have a party!

Basically, the same techniques hold true for parties. An advance telephone call to your hostess can be helpful. You can even bring along your own special dish for all to enjoy. Many cookbooks today have a number of low-fat or reduced-calorie ideas for preparing dishes for these occasions. In today's weight conscious society, the chances are the hostess herself has a weight problem and will be delighted to accommodate you. Here, again, unless you SPEAK UP, you will never know if it is not possible to pre-plan for these parties. They will be much more enjoyable, because they will not be followed by the guilt you often feel the next day after reacting to the

many powerful cues for overeating. Careful pre-planning can help you avoid many of these difficulties.

### Vacations and business trips

A very dangerous but common rationalization is: “I'm going to really enjoy myself on that vacation” (or trip). “I've been so good at home,” (implying you've already paid for it) “so why shouldn't I eat?” Instead, plan your trip so you won't gain any weight. Even if you gain during the first week you're away, that is not a license to throw out all restraints. You have to be prepared to compensate for an occasional weight gain. The technique is to GET RIGHT BACK ON (see later). By pre-planning you can exert a considerable amount of control, remove some of the vulnerability, and limit the gain. From our many years of experience with patients who have attempted to deal with the compelling temptations of a business or pleasure trip, we have found one singular, effective method that overshadows all others you can use: Pre-plan to keep food records, no matter what happens! Regardless of what you actually end up eating, keeping food records serves as an automatic brake on over-indulgence. If it results in your gaining only two pounds instead of ten, that's an enormous success of eight pounds. That is, it represents eight pounds you will not have to lose, simply because you kept food records. We cannot over-emphasize the importance of food records in this situation.

## ***You will need to refocus your attention away from food and concentrate on the social aspects of the occasion.***

When you repeat a trip or take a vacation to a location similar to a previous one, you can profitably pre-plan based on your past experience. You can pre-plan your days and the restaurants you will eat in. You can pre-

plan your food intake for the day, no matter where you go. That is, if you WANT to. That's a choice you have to make. ***Pre-planning is still the No. 1 technique, even while on vacation.*** For instance, you can plan to “bank” your calories (save them up for a big fancy gourmet meal), just as we discussed in planning for special meals. At buffet meals, you can preplan to pass up second helpings by not lingering in the dining room when you're through with your meal. Vacations are excellent times to plan enjoyable walks after meals. If you're on a cruise ship, asking for the next day's menu (headwaiters will be happy to accommodate you), allows you to pre-plan and figure out tomorrow's eating program. You'll enter the dining room with a much greater feeling of control than if you sat down blindly without knowing what temptations were about to descend upon you.

Practicing portion control is also an excellent method of pre-planning. You can plan to have just one spoonful of each of the delicacies. By using the knowledge of the energy value of foods (see book “Dr. Berry's Pocket Nutritionist,” or other reputable food-values publication) it is easy to stay within your allowance and not feel deprived. The important message here is that the technique

of pre-planning allows you to find innovative solutions to problems, to reach out for new ways to meet old challenges, and allow them to act as a stimulus for creative action.

## Holidays don't have to be your downfall

Holidays are often the most problematic times for weight controllers. The “anything goes” atmosphere, coupled with an abundance of food, leads to an overindulgence of eating. Yet, it doesn't have to be that way. With some prudent pre-planning you can still partake of the festivities and nonetheless remain true to your weight control effort. There is no reason why you cannot enter the holiday season with your eyes fully open, especially if you decide ahead of time what you want to accomplish during this season. Pre-planning will allow you to establish, in your own mind, whether you want to continue losing; maintain weight loss thus far; or simply minimize weight gain. Regardless of your decision, with advance determination, you will avoid finding, when it's all over, that you have “somehow” slipped up. Many of the major meals can be pre-planned as we have already discussed. Even if you “overdo” it, you can pre-plan to GET RIGHT BACK ON (see later) immediately after the big treat.

You can also pre-plan to be assertive as described in one of our later “Keeping It Off!” handout titled “It's Your Right to Be Thin!”

## *Stopping in the middle of a 2,000 calorie binge to make it only 1,000 calories is definitely an advantage, and is considered excellent technique.*

By using the mental rehearsal techniques detailed in that handout you will be less likely to deviate from your plan. But, the important thing is that you have a *definite plan*. Pre-planning is essential for getting through this troublesome period.

## If you decide to maintain weight

Your pre-planning should include some self-indulgence, especially if you have not chosen the weight-loss option of the three options we just outlined. Moderation should be your guideline. If you attempt to avoid all deviation during the holidays, you're more likely to fall into the all-or-none trap we mentioned (see “Clean Up Your Crooked Thoughts”), and to overindulge without restraints after the first “mistake.” This method is the best for persons who have trouble celebrating with others in non-eating ways. By pre-planning your deviations, you are less likely to feel a loss of control. Conversely, keep the planned deviations to a minimum. You will have less ground to make up later.

In case you choose the *complete avoidance* option (e.g., Protein-Sparing Modified Fast or Nutrifast) it will teach you to focus on new non-eating ways of sharing the holiday joys with others. Furthermore, by not breaking the psychological set of avoidance, you will have not lost ground to make up after the holidays, and you will be able to take pride in having practiced maximum control.

In either instance you will need to refocus your attention away from food and concentrate on the social aspects of the occasion. The important thing is to preplan by having outlined a definite strategy, in writing, prior to the holiday season. Not only should you pre-plan everything you will eat or drink, but also how you will do it (e.g., location, position, time, speed of ingestion, etc.)

In other words, your pre-planning should include all the various behavioral techniques you have learned. Delay tactics, cue elimination, tuned-in eating, alternate activity strategies, plate-not-empty, contingency contracts, mental programming, exercise, etc., should all be components of pre-planning for the holidays.

## Get right back on

**T**hese four “magic words” express the cardinal rule of pre-planning. Remember, no one is perfect. Pre-planning is the primary technique in your weight control effort. Yet, you will obviously not always carry out your advance plan perfectly. All is not lost when this occurs. The fact that you have pre-planned for the occasion should give you a sense of pride – you've taken some positive steps in your weight control effort, rather than merely wringing your hands in despair. Moreover, the chances are that, without pre-planning, you would have probably done a lot worse. Doing not as badly is progress also. Never forget that important fact. You must learn to focus your attention on the positive aspects of your behavior. Don't use negative aspects for self-reproach, but as a learning experience to inspire you to pursue

productive and imaginative steps to achieve the goal of a lifestyle that leads to long-term weight control.

**GET RIGHT BACK ON** means that every calorie counts. No matter what happens, the thought that a pure dieting attempt has become impure by a deviation, no matter what the magnitude, and that you might as well stuff yourself until the next pure period starts (*e.g., tomorrow, next Monday. etc.*) is “crooked thinking.” That thinking is a gross distortion of facts. There are no pure or impure days.

That’s why we recommend looking at caloric intake on a weekly basis – indeed, a monthly or yearly basis (there are no impure weeks, or even impure months). It all adds up! Sooner or later you must pay back the “loan” . Stopping in the middle of a 2,000-calorie binge to make it only 1,000 calories, is definitely an advantage, and is considered excellent technique. Everyone deviates at one time or another, even though they won’t admit it.

### The difference between success and failure

The quality that separates a successful weight controller from the unsuccessful one is not perfection, but the ability to GET RIGHT BACK ON the weight control program, as soon after the deviation as possible. The sooner the better! *In fact, one way to measure progress is to see the interval between the deviation and GETTING RIGHT BACK ON shorten.* This concept of GET RIGHT BACK ON is of primary consequence in all phases of a weight control effort. Should you ever drop out of the program for any reason, the sooner you GET

RIGHT BACK ON, the less lost ground will have to be made up. The thought, I’ll wait until next week, or month, or season to restart is full of risk. GET RIGHT BACK ON should be practiced immediately. Feeling guilty is the most useless and harmful state of mind during any weight control program. It is a complete waste of your energies, and when used as an excuse for doing nothing (inertia), is also very destructive. Instead, use your energies more constructively, even after a transgression, and GET RIGHT BACK ON as soon as possible!

## The key to success...

# GET RIGHT BACK ON!

© Copyright 2006  
Clinical Nutrition Center

© Copyright 2002, American Society of Bariatric Physicians. Adapted from materials from the Lindner Manuals.

Ethan Lazarus, MD  
Keeping It Off!

## Lesson #7: Pre-Planning

Clinical Nutrition Center  
[www.ClinicalNutritionCenter.com](http://www.ClinicalNutritionCenter.com)