Slips and Getting Back on Track

I try hard to stay on track with my plan to be healthier, but there are times when I slip back into unhealthy habits. No one time of overeating or not being active will ruin my progress. How I react to that slip will determine my success. Getting back on track the very next opportunity will help me reach my goals.

Recognizing what triggers my slips and how I react to those triggers will help me develop healthier habits. New, healthy habits will limit my slips and make it easier to get back on track.

**Triggers:** A trigger causes an event or situation to happen. I don’t always realize when a trigger has happened because it has become such a habit. Recognizing my triggers and reacting differently will change my habit.

Some triggers are positive and lead to a healthy behavior. Other triggers are a problem and lead to an unhealthy behavior.

**Habits:** My habits are how I react to those triggers. When I react in an unhealthy way, it causes me to slip.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trigger</th>
<th>Habits that make me slip</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seeing others eat at bedtime</td>
<td>Eating even though I’m not hungry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not having a plan for a meal</td>
<td>Stopping for fast food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flipping TV channels late at night</td>
<td>Staying up later than I should</td>
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**Justification:** When I make an unhealthy choice I often justify the behavior to make myself feel better about my choice. I know that unhealthy choices do not provide me with long term satisfaction and can actually hurt my progress.

- It’s alright if I eat a big lunch now; I will do better tomorrow.
- I’ve had a bunch of candy today, but this is chocolate and all foods fit.
- I’m stressed and a milkshake will help me feel better.
- It’s not polite to watch someone eat, so I will join him/her.
- I’m tired today, so I’ll walk an extra 30 minutes tomorrow.
How can I change my habits?

1. Recognize the habit.

2. Change the trigger, if I can.
   - Put my walking shoes by the door to remind me to go for a walk
   - Keep healthy foods on the counter instead of junk food
   - Be sure to get 7-9 hours of sleep each night
   - Plan meals for the week
   - Set up regular activity dates with a friend so I go no matter what
   - Take a healthy dish to the next party I attend

3. Practice responding in a more healthy way.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Trigger</th>
<th>Healthier Habits</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seeing others eat at bedtime</td>
<td>Brush my teeth and go to bed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not having a plan for a meal</td>
<td>Get a rotisserie chicken and bag salad from the grocery store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flipping TV channels late at night</td>
<td>Set an alarm reminding me to go to bed</td>
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I can choose how triggers affect my behavior!

**Trigger:**

Husband brings home pizza at 9pm

**Habit:**

Eat 2 slices of pizza right before bed

**Justification:**

I’ll exercise 30 minutes more tomorrow

**Result:**

I feel guilty about my decision and have a hard time staying on track

**Habit:**

Put 2 slices of pizza in container for lunch tomorrow

**Justification:**

I am so proud of my healthy choices

**Result:**

Stay on track to lose weight and live better
**Getting back on track after a slip:** Slips are normal, and should be expected. What matters is how fast I get back on track. When I get off track, I should remember:

- I have worked really hard to get where I am. I am worth it!
- What was the trigger that got me off track?
- What will I do differently next time?
- I will get back on track as soon as possible.