



# MOTIVATE *your* MATES

- ✓ *LOSE WEIGHT*
- ✓ *BE HEALTHY*
- ✓ *EAT RIGHT*

Feeling fabulous and want everyone around you to feel the same? Here are the best ways to help your friends and family get on the weight-loss bandwagon.

*RATHER THAN BOMBARD LOVED ONES WITH WEIGHT-LOSS ADVICE AND INFO, IT'S BETTER TO OFFER PRACTICAL SUPPORT.*

**W**hen you start dropping kilos and dress sizes, it's natural to want to recruit your loved ones to join you. Now your priorities have shifted, a power walk is probably more appealing than a big night out with friends and you can hardly be blamed for wanting to drag your couch potato partner or degustation-loving best friend along. But before you start telling them to clean up their health act, read our guide so you get them on board in the best possible way: without offending them! >

## SHOW DON'T TELL

As much as you can see that your partner or best friend needs to lose weight, they'll struggle to get motivated until they have an epiphany themselves. "Unless they're actually ready or have seen that photo that showed them what size they really are, then your opinion might not be received well," explains weight-loss psychologist Kristina Mamrot.

Instead of telling them what they need to do, weight-loss psychologist Glenn Mackintosh says you're better off going quietly about your new lifestyle and your efforts will naturally start to rub off on them. "Most people's motivation for joining weight-loss programs is that they've seen someone close to them lose weight," he explains. "One of the best things you can do is keep doing what you're doing – they're likely to get motivated by seeing the changes in you."

## FIND OUT WHAT THEY NEED

As you progress on your Weight Watchers journey, you'll continually pick up nuggets of weight-loss gold. While it's tempting to parrot your Leader to your partner every time you come home, you risk putting them off. Rather than bombarding them with weight-loss advice and information, it's better to offer practical support. "Schedule times when you'll look after the kids so they have time to do the exercise they enjoy," suggests Mackintosh.

You can also support members of your family by making small, gradual changes to meals. If takeaway is usually part of your week, learn how to make healthier versions, such as pizza on wholemeal pita bread with low-fat cheese and chargrilled vegetables, or burgers made from lean mince patties topped with fresh salad.

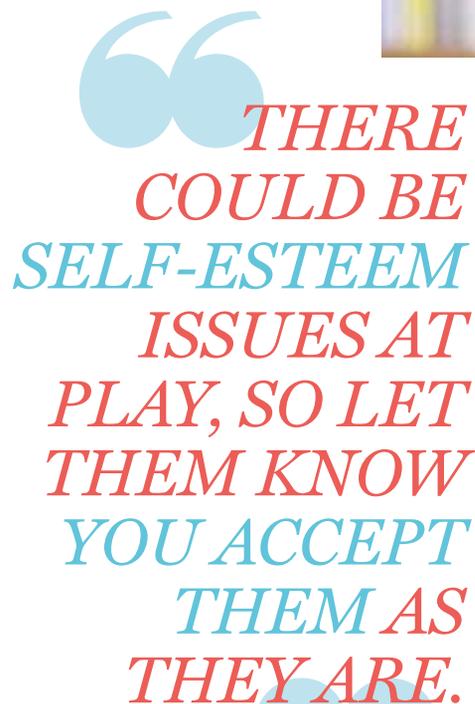
Many Weight Watchers Members say their partners have lost weight as a matter of course when healthier meals are on the household menu. But it might be wise to take a slow approach and make subtle changes so you avoid freaking them out.

"If you normally buy junk food, start cutting it back by half so there's no sudden major change," says Mamrot. "If your partner is used to sitting on the couch in the evening with a large bag of chips, pour some of the chips into a bowl instead

– you can eat about twice as much when you're eating out of a packet."

## BE EMOTIONALLY AVAILABLE

Weight gain can often be a result of deeper issues. "A sudden gain could be symptomatic of serious stress from something like a relationship breakdown," says Mamrot. "But if weight issues have been a longer term problem, there could



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be self-esteem issues at play, so let them know you accept them as they are."

"Try to help them build their own self-acceptance and self-esteem," adds Mackintosh. "If they've gotten to a point where they feel terrible about themselves and are depressed, that won't help them lose weight. The better someone feels about themselves, the better they feel about their body and the more they're able to take care of themselves."



Words: Kimberly Gillian Photography Getty Images

## A MORE DIRECT APPROACH

If you have the feeling that a more direct approach might work, then broach the subject gently. Don't point your finger at them and start sentences with words like, 'You need to...' or 'You should...'. Instead, try saying things like, 'I'm worried about your health', or 'I'm concerned that I'm developing a healthier lifestyle and you're staying in the same place, and I'm starting

to worry about what that might do to our relationship," says Mackintosh.

You can also talk about yourself: how much better you're feeling and how much more energy you have, then suggest that person joins you on walks and activities. "Own your own experience, rather than talking about how the other person has to change," says Mackintosh. What you say about yourself might just prompt them to make a change, too. ■

## NAVIGATING TRICKY TERRITORY

If you feel like your offers to help your loved ones are falling on deaf ears, don't despair. Try these strategies to overcoming a few common roadblocks.

**1** "I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT RIGHT NOW."

Give your loved one time and space to make their own decision to lose weight. While they might cut you off when you bring up the issue, it doesn't necessarily mean they're not open to the idea, it just might take time for it to sink in.

**2** "THAT'S NOT GOING TO WORK FOR MY LIFESTYLE."

Don't pressure others into living like you. "I can tell people what worked for me, but it may not be right for them," says Weight Watchers Member Jaime Scholten, who lost 19kg. Instead, suggest a walk after dinner, and perhaps your healthy habits will become contagious.

**3** "I'VE TRIED TO LOSE WEIGHT SO MANY TIMES BEFORE."

This means you know your friend wants to lose weight, but might not know where to start ... again. "Explore the options with them: ask what did and didn't work before," suggests Mackintosh. It's all about helping them plan.