

**D**ieting has been around for centuries, but it's fast becoming a negative term. Weight Watchers, for example, has recently changed its name to WW (short for Wellness that Works) to remove the connotation of weight from the brand. Rebranding costs companies a lot of money, so for a global corporation like Weight Watchers to take this step tells me this cultural shift is starting to happen, where there's less focus on weight and more on wellness.

# Why "diet" is a dirty word

NO, WE DON'T MEAN THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET – THAT'S A WAY OF LIFE. WE'RE TALKING ABOUT THE FADS THAT SHAME YOU INTO FEELING GUILTY FOR EATING.

■ JEMMA O'HANLON



The Non-Diet Approach and Health at Every Size are also growing in popularity. There's also more pressure from these groups to call out "diet culture" when it rears its ugly head and move towards a place where people aren't judged based on the shape of their bodies.

As a dietitian and nutritionist, I'm highly supportive of this and I've been excited to see celebrities come out and post photos of themselves without makeup, without sucking in their tummies and without Photoshopping their cellulite. Even singer Sam Smith made a bold move to show off his "imperfect" body on Instagram recently, opening up about the fact that he'd often starve himself for days leading up to a photo shoot.

I'm against dieting because it makes you feel instantly deprived. It makes you feel like you're missing out on something and you immediately get a case of FOMO. Not only do you feel deprived, you also want that thing so much more! It's like when you were a teenager and you liked someone at school, and you'd sit by your phone for hours waiting for them to call.

At the end of the day, depriving yourself of foods you love ends in disaster. A great friend of mine, psychologist Glenn Mackintosh, refers to dieting as resulting in the "Nike swoosh" (think of the tick symbol as a weight graph over time). Essentially, you'll lose weight at the start because you've likely cut out a lot of processed food from your diet, but then over time, your body's hormones pull you in every direction to bring you back to your happy natural weight. They will make you feel hungrier (that's more of the hormone ghrelin) and less full after eating (that's the lack hormone leptin).

It's not about not having enough willpower, it's about your body telling you what it needs i.e. to come out

of a place of starvation. Then, after your body brings you back to your healthy weight, the Nike swoosh tick continues upwards and a lot of people find it tricky to maintain their new weight.

So then how can you live your best life, enjoying all foods, while still working towards your health and fitness goals (AKA a balanced life)? First, remember that weight is only one of many ways to measure your progress – it's not all about the scales. Instead, look at enjoying all foods in

every morning in the mirror as you get ready for work and you won't be worried about what you look like naked. If you're after an accountability partner and a food coach to help you along the way, chat to club staff about some options that might work for you. They'll be an amazing support.

Cheers to wellness, not weight. **fw**

*Jemma O'Hanlon is an Accredited Practising Dietitian with a love for long macchiatos. Apart from group fitness classes, you'll find her researching the latest foodie trends. @jemmahanlon*

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moderation and eating mindfully. Get in the kitchen and have a go at putting a healthy spin on your favourite meal. Don't feel guilty for eating a treat once in a while, just savour every mouthful when you do.

The other really easy practice to introduce into your day is whenever you go to eat, ask yourself: am I really hungry? If you are, eat. If not, don't eat. Keep a diary of the times you feel like eating to calm your emotions and swap in a different behaviour such as going for a brisk walk, calling a girlfriend or heading to the gym. Every night before bed I write in my gratitude app five little things I am grateful for from that day and then I turn my meditation app on. This also makes a world of difference to my mindset and how I look at life, as well as how I feel about my body.

Trust me, removing yourself from the dieting world is truly liberating. You get a sense of freedom, a load off your mind and a sense that you're now in the driver's seat. You won't be poking and prodding your body

