Editor’s Letter-Summer 2014

June 5, 2014 By Kate Ferguson

Fitness Is All About You

When I was a teenager, I was overweight. After puberty kicked in, my body began to react to food differently. I found I could no longer eat what I wanted when I wanted. To fit into the clothes I loved and to like the way I looked, I realized that I simply had to do one thing: lose weight.

Of course, losing weight is easier said than done. At that point, trying to shed excess weight became my never-ending mission. When the weather would warm up, that was my signal to start preparing for a diet. I’d focus my thoughts on how slim and svelte I’d look, how cute in my clothes, how light on my feet I would feel. How happy I’d be!

But the first hurdle was always hunger. Every diet I’d ever tried would find me starving for food—in particular something delicious. I have a sweet tooth (and, nope, things haven’t changed), so I’d psyche myself up to boost my willpower.

At home, my mother would bake extra cakes for the holidays and store them in brightly painted, oversized round tins. Whenever she’d unseal the pans, out would waft the mouthwatering and delicious fragrance of liquored fruit and sweet spices. Saying no to that was almost impossible.

For a while, I’d be good. I often made it past Defcon 4. That’s when the family would gather for mealtime and pass around the table many morsels of temptation. If I lasted past the Easter festivities without blowing my diet, I’d rejoice at the miracle.

For me, losing weight was much like having an unpaid full-time job. I found dieting very hard to do because I loved food. Still, I believed there must be a way to eat the foods I loved without getting punished for indulging.

That’s when exercise came into my life. At first, I began jogging. Then I upped my pace. I lived near a park, so I’d run either inside that grassy urban oasis or around its tree-shaded, concrete perimeter. I’d carefully time myself because I was always pushing to shave additional minutes off my finish time.

But the best part about my exercise regimen was that it helped me to lose weight. That’s when I

became hooked.

I started keeping a journal to record all the food I ate and the activities I did. Soon I learned what worked for me in terms of diet and exercise.

Today, nothing’s really changed. Maddeningly, my weight still fluctuates. The only difference now is that I have a better understanding of how my body responds to the different foods I eat. As a result, I’ve been able to customize my weight loss and maintenance regimen so that they’re unique to me.

If nothing else through the years of having my weight yo-yo up and down, I’ve learned a very important principle: Weight loss is purely an individual thing. What works for some simply won’t work for others. That means forget a one-size-fits-all approach to diet and exercise.

Try out different programs to see what works for you.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/editor-letter-summer-2014-25692-9601