

## The Slippery Slope of Lifestyle Change

**Slips:** Times when you don't follow your plans for healthy eating or being active.  
A normal part of lifestyle change. To be expected.

**Slips don't hurt your progress.  
What hurts your progress is the way you react to slips.**

### What to Do After a Slip?

**First, remember two things:**

- 1. Slips are normal and to be expected.**  
99.99% of all people on their way to being more active have slips.
- 2. No one time of eating too much or not being active, no matter how extreme, will ruin everything.**

**The slip is not the problem. The problem occurs if you don't get back on your feet again and keep going toward your goals.**

- 1. Talk back to negative thoughts with positive thoughts.**  
Negative thoughts can be your worst enemy. Talk back. "I'm not a failure because I've slipped. I can get back on my feet again."
- 2. Ask yourself what happened.**  
Learn from the slip. Can you avoid it in the future? Manage it better?
- 3. Regain control the very next time you can.**  
Do not tell yourself, "Well, I blew it for the day." Make your very next meal a healthy one. Get back on schedule with your activity plan right away.
- 4. Talk to someone supportive.**  
Talk with a family member or call a friend. Discuss your new strategy for handling slips. Commit yourself to renewed effort.
- 5. Focus on all the positive changes you've made.**  
You are making life-long changes. Slips are just one part of the process.

### Self-defeating thoughts

Everyone has negative thoughts at times.  
Negative thoughts, which include excuses and rationalizations, can lead you to overeat or be inactive. A vicious cycle of self-defeat can result.

#### Some common negative thoughts:

#### Example(s)

<b>Good or Bad</b>	Divide the world into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Seeing yourself as a success or failure;</li><li>• Being on or off the program.</li></ul>	"Look at what I did. I ate that cake. I'll never be able to succeed in this program."
<b>Excuses</b>	Blame something or someone else for our problems. We don't mean to go off the program, but we "can't help it."	"I don't have the willpower." "I have to buy these cookies just in case company drops in."
<b>Should</b>	Expect perfection. A set-up for disappointment. Lead to anger and resentment.	"I should have eaten less of that dessert."
<b>Not As Good As</b>	Compare ourselves to someone else. Blame ourselves for not measuring up.	"Mary lost two pounds this week, and I only lost one."
<b>Give Up</b>	Defeat ourselves. Often follow the other kinds of negative thoughts.	"This program is too hard. I might as well forget it."

## How to Talk Back to a Negative Thought

1. Catch yourself. Think, "I'm doing it to myself."
2. Imagine shouting, "STOP!" to yourself. Picture a huge, red stop sign.
3. Talk back with a positive thought.

### **Negative thought:**

Good or Bad

"Look at what I did. I ate that cake. I'll never succeed."

Excuses

"It's too cold to take a walk."

Should

"I should have eaten less dessert."

Not As Good As

"Mary lost two pounds this week, and I only lost one."

Give Up

"This program is too hard. I might as well forget it."

### **Talk back with a positive thought:**

Work toward Balance:

"One slip-up isn't the end of the world. I can get back on track."

It's Worth a Try

"I can try going for a walk and stop if it gets too cold."

It's My Choice

It was my choice. Next time I can decide not to eat so much."

Everyone's Different

"It's not a race. Mary and I can lose weight at different rates and both succeed."

One Step at a Time

"I've learned something about what's hard for me."

## Slips From Being Active

Describe one thing that has caused you to slip from being active: \_\_\_\_\_

Can you avoid it in the future? If so, how? \_\_\_\_\_

If not, make a plan for how to get back on your feet the next time you slip:

I will:

When?:

I will do this first:

Roadblocks that might come up:

I will handle them by:

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I will do this to make my success more likely: \_\_\_\_\_

## Mental Gremlins

What are your thoughts when you “slip” in your efforts to make a lifestyle change? The way you talk to yourself can make all the difference.

### Mental Gremlins

- **The Scolder** (“You did it again! Stupid! When will you ever learn?”)
- **The Labeler** (“Face it. You’re a fast food junkie.”)
- **The Threat Maker** (“Okay. No food for you tomorrow. ”)
- **The Commander** (“You’ve got a meal plan to follow. So just do it!”)
- **The Lecturer** (“You know better. This always happens. You should’ve brought something low-fat from home.”)
- **Mr. or Ms. Sarcasm** (“Brilliant! Lock you up and throw away the key, and then you might lose weight.”)
- **The Comparer** (“What’s the big deal? Sue can work all night and not eat a thing.”)
- **The Worrier** (“With your bad habits, you’ll never lose weight.”)
- **The Quitter** (“You blew it! Might as well give up trying.”)

### Here’s how to talk back to those nasty mental gremlins.

1. First, describe what you did *right*. “On four days this week, I stayed under my fat and calorie goals.”
2. Give information without insult. Instead of describing what you did wrong, point out what still needs to be done. “I need to make a plan for dinner on nights when I work late.”
3. Offer yourself a choice. “Next time I work late; I can plan what I’m going to eat at McDonald’s and use the drive-through so I’m not tempted to overdo it.”
4. Say it with a word or two. Next time you work late, think: “Drive-through.”
5. Describe what you feel, without reference to your character. “I’m disappointed and frustrated that I went back to old habits.”
6. Put it in writing. Put a note on your car’s dashboard: “Drive-through.”
7. Believe in yourself. Keep the faith. Say to yourself with a confident tone of voice, “I can do this.”

### Let’s Practice!

Describe an example “slip” from your own life: \_\_\_\_\_  
What do your “mental gremlins” say? \_\_\_\_\_

### Practice talking back:

1. Describe what you did *right*. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Give information without insult (point out what still needs to be done). \_\_\_\_\_
3. Offer yourself a choice. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Say it with a word or two. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Describe what you feel (no reference to character). \_\_\_\_\_
6. Put it in writing. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Believe in yourself. Say to yourself in a confident tone, “I can do this.”  
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