

# Problem Solving

Many things can get in the way of being more active and eating less fat and calories. But problems can be solved.

**The five steps to solving a problem:**

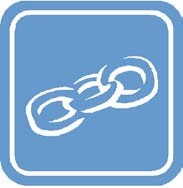
1. **Describe the problem in detail.**

 Be specific.

 Look at what led up to the problem.

 Find the action (or behavior) chain.

**Try to see the links (steps) in the action chain.**

Look for:

 Things that “cue” you (or make you want) to eat or be inactive.

 People who don't support you.

 Thoughts or feelings that get in your way.

|  |
| --- |
| **Sarah's Action Chain**  Didn't eat lunch.  Boss was critical.  Sarah felt stressed and anxious.  Came home tired, upset, and hungry.  Went right to the kitchen.  Saw cookies on counter.  Ate cookies. |

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1. **Brainstorm your options.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Links** | ***Some of Sarah's Options*** |
| Didn't eat lunch. | • Quit her job. (Just kidding.) • Pack a quick bag lunch. |
| Boss was critical. Sarah felt stressed and anxious. | * Talk with her boss about solving the problems at work. • Take a break. * Get support from a co-worker. |
| Came home tired, upset, and hungry. | • Go for a walk after work to unwind. |
| Went right to the kitchen. | * Enter house through different door. * Plan something to do the minute she gets home (like getting out in the yard, straightening a closet or room in the house). |
| Saw cookies on counter. | * Don't buy cookies. * Keep cookies out of sight. * Keep fruit in sight. |

1. **Pick one option to try.** 
   * Weigh the pros and cons.
   * Choose one that is very likely to work and that you can do.
   * Try to break as many links as you can, as early as you can.

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1. **Make a positive action plan.**

**Example for Sarah:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| She will • | Pack a quick bag lunch. |
| When? • | Tuesday and Thursday next week. |
| • She will do this first | Shop for the foods. |
| • | Pack lunch the night before. |
| •  •  Roadblocks that might come up, and how she’ll handle them | I might forget.  I will find a healthy sandwichplace with quick service. |
| • | I will order a turkey sandwich by phone. |

She will do this to make her • Ask a friend who also bringsbag success more likely lunches to work to join me for lunch on Tuesday.

1. **Try it. See how it goes.**

Did it work? If not, what went wrong? Problem solve again.

**Problem solving is a process. Don't give up!**

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# The Lifestyle Balance Problem Solver

**Describe the problem in detail.** Be specific.

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| **Find the action chain.**    **Links** | **Brainstorm your options.**    **Options** |
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**Pick one option.**  Is it very likely to work? Can you do it?

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# Make a Positive Action Plan

I will ... \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

When? ... \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I will do this first … \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Roadblocks that might come up I will handle them by:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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

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How can we help you? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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