

Compliance Leads to Success

I've had countless people tell me how they watch what they eat and wonder why they aren't more successful in losing their extra baggage. Then I see them with their fast food drive thru bags or slurpee cups and wonder about the diet they're talking about. Maybe they have some sort of special plan that includes high fat, high calorie foods, or maybe their compliance to a healthy plan is low. Many people are unwittingly fooling themselves into thinking that their eating habits are healthier than they think. One way to address this problem is to quantify eating patterns. A compliance chart is a good way to do this. A chart for a one week interval is needed, similar to the one below.

Day:	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Breakfast							
Snack							
Lunch							
Snack							
Dinner							
Snack							

Each time you eat according to your diet plan, you enter a check mark in the table. Each time you deviate from your plan, you enter an 'x'. If you really fall off the wagon, enter two or even three 'x's. At the end of the week, you'll know if your compliance to your eating plan is as high as you thought it was. If compliance is high and weight/fat loss success is low, you know that you need to change your diet/exercise plan. If, on the other hand, your compliance turns out to be lower than your expectations, then perhaps the diet/exercise plan is fine, you just need to be more diligent in sticking to your plan.

Another benefit of such a chart is that it helps identify negative eating patterns. You become more conscious of when and where the problem areas are. You may notice that it's the evening snack that always turns into an 'x' instead of a check mark. Or maybe it's lunch time at restaurants that are throwing you off. Most people don't think about these things too much. When you look at your week as a whole, then it makes eating and behavior patterns become more apparent. Perhaps less TV viewing in the evening or packing a lunch would be solutions to the above problems. In any case, whatever your problem is, identifying it is the first step.

Exercise compliance could also be added to the chart. You could highlight the days that you follow your fitness regime. Again, at the end of the week, you'll see if your exercise plan is in need of adjustment to yield results, or if you need to apply your plan more diligently.

A second point to ponder when working a diet or exercise program is that only one variable should be changed at a time. It seems like common sense, but often a methodical approach is overlooked. It's difficult to know exactly what's working for you, or not working for that matter, if you don't keep track of significant behavioral and diet changes. Often results aren't immediate, so people throw something else into the

mix without giving things a good try. The body adapts over time and it takes time for you to get to know your own body and how it will react to certain stimuli. Give a program a few weeks before changing anything. Then, by all means, change is not only good, it's *necessary* to keep results coming.

There is much to learn about diet and training, but it's not rocket science. Education is needed and more importantly, you need to be honest with yourself. Self awareness is the key to success in any field, including the battle of the bulge.

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