Weight Fluctuations? Trust in the Process

-The bioMechanic-

You get home from the gym feeling pumped and motivated from another great workout. You've been working hard at your program for the past three weeks, hitting the gym at least 4 times, cleaning up your eating, getting lots of sleep and making healthier decisions when out with your friends. You turn the shower on, take your sweat-drenched clothes off, and hop on the scale… The "WHAAAAT!?" uncontrollably escapes your mouth as you dreadfully look down at the scale that is telling you 'Guess what, you gained a pound today'. All that hard work…. And this is what you get???

It's possible you have or will experience this at some point during your weight loss efforts. Understandably, this can hit hard and be very frustrating if not completely demotivating. This article is here to reassure you that this is normal and to be expected, you do not need to replace the batteries in your scale or give up on all your hard work.

Weight fluctuations are happening constantly in all of us. As we eat different foods, drink water, exercise, take medications, feel stressed, get sleep and eliminate waste, our body weight will consistently fluctuate by as much as 5 pounds throughout the day. The following article goes into detail on how each of these factors plays a role in weight fluctuations: https://www.verywellfit.com/why-does-weight-change-day-to-day-4100012?print

Now that you understand why the scale isn't always predictable, let's go over some tips on how to properly use body weight as a tool for tracking your weight loss progress.

1. **Consistency** - Due to all the biological and digestive variables that affect your weight throughout the day, it's best to weigh yourself under the same conditions every time. Same time of day, same clothing (or lack thereof), same scale, same hydration levels. The morning is often the most consistent time for people (before eating anything).
2. **Accuracy** - The best way to know if you're on the right track, is to have accurate data. Recording your weight in a notebook, in a spreadsheet (like the one you use for this program), or in an app, will help give you a full picture of trends in your bodyweight. Over time, the small fluctuations will not be as important as the trend lines that start to emerge. Adjust your workouts/nutrition accordingly if your weight isn't going in the right direction over the course of a couple weeks (as opposed to changing habits daily based on fluctuations).
3. **Frequency** - How often you weigh yourself comes down to knowing your own personality. For some people, weighing in every day is motivating and keeps them on track. For others, a daily weigh-in is stressful and frustrating (you will see more fluctuations the more often you weigh yourself). We generally recommend weighing yourself weekly, but more/less often might be right for you.
4. **Latency** - Every food you eat and every workout you complete will take time to be completely reflected on the scale. If you eat 3 pounds of food in a day, your scale may say you gained three pounds that day. But by the time you digest the food, use it for

energy, store some of it and defecate the rest; maybe you only hold on to 1 pound of the initial three. When you workout, you may burn 300 calories during the session, but you may burn an additional 50 calories over the next few hours as your body recovers from the workout. The bottom line… don't expect your efforts to show up on the scale the same day, or even over the next few days. Weight loss is a process that takes time, be patient with yourself and stay on track even when the scale doesn't reflect your efforts.

5. **Resiliency** - Our bodies are incredible machines that have the ability to adapt and to resist changes. You may find that a weight loss strategy works very well for a few weeks, then all of a sudden you stop seeing favorable results. This could be your body adapting to your new habits and resisting more changes in body weight. When you hit a plateau like this, it's time to reassess your strategy and change what you're doing!
6. **Emergency** - Anytime we talk about weight loss (intentional or unintentional), we need to point out there is a safe and unsafe amount of weight we can lose. We generally recommend 1-2 pounds per week. We want to make sure we are developing healthy and sustainable habits, which often keep us in the 1-2 pounds per week range. Some body types can stand to lose more fat than others, so don't panic if you're losing a bit more than that. There are some signs and symptoms to look out for which may indicate an unsafe rate of weight loss. Our next article will talk about indicators of overtraining and undernourishment.

So the next time you hop on your scale after rocking a workout, keep in mind the number that shows up is simply a snapshot of dozens of processes taking place in your body at all times. Stay positive, confident, diligent, and consistent; the results will follow. We should point out there is the rare occasion where weight loss doesn't occur even with seemingly proper nutrition and exercise. Some conditions, medications and adjustments to metabolism can make weight loss very challenging for a small percentage of people. Consulting with a physician to look into why you're not able to lose weight may be a necessary step if this is you. However, we can't stress enough that this is a very small percentage of people (far less than 1%). It's most likely the case that with structured exercise and nutrition, you can and will lose weight with the right program. If you're not seeing the changes you want, adjust your program until you do. It will take sacrifice, it will not be easy. But it can be done!

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