

weight loss



PART 2: STEPS 6-10

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6. EVALUATE YOUR ENVIRONMENT



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WE SHAPE OUR BUILDINGS; THEREAFTER THEY SHAPE US.

SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL

As water is to a fish, so our buildings – our environment – are to us. The environment is so pervasive, we're mostly unaware of it. But you can change this by cultivating your various environments consciously. This puts you in control of your transformation to Supernova.

CONSIDER THIS EXPERIMENT

- Rats were fed and then placed inside a box with a lever. When the lever was pressed, the rats got a treat.
- However, when the rats were hungry, they were placed inside a different box. In this box, pressing the lever produced zilch.
- The rats came to associate being hungry with no extra food. But they associated being full with getting additional food.

When the rats were tested again, if they were full, they pressed the lever far more often.

"Rats inhibited their behavior while hungry, but learned to respond for highly palatable foods while they were full," explains **psychological scientist Mark E. Bouton** of the University of Vermont. The creatures demonstrated that seeking food and not seeking food are behaviors that are learned – in a specific context. "The sights, sounds, and the smell of your favorite restaurant might signal the availability of your favorite food, causing your mouth to water and ultimately guiding you to eat."

Your appetite and how you eat are shaped by the treat-lever box in which you live.





YOUR HOME

Environment

An interesting study found that older people who have a match between personality and living space report more well-being. They feel better about their life, and have a sunnier mood overall.

My home does/doesn't fit my personality because:



YOUR FOOD

Environment

Unlike our home environment, our food environment is broad, especially now that we spend more on eating out than shopping for food ingredients.

The broader food environment impacts what we weigh. Eating a lot of fast food is highly correlated with weight gain and obesity, especially when these places are located in the neighborhoods where we live and work.

Ultra-processed foods excite our lizard brains into overeating for two big reasons:

1. These items are loaded with calories, and energy density drives overeating.
2. They combine salt, fat and sugar so as to produce "a state of satiety, pleasure, and *hedonia* called ***the bliss point.***"

Take a bliss point and add some crunch, and you end up with something you can't eat just one of, but one whole can of – like Pringles.

Home cooked food, however, is different. For one thing, it isn't "formulated." It's also less energy dense. And it lacks that explode-in-your-mouth intense flavor edge that increases the can't-eat-just-one characteristic of ***food reward.***

Prepping food at home gives you back control over your food. "The evidence shows people who cook at home eat a more healthy diet," says **Julia A. Wolfson, MPP**, Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future. It's one of the most potent nutrition weapons in your weight loss war-chest. People who prep their own food also make healthier choices when they eat out, even fast food.



ENVIRONMENT ASSESSMENT:

What is in the house that could trip me up?

What dangers lurk at work?

What areas and neighborhoods do I need to be careful of?



YOUR EATING Environment

Although food reward uses your brain chemistry against you, you can fight back. Get the upper hand by using your mind. By practicing mindfulness.

Mindfulness was created in 1979 by **Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn**, a microbiologist. He was working at the University of Massachusetts Medical School and wanted to help patients take time for self-care. This desire inspired his original 8-week training program in mindfulness.

"Mindfulness is pure awareness," explains Kabat-Zinn. "Recognizing thoughts, and then realizing that they may be true to a degree, but then none of them are actually absolutely true and a lot of them are based on preferences and on selfing, a kind of *I like this, I don't like that. I want this. I don't want that.*"

Practicing mindfulness has been found to reduce food-reward anticipation. Probably because you get to unmask anticipation and see the truth of it – that it's not the truth. "When you bring awareness to it," adds Kabat-Zinn, "then all of a sudden you see that they are like weather patterns in the sky of the mind. They're not the truth about anything." Recognizing your thoughts aren't you is profound. And incredibly liberating – especially when it comes to food and eating.

Here are some effective ways to eat more mindfully:

- Stash your phone elsewhere. Scrolling while food is going in your mouth lets your subconscious lizard brain hijack your mindfulness.
- After you take a bite of food, put your utensil down.
- Chew each bite at least 20 times.



EG: THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET

Environment

The Mediterranean dietary pattern is centered around locally grown, nutrient dense, seasonal fresh foods. High amounts of fresh seafood and veggies. Moderate amounts of good-quality olive oil. Some fresh meat, poultry and eggs. Whole grains, beans, seeds, nuts. Some cheese and yogurt.

Eating this way reduces the risk of heart disease, metabolic syndrome, obesity, type 2 diabetes, cancer, and neurodegenerative diseases

While the nutrients, freshness, and gut-microbiome friendliness hog the spotlight, the most underrated aspect is the environment fostered by this way of eating.

- **FOOD ENVIRONMENT:** the cooking methods are varied, but simple, which reduces food reward
- **EATING ENVIRONMENT:** this diet is associated with less depression and anxiety & a better overall mental state
- **RENEWAL ENVIRONMENT:** this dietary pattern is associated with better patterns of sleep
- **SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT:** the cultural values in which it emerged encourage communal meals & social connection

Unfortunately, adherence to the Mediterranean diet has been falling for some time in the actual Mediterranean region. But research has found that having a more favorable attitude toward healthy eating predicts better adherence to this health-promoting dietary pattern.

7. STOCK UP ON SUPERNOVA ESSENTIALS



Clearing your various environments of the tools of the Diet Dark Side creates a vacuum. Instead of abhorring nature, work with yours. Fill that void with Supernova stuff.

Keep Backups at Work

I keep individual packets of oatmeal and a tub of protein powder at my desk (however, companies like VADE also make individual packets that are dissolvable). If the munchies strike, some protein oatmeal costs me 200–300 calories, but keeps me out of any further trouble.

I also stash apples in my lunch box as I find them quite satiating.

Fruit & Veggie Intake = Predictor of Success

A significant predictor of weight loss success is intake of fruit and vegetables. Most nutritional bang for your buck? Start with sweet potatoes, potatoes, carrots, tomatoes, and broccoli.

If you want a quick & trustworthy guide to the different types of dietary fiber & creative ways of prepping produce, snag your free FIBER 101 Playbook (AgelikeaSupernova.com/Fiber).

Meal Prep

I don't really enjoy cooking. Actually, I kinda loathe it. But I enjoy not gaining weight. So I compromise. Once a week, out comes the trusty *Le Creuset* workhorse.



First, I cook up a giant batch of veggie stew that includes some lentils or beans.

Then I stew several meals worth of shrimp or chicken breasts. Why stew it? Less of the nasty by-products that you get with high, dry heat like searing.



Everything then is weighed on the food scale, portioned into individual containers, and put into the freezer.

GRAB & GO:

On weekdays, I just grab a container of protein from the freezer as well as one of veggie stew. By lunch time, everything has thawed & is ready to eat.



Lean Beef Lasagna

OUTSOURCE MEAL PREP:

Having someone else be your kitchen bitch is also a Supernova-worthy strategy. In the US, try [Muscle Meals 2 Go](#). The UK's [Muscle Food](#) gets thumbs up from the pro-protein crowd.

Convenience is proven to improve adherence. Adherence, as we know, is the secret success sauce.



MUSCLEMEALS
2G

Protein packed Lasagna with Lean Beef

Nutrition:

570 Calories

46 Protein

47 Carbs

21 Fat

wow!

GET A CUTE TOTE:

To schlep your meals, an insulated bag that is cute is a must. This one can be had on Amazon for under \$20. Just search for *meal prep bags*.





TO SUCCEED

I will...

...keep more of these items on hand at all times:

...cook these items or order from this Meal Prep company:

8. MAKE EXERCISE NON-NEGOTIABLE



exercise → appetite control & better mood → diet-adherence → goal weight

Exercise impacts appetite as well as how you feel about life. The better your mood, the more likely are your chances of following through on this diet thing.

I will lift weights on these days at these times: _____

I will do this form of exercise on these days at these times: _____

I will walk every day at this time for this long: _____

I will set my phone timer whenever I am sitting for long stretches so that every 25-30 minutes, I get up and walk around or move for 5 minutes.

9. YOUR HABITS ARE YOUR IDENTITY



“

YOU DON'T RISE TO THE LEVEL OF YOUR GOALS —
YOU FALL TO THE LEVEL OF YOUR SYSTEMS.

JAMES CLEAR, *ATOMIC HABITS*

To become a Supernova, you have to behave like one. Every day. Day in and day out. "It's like an operating system," says author **Ryan Holiday**, "and the code this system operates on is habit." Habits are small – individually. But linked together, they transform into something more powerful. So powerful, in fact, that habits make up how we spend most of our days.

The easiest way to create a new habit is by attaching it to one you already have. Assuming your habit is to brush your teeth daily, you could make it a habit right after to do some push-ups. Or whatever.

Linking a new habit to an existing one makes it a lot easier for the new one to stick.



One of my readers used this strategy to lose over 100 pounds. In the beginning, he went to the gym each day, would exercise for five minutes, and leave as soon as his time was up. Why bother? He was mastering the art of showing up. A habit must be established before it can be improved, right? You can do it in just two minutes and then become the type of person who shows up for those two minutes each day.

After a few weeks, he looked around and thought, "Well, I'm always coming here anyway. I might as well start staying a little longer." A few years later, the weight was gone.

James Clear, author of *Atomic Habits*

To develop a new habit, do it in 2 steps:

1. Establish it. (Show up.)
2. Improve it.

Think about the last time you moved. Whenever I move, it becomes shockingly easy to ditch my healthy ways. I've learned I need to pack my food prep tools in an easy-to-find place, so it's convenient to get back to my food-measuring habit *right away*.

But change doesn't have to be dramatic. "Think of someone who has developed a habit of eating a healthy breakfast every morning," says **Dr. Phillipa Lally**, Senior Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Surrey. "One day, they wake up late, leave the house without having time for breakfast, and then grab a sugary snack on their commute. This single disruption can make them feel like they've failed, potentially leading them to abandon the healthy eating habit altogether." To keep a setback from derailing a healthy new habit, Lally advises being prepared. "When trying to make a new behaviour stick, have a backup plan for dealing with setbacks, such as keeping healthy snacks on hand that you can quickly grab on busy mornings."



Habits are like cats. They hate change.

YOUR HABITS ARE YOUR DAILY VOTE FOR WHO YOU WANT TO BE



You miss a workout, splurge on comfort food, or otherwise do something that takes you *away* from your Supernova identity rather than affirming it. It happens. "Making a mistake and slipping up does not alter the long-term outcome...if you find a way to get back on track," says James Clear. "Errors are part of the process, but they shouldn't become part of the pattern. One mistake is just an outlier. **Two mistakes are the beginning of a pattern.**"

Clear suggests reframing what you do each day as casting a vote for your identity. Every day that you track your calories and stick to your calorie budget, you are voting for Supernova you at your ideal weight. Every day you keep your weight-training appointment? Supernova vote. Eat optimal protein? A vote for Team Supernova.

You vote **by what you do**. What you do is the identity you choose.

MAKE IT A HABIT TO HAVE A HIGH-PROTEIN BREAKFAST



From the perspective of what Supernovas care about, muscle, breakfast should be mandatory.

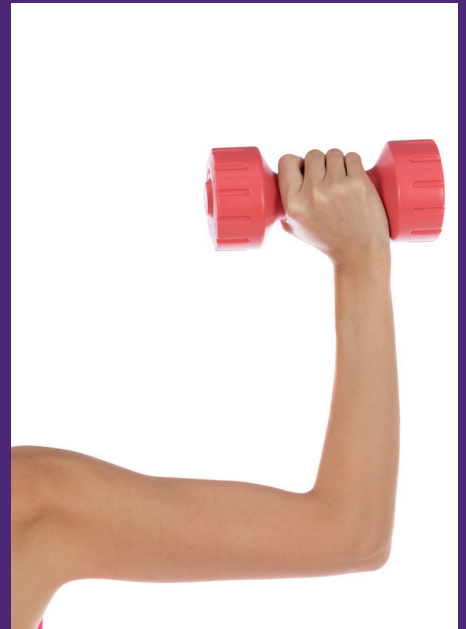
Breakfast-skipping is associated with weight gain and overweight/obesity, cravings for high-caloric foods, inactivity, worse sleep, and lower levels of emotional, social and mental vitality.

After not eating all night, your muscles are being broken down. Eating puts the brakes on muscle-protein breakdown. But it won't promote growth of new muscle tissue. To stimulate muscle-protein synthesis, you have to have enough protein. For us older chicks, that means 50-70g of protein.

To maintain and build muscle, make breakfast protein an ironclad habit.



SUPERNOVA HABITS CHECKLIST



IDENTITY:

I read my *Desire Statement* aloud twice a day

EATING ENVIRONMENT:

When I eat...

I am not on my phone

I put my utensil down between bites & chew each bite at least 20 times

FOOD:

I control my portion sizes by measuring everything I prep with a food scale

I track my calories in an app

I plan my snacks & meals & prep them

I eat a variety of fruits & veggies every day and prioritize foods rich in fiber

I eat a high-protein (at least 50g) breakfast & dinner daily

MOVEMENT & MAINTENANCE:

I lift weights at least 3 times a week

I walk 8,000-10,000 steps daily

I keep my exercise appointments

When I'm sitting, I set my phone alarm to remind me to get up every 30 minutes and take a 5-minute walk or movement break

I weigh myself at least once a week

10. PLAY THE LONG GAME (SELF EFFICACY)



“

I NOW HAVE CONFIDENCE THAT I CAN ACHIEVE THINGS I
SET MY MIND TO, LIKE LOSING WEIGHT OR PURSING AN
ACADEMIC OR PROFESSIONAL GOAL

A LONG-TIME WEIGHT LOSS MAINTAINER

You lose the weight – yay! Now it needs to stay lost. But how? Avoid this particularly tricky trap by using your imagination. Imagine yourself living at your maintenance weight. Not the day you reach it, but after. When it's an everyday thing.



Now that I've been at goal weight for a while, I feel:

I still weigh myself once a week because:

Getting to goal weight & staying here changed my life by:

This surprised me because:

These days, I generally eat:

**MAINTAIN THE HABITS
THAT GOT YOU TO GOAL,
ESPECIALLY BEING AWARE
OF WHAT YOU EAT**

A LONGTIME MAINTAINER



**Derail long-term derailers by anticipating
them & preparing in advance.**

What you will eat every day at maintenance is important to think about now. Why? Because the more your diet phase differs from your maintenance phase, the less likely it is that you will stay at your maintenance weight.

Instead, view your journey to maintenance as practice *for* it. That way, when you get there, you will have already removed many of the nasty surprises that derail would-be maintainers.



HOW "WEL" ARE YOU?

1. I can resist eating when I am anxious (nervous).
2. <i>I can control my eating on the weekends.</i>
3. I can resist eating even when I have to say "no" to others.
4. I can resist eating when I feel physically run down.
5. <i>I can resist eating when I am watching TV.</i>
6. I can resist eating when I am depressed (or down).
7. <i>I can resist eating when there are many different kinds of foods available.</i>
8. I can resist eating even when I feel it's impolite to refuse a second helping.
9. <i>I can resist eating even when I have a headache.</i>
10. <i>I can resist eating when I am reading.</i>
11. I can resist eating when I am angry (or irritable).
12. I can resist eating even when I am at a party.
13. I can resist eating even when others are pressuring me to eat.
14. I can resist eating when I am in pain.
15. <i>I can resist eating just before going to bed.</i>
16. I can resist eating when I have experienced failure.
17. <i>I can resist eating even when high-calorie foods are available.</i>
18. I can resist eating even when I think others will be upset if I don't eat.
19. I can resist eating when I feel uncomfortable.
20. <i>I can resist eating when I am happy.</i>

Mapping out the minefield to maintenance is one thing. Mindset is the other. It's one of the main ingredients in the secret sauce of success. More than the *desire* to lose weight and keep it off is *believing* that you can.

Self-efficacy.

How's yours?

Find out by taking this questionnaire about your *Weight Efficacy Lifestyle* (WEL). Answer honestly so you get a useful look at where things stand.

Answers are on a scale of 0 – 9:

- Not Confident at all? Give yourself a 0
- Supremely confident? You get a 9

What is your total score?

The closer you are to 180, the higher your levels of self-efficacy. The higher your self-efficacy, the greater your chances of getting to your desired weight – and maintaining it.

The closer your score is to 180, the more likely you will be to:

- track your calories accurately and do so every day
- not blow off exercise, but do it when you had planned to
- keep at your diet & demonstrate grit - until you succeed

Motivation will get you started, but the magic lies in self efficacy.

Self-efficacy is the reason weight-loss maintainers change their environment, adopt healthy habits, find a supportive crew, and do the thing. Do what they need to do every day. Stick to the calorie budget. Track. Consume optimal protein. Eat greens and fruit. Exercise. Move. Lift weights.

By doing everything you need to do every day, you will drive your self-efficacy.



When you show that you *believe* in the Supernova you envision by behaving like her, you become her.



CREDITS & SOURCES

PLEASE DOWNLOAD PART 3 @
[AGELIKEASUPERNOVA.COM/WEIGHTLOSS](https://agelikeasupernova.com/weightloss)

ANTI-AGING FOR BADASS CHICKS

AGE LIKE A SUPERNOVA

...NOT A DYING OF THE LIGHT



YULIAN Y

*"It turned back the clock!"
-Your Muscles*

Come join your fellow Supernovas!

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- FACEBOOK: @ Ninja Supernovas
- X: @SupernovaYulian
- EMAIL ME!
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