Dealing With Fibromyalgia Weight Gain

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Weight Gain and Loss With Fibromyalgia

For a lot of people with fibromyalgia weight gain and loss is another part of our daily battle. When I first became unwell I lost a lot of weight; the stress, the loss of appetite and the medication all contributed to me shedding the pounds.c

Then, as I started to become familiar with my condition and made changes to my lifestyle, the weight started to creep back on. And on and on and on.

Weight gain is common in fibromyalgia patients. More and more time is spent indoors unable to exercise, and many of us turn to comfort food when we're too sore to do anything else.

Weight loss is tough at the best of times, but for fibromyalgia sufferers it can feel like yet another fight that we're just too tired to have. When you're feeling sore and sad, no one wants to curl up with a stick of celery. We want a cup of tea and a donut.

So how do we lose that unwelcome weight? Well, after trying a couple of fad diets and getting nowhere, I decided I needed something more. This was no longer about trying to shed a few pounds; I needed to change my entire relationship with food.

Here is how I changed my approach and turned into a happier, healthier version of myself. I gained energy and lost 21 pounds in two months. And what's more, I've sustained that weight – and there isn't a calorie counter in sight.

Define the Plan

Losing weight can seem like such a big task, so part of the challenge can be knowing where to start. Set yourself a goal weight – a realistic one – and create a firm plan on how to achieve it.

A lot of people recommend you stay away from the scales and take each day as it comes, but regularly weighing yourself can be a solid way to keep you focused against your goal.

Keep a Diary

Keeping a food diary is a good way of monitoring what you eat. You have to write absolutely everything down in order for it to be effective; it's particularly good for seeing just how frequent those 'infrequent snacks' really are. Whenever you change a habit, the first bit is always the hardest so the diary helps you get into a new routine. You can get rid of the diary once it starts to feel natural.

Stay Away From Diet Stereotypes

Fad diets definitely didn't work for me (do they work for anyone?) so my one and only rule is to be sensible and stay away from the exaggerated stereotypes. You don't have to cut out carbs, you don't have to live on juice and you don't need to take pills or diet shakes. The focus should be on finding healthy and delicious food that excites you.

Change Your Food Routine

With those three things in mind, here's how I started to change my food routine:

- **Breakfast –** Eggs are a great way to start your morning, they're full of protein and they'll keep you going until midday without the need for your mid-morning cake and biscuits. Plus, you can eat them in so many ways that you still get an element of variety.
- **Lunch –** Lunch is particularly challenging, especially if you're at work as opposed to at home with the contents of your kitchen cupboard. I now have soup or salad for lunch and a piece of fruit. Again, you want something that can see you through the day without the need to snack, so a salad with protein and carbohydrates, such as tuna nicoise or feta and cous cous salad, is a good choice.
- **Dinner –** Knowing you have something delicious ahead of you is what keeps you going. Trying to cook with natural ingredients is good but it's not always that simple, especially if you're the cook *and* the fibro sufferer.
- **Snacks –** My view on snacks is where I seem to split the group. I think if you're eating three good meals each day there is no need to snack. Yes, there are healthier snacks than cake and biscuits – you could go for fruit or nuts – but no snack is completely healthy so if they're not completely necessary, just leave them alone.

- **Treats –** Now, treats are a different matter. Treats are a vital part of the enjoyment of life, but only when you really want them. When I dunk a cookie in my tea it tastes so good because I'm not doing it every day. The key point is that if you're going to have treats, make them occasional and make them worth it.
- **Drinks –** Finally, keep an eye on your drinks. Drink more water; however much you're currently drinking, it's probably not enough. Cutting down on alcoholic drinks is also a quick win, but then I refer you back to my view on treats!

This food plan won't work for everyone, but it's sensible and sustainable and it allows you to take away the stress of calorie counting. You don't need to cut anything out, just use your head, don't over-indulge and reduce your snacking unless it's a treat.

Be as healthy as you can in those three main meals but not at the expense of your happiness because, let's be honest, that's not healthy either. Once it becomes routine, it doesn't feel hard. In fact, it feels great.

Interestingly, the weight loss and reduced carb intake has also had an impact on my fatigue. I now have more energy to cope with my pain, which in turn makes it feel like my level of pain has reduced too.

There's a possibility that's because by reducing carbs I've in turn reduced my gluten intake too, which some say helps reduce fibro symptoms. Who knows? As with many fibro battles, it's just trial and error until you find something that works for you.