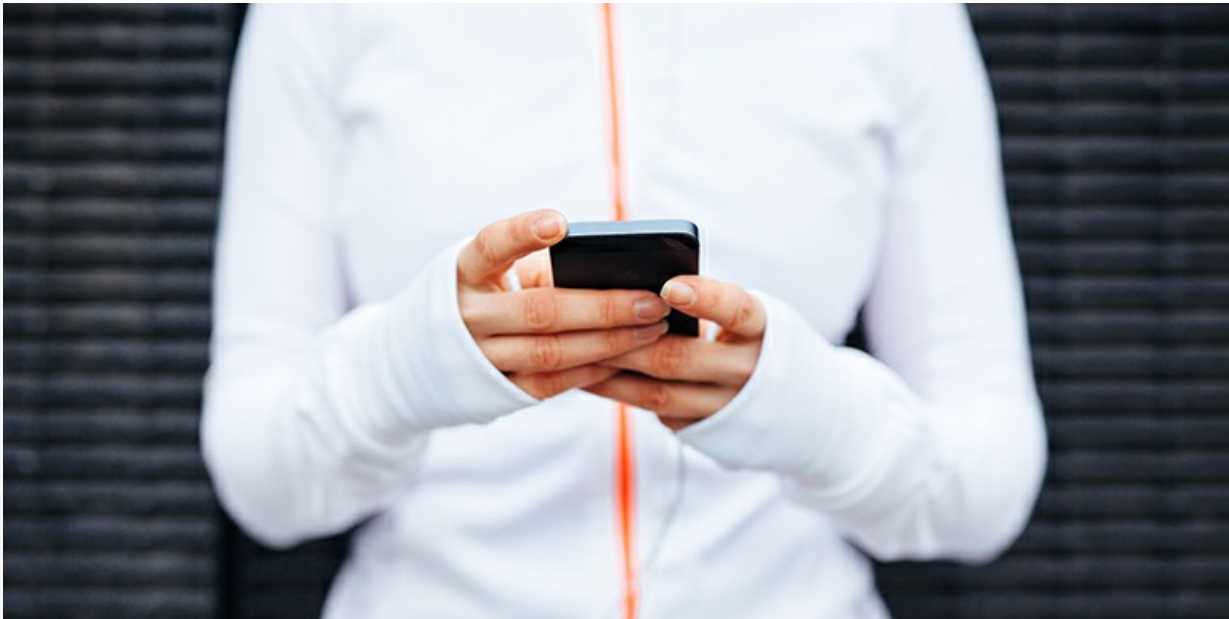




## The Do's and Don'ts of Losing Weight With Social Media



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Liking, following, and scrolling may not measure up to a [HIIT session](#), but don't sell social media short as a [weight-loss tool](#): Sharing before-and-after photos on Instagram, and posting on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) might be the extra oomph you need to lose weight.

### How Can Social Media Tip the Scale in Your Favor?

An estimated seven out of every 10 Americans use social media regularly, according to [2017 Pew Research Center data](#).

As the line between of virtual and the real world increasingly blurs, studies show that social media can have a huge impact on your daily life — in good and bad ways.

While social media can be a time-suck and portray [unrealistic body ideals](#), there *are* benefits when tech time is used strategically and in a positive way.

For example, one study shows that people in online weight-loss communities who [shared their scale progress](#) and actively engaged with their social network dropped 8.3 percent of their body weight, compared to a 4.1 percent loss of those who kept their numbers to themselves.

“Social media can be a powerful tool in getting to know others who are on similar journeys, we can feel extremely motivated seeing others take steps toward and reach success, and it holds us accountable to our mindset and actions, thus facilitating behavior

change,” says Ariane Machin, PhD., clinical psychologist and co-founder of the [Conscious Coaching Collective](#).



### How to Swipe, Tap, Click Your Way to Weight Loss

If you're among the app aficionados and gadget groupies using social media on the daily, putting the popular tech platforms on task to achieve body goals is a no-brainer.

But with more than 165,000 health apps tallied in 2015 by [IMS Institute for Healthcare Informatics](#), not to mention the endless variety of social apps, knowing where to start can leave you feeling disconnected.

Before you get started, check out these dos and don'ts of making social media part of your weight-loss strategy.

DO: Share your goals

When you only have to be honest with yourself at the end of the day, willpower can easily (and rapidly) fall to the wayside. Want to stick with that goal? Share it with others.

Dr. Gail Matthews, psychology professor at [Dominican University of California](#) found 70 percent of 267 study participants completed a goal or were more than halfway there when they sent weekly updates to a friend.

The success rate dropped to 35 percent for those who didn't write down their goals or share them with others.

In addition to sharing your goals on social media, blogging can lead to big weight-loss wins. In a survey published in the journal [Translational Behavioral Medicine](#), 194 participants reported an average 42.3 pound weight loss since they began sharing their journey online.

While more research is needed to explore the “what” that makes weight loss work for bloggers, publishing posts is good example of sharing your goals with others, which helps to hold yourself accountable. Additionally, readers will likely identify with the highs and lows of your progress, commenting with helpful tips and motivating stories of their own.

DO: Build support

When the going gets tough, the tough get cheerleaders. Ideally, your squad would consist of close friends and family members, but don't overlook the people you meet online as well.

Relationship drama can play a complicated role when asking for support, so sometimes those who are more neutral — even people you've never met in person — can help motivate you toward big wins.

Not sure where to seek support outside of people close to you? Tap into [Twitter](#). People [tweeting weight-loss progress updates](#) found more encouragement from their followers than they did their friends and family IRL.



#### DO: Find your tribe

Your mom and bestie might be there to cheer you on, but that doesn't mean they want to train with you for a triathlon.

Joining online groups that share your interests and goals, such as [Beachbody On Demand's Facebook group](#), [challenge page](#), and [message boards](#), means being able to ask questions, get expert advice, and even find your next workout buddy.

"In a group of similar others, everyone is working toward a similar goal, which can increase motivation and efforts more than we would be applying otherwise," says Machin. "Being part of an online group can also help you learn different strategies in mindset, nutrition, and exercise that can help you experience your weight-loss journey in different ways."

#### DO: Check in

If logging every bite you take and step you make feels cumbersome, take a baby step by checking in. Whether you're physically sweating it out in group class or just putting in the work at home in your basement, let others know via a post, tweet, or location update. The more comfortable you become with the process, the easier it will be to take the next digital tracking steps.

#### DO: Track your efforts

Once you're ready to up your digital-tracking game, apps make it easy. Just as [Portion Fix containers](#) can take the guesswork out proper portions, apps like the [21 Day Fix Tracker](#) can evaluate your workouts and food intake to make sure you're not eating too little or too much to meet your goals.

It may seem like a lot of work in the beginning, but the knowledge it provides about how to tweak your program to fit your needs is worth the extra time.

#### DO: Switch things up

When the body does the same thing over and over again, plateaus are sure to follow. Social media is the perfect place to get recipe and workout ideas when your weekly routine is falling flat.

You could do this by asking for ideas from those in a online groups and forums, or you can make the social media a little less social by searching and scrolling Pinterest. Avoid getting inundated (and distracted by unrelated posts) by finding amazing recipe, meal prep, fitness, and motivational pins on [Beachbody's Pinterest Page](#).

**DO SOMETHING  
TODAY THAT  
YOUR FUTURE  
SELF WILL  
THANK YOU  
FOR**

DO: Find motivation

“Know you won’t always feel motivated and plan for it,” says Machin. “What types of obstacles might you encounter? How can you work through it? When you plan for those times, you can better buffer and work through your goals to be consistent (and thus, increase your likelihood of reaching goals).”

**Motivation** looks different for everyone. If you love a good empowerment meme, [Pinterest](#) and [Instagram](#) are a great place to find and store images to recall when you’re feeling low on energy.

Another great source of motivation? Your tribe. Everyone needs a good kick in the pants from time to time, and people who’ve been there done that will know just the motivating words to get you back in the weight loss game.

DO: Celebrate wins

Progress pics and gym PRs are practically made for sharing on social media. Post your exciting news, and others will be happy to give you the pat on your back you deserve.

“Enjoy the process you’re on and don’t just focus on the end point,” suggests Machin. “Identify ‘wins’ throughout the journey to stay motivated and be proud (as you should be!). Then share the success as you celebrate others’ wins as well!”



## Beware of Social Media Saboteurs

For all the weight-loss wins social media can offer, it's easy to fall prey to the negativity that can come from making your private life a little more public. Keep the progress positive by avoiding these common pitfalls:

DON'T: Compare yourself to others

Your journey is your own and [comparing yourself to others](#) will only set you back instead of propel you forward.

"Looking at others' before/after pictures, other women's bodies, etc., can facilitate being more critical of your own body size and shape and enhance your risk for disordered eating, negative mood, low self-esteem, etc.," says Machin, who offers a variety of online mindfulness programs like [The Food Shift](#) to help individuals with body image concerns and disordered eating.

"People can feel ashamed of themselves, their bodies, their progress in an online group/culture when there are a lot of other people to compare themselves. They might feel less than, as though they do not meet 'body ideals,' and worthless. Instead of the group helping them, it may contribute to another failure in their minds," she explains.

DON'T: Listen to the trolls

"When you put yourself out there, there will always be people who want to criticize you (even when it makes absolutely no sense)," says Machin.

"Know that if you do put yourself out there, you might get negative or inappropriate responses. Give yourself permission to delete comments or make a private account to limit access to those you know. Know you are in charge of your privacy and can decide what works best for you."

## The Bottom Line

You could spend all day every day tracking your weight loss, posting progress pics, chatting in forums, pinning new recipes, compiling workout playlists and so on — but all of that isn't the main point.

Social media should help supplement your goals — not be the main focus. Spending too much time on social media could mean staying sedentary for too long, but more importantly it usually means missing out on real life. Virtual life has its advantages, but don't let it become a replacement for your actual life, experiences, and relationships.

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