

## **Tips to Overcoming an Eating Disorder from Women Who have Recovered**

1. Acknowledge that your behaviour is unhealthy and you need to make changes. Change is YOUR choice.
2. Don't wait for others to "fix" you. Take responsibility for your own recovery.
3. Learn to listen to your "self." Recognize and honour your needs and wants. Spend some quiet time so you can hear your "self."
4. Focus on feelings before, during and after you binge, purge or restrict. Whatever you are feeling is valid. Find alternative ways to resolve these feelings. Don't stuff them -- express them!
5. Stop comparing yourself to others. You are a unique and valuable person just as you are. Value your individuality.
6. Set small goals that you can accomplish easily, and congratulate yourself for every success.
7. Focus on the present and positive aspects of your life. Let go of the past and the future.
8. Become aware of your negative self-talk (i.e. I can't do that because I 'm fat. I always make mistakes). Challenge and dispute that talk (i.e. I am successful at . . . The size of my body does not determine my worth). Replace the negative statements with positive statements and encouragement (i.e. I have value. It is o.k. to make mistakes. I learn from my mistakes).
9. Take time to nurture yourself in ways other than with food, such as a walk, a movie, a hot bath, a special present.
10. Enjoy your body. Do activities you like, such as dancing, massage, yoga, swimming, biking.
11. Talk to someone rather than turning to food for support. Keep talking until you find someone who is willing to unconditionally accept your body, your feelings, your needs; to accept your "true self."
12. Start trying to appreciate different achievements in yourself and others. Work toward the point where weight and appearance are no longer something by which you rate your success. Think about your accomplishments, positive personal qualities, and valued relationships.
13. Identify goals and activities you have been putting off until you're thin, make a list and start doing them now. Appreciate who you are now and start living your life today.

14. Explore your possible ambivalence about giving up these behaviours and your fear of living without these old coping techniques. Take the risk to try new behaviours, without being certain of the outcome.
15. Recognize your personal rights. You have the right to say no. You have the right to express your feelings or your opinion. You have the right to ask to have your needs met.
16. Keep a journal of your experiences, feelings, thoughts and insights. This is a safe place to be honest with yourself -- the journal is for your eyes only, no one else will be reading it or judging it. The journal can also help you identify your \"triggers\" so you may prepare yourself to choose alternate strategies.
17. Develop a creative outlet. Take up painting, drawing, writing, dancing, singing. No one will judge it, and it is a great outlet for expressing feelings.
18. Don't let the scale run your life. Remember the numbers on a scale are not a value judgment on your self-worth. Give the scale away.
19. Dispute the concept of a cultural ideal of beauty as being unrealistic. People come in all shapes and sizes. The concept of an ideal body is a form of prejudice, similar to racism.
20. Seek professional help for guidance in your recovery. Help can be found from counsellors, psychologists, support groups, family doctors, and nutritionists, experienced in helping people recovering from eating disorders.
21. Relax. Be kind to yourself. Trust yourself. You can make changes.

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