

**REVIEWED**

Weight Watchers

Add Topic +

I did WeightWatchers for three years—here's why I'm still doing it

**Rachel Moskowitz Levin**

Reviewed

Published 3:23 p.m. ET Jan. 29, 2020 | Updated 4:38 p.m. ET June 21, 2022

— *Recommendations are independently chosen by Reviewed's editors. Purchases you make through our links may earn us a commission.*

Weight loss can be a full-time job. There are meal kits you can try, intense workout regimens, juice cleanses and questionable diet pills. While it's easy to take advantage of the overwhelming number of options available to help you, you have to be motivated to actually take the first steps towards a healthier life.

When I gained weight after college, I was sitting in front of a computer for a 40-hour work week and didn't feel like I had any additional time or energy to devote to my health. In hindsight, prioritizing my health would have given me *more* energy. But the fact of the matter is that I didn't have any motivation to sort through all the fads. All I knew was that I wanted to be comfortable in my own skin again.

I turned to WeightWatchers in 2019 and I was very skeptical about whether it would work for me or not. Now three years later and 30 pounds lighter, I know I made the right decision. The program helped me not only lose weight but start living a much healthier lifestyle.

Get deals and shopping advice delivered straight to your phone. Sign up for text message alerts from the experts at Reviewed.

What is WeightWatchers?

If you're not familiar with WeightWatchers, it's an Oprah-approved program that helps members achieve a healthier lifestyle. While weight loss is the most sought-after benefit of

following the program, it offers plenty of other benefits. It promotes hydration, physical fitness, meditation and better sleep. It's tied at #1 for Best Diet Program and Best Weight-Loss Diet and #3 for Easiest Diets to Follow by the U.S. News and World Report.

WeightWatchers uses a simplified calorie-counting system that is personalized based on your age, weight, height and sex to help you lose weight in a healthy way. Every food and drink has a corresponding point value. Saturated fat and sugar are higher in point value, while proteins are fewer. There are even foods valued at zero points that you can find on a ZeroPoint food list, which can be consumed to your heart's content. You're allotted a specific number of points for each day so, in theory, if you consume the equivalent of your daily points or fewer, you should lose weight. The aim is to guide you toward making better choices and, with practice, to make those choices habitual.

How does WeightWatchers work?

When you sign up for WeightWatchers, you complete a personal assessment, which provides a baseline of where you are currently are in your health journey and indicates your goals. These are all taken into account in the "Personal Points Engine" to generate your personalized program, or PersonalPoints. WeightWatchers proudly proclaims that no two programs are the same—your PersonalPoints includes your daily Points Budget, which is a number of points per day that you should ideally consume, in addition to your personalized ZeroPoint food list.

Every time you have something to eat or drink throughout the day, you track it on the app. Each food and beverage has a corresponding point value, which eats into your Points Budget for that day. While it might seem hard to stick to a daily number, the ZeroPoint food list makes it more manageable because you have flexibility to enjoy more food or drinks when you get hungry, even if you've hit your daily limit. In addition, you're rewarded with more points in your budget if you track healthy habits such as eating more fruits and vegetables, consuming water and exercising. Another great feature: Unused points become "rollovers", meaning they automatically roll into your Points Budget for the next day. For example, if you're working with a budget of 23 points and find that you only use 21 of those points on Monday, your Tuesday Points Budget will reflect 25.

In addition to a daily Points Budget, you're also assigned an additional number of weekly points, or "weeklies." These give you the freedom to indulge at your discretion. If you go over your daily point budget on any given day, points are taken from your weekly points. You may

go over by a point or several, but there's no harm, no foul. Your amount of weeklies is personalized to you and designed to help you find success in your weight goals whether you use them little by little, many at once or opt to not use them at all.

What are ZeroPoint foods on WeightWatchers?

Your ZeroPoint food list is a helpful way to stick to your Points Budget. ZeroPoint foods and drinks are ones that you don't have to track, that you can consume indefinitely without spending any of your allotted daily points. There are some "staple" ZeroPoint foods and drinks that anyone can find on their ZeroPoint food list. This includes many fruits and vegetables, lean proteins and eggs. Your personalized ZeroPoint food list has additional items tailored to you and *selected by you* based on what you consume regularly, as well as what you enjoy consuming the most. You select foods for your ZeroPoint food list when you sign up for the program, and as your day-to-day habits change throughout the year, you can go back and adjust your list as needed. Options include but are not limited to potatoes, sweet potatoes, popcorn, avocados, brown rice and whole-wheat pasta.

Depending on what you select to be on your ZeroPoint food list, your Points Budget will change. For example, if you add foods that are high in carbs or sugars to your ZeroPoint food list, your Points Budget will decrease to offset the higher calorie intake. The idea is, and always has been, that *no food is off-limits*. You can still enjoy all of your favorite foods, just in moderation.

What membership plans are available on the WeightWatchers program?

There are a few types of WeightWatchers plans and it all comes down to your personal preference. One is the **Digital** plan, which is essentially the basic plan and more of a self-guided experience. You have access to the app and website, as well as tracking, and your own personalized plan. The Digital plan also gives you access to 24/7 Live Coaching via messenger and 5-minute coaching audios.

The second plan is called **Unlimited Workshops + Digital**. It includes all aspects of the Digital plan in addition to thousands of workshops you can join. In-person workshops were on hold temporarily because of the pandemic, but now they are back in full swing and you can choose to participate in-person or virtually. If you're someone that finds strength in

numbers and craves a social aspect in your weight loss journey, this plan may work better for you.

The third plan is called **1-on-1 Coaching + Digital** and it is exactly how it sounds. With this plan, you'll get all of the aspects of the Digital plan, and an opportunity for private coaching with a weight-loss expert. You'll have 15 minutes with the coach of your choosing each week to talk about your wins, areas where you feel you may have fallen short and to create a game plan to move forward with confidence. They're there for guidance as well as to keep you on track. If you want more accountability and someone to check in on your progress, this plan may appeal to you.

When I first began the program several years ago, I started with the 1-on-1 coaching program. Ultimately, I felt smothered by the check-ins and wanted some more freedom. It wasn't personal to the coach, it just turned out that WeightWatchers is more effective for me when I am figuring it out my own way. I'm someone who wanted the app and website benefits without having to interact with others, so I opted for the Digital plan, and I'm still using it three years later.

What's included in the WeightWatchers app?

The WeightWatchers app is included in all membership levels. When you open it, you'll be prompted to complete an optional weekly check-in. I find this helpful at times. It prompts you to take into consideration how you're feeling during a given week and how that might be impacting your journey, as well as prompts you to weigh in and truly track your progress. It can be tempting to avoid the scale, so this is a helpful way to keep you accountable. This keeps your weight loss "why" top of mind, and allows you to reflect on what's working and what's not.

The app is where you log your food and beverage consumption each day to keep on track with your health goals. It gives you access to thousands of recipes and even a convenient "What's in your fridge?" feature that will let you input items that you already have at home and match you with healthy recipes you can make. You can build your own recipes and save them for later use, making it much easier to track meals that are "regulars," so to speak, in your life. There is also a barcode scanner to make food tracking easier and a search feature where you can look up food items from common brands or even restaurants.

Sleep is also a focus on the app. There's a sleep section where you can track your hours of sleep, set up a reminder to alert you when it's bedtime, and stretches and meditations to help you wind down for an improved night's sleep.

Then, there's the fitness tracking. As previously mentioned, logging your daily fitness efforts will expand your Points Budget. You can sync most fitness tracking devices with the app so that activity is automatically logged and extra points seem to magically appear in your Points Budget. If you're looking for a new fitness routine, you can choose from thousands of on-demand workouts from obé Fitness through the app.

The app is also where you'll find a chat feature with 24/7 access to coaching, should you want it. If you want to take the social aspect of WeightWatchers to the next level, there's even a social media section called "Connect" where you can post to the WeightWatchers community to share wins, ask questions and join groups of like-minded people. If that's not your style but you still want some advice to level up your health journey, the app gives you access to audio recordings from weight-loss experts that are meant to teach and motivate when you need it, or when you're looking to try something new.

What is the WW Shop?

Available on both the app and website, there's a WeightWatchers store called the WW Shop. You can buy healthy food, various WeightWatchers cookbooks, products to make your health journey easier such as grilling tools or a sleep mask and more. I'm going to level with you: Some of the food items are hit or miss. I tried the Chocolate Caramel Mini Bars. They weren't anything to write home about, but it was very rewarding to only track 2 points for a chocolate bar that satisfied my chocolate craving. I ended up re-ordering these.

I also tried the 2-Ingredient Dough Bagel Kit and I have some beef with it. I thought when I opened up the kit that all of the ingredients would be in it, but that was not the case. You need to buy ingredients on top of it; it just gives you the bagel mold sheet and toppings. It's clearly stated in the description of the item so that was completely a user error. I will say, however, that I was not thrilled with the non-stick silicone pan. It did the job but the silicone is very floppy to hold so getting it out of the oven while it was hot proved challenging. Ultimately, the bagels came out decently, and I appreciated that they were low-calorie, allowing me to log fewer points than I would with a store-bought bagel.

Lastly, I tried the Half Gallon Water Bottle. Drinking water from such a large container felt a little aggressive, but also very efficient. I liked knowing that if I just finished the container, I'd be drinking all the water I needed to each day. It even tells you what time of day you should be done drinking a certain amount. In addition to being a quality water bottle, it's dishwasher friendly, which is always a plus. The only thing I would change is the neck of the water bottle, which has a fabric handle of sorts. It's convenient to hold when you're using it, but seems strange to put in the dishwasher.

All these products available in the online store aim to keep you on track. What's more, you can earn rewards to use in the shop for your commitment to the program and hard work. Everything you track on the app contributes to "WellnessWins", an accumulation of points (separate from PersonalPoints) that are redeemable at the online store. You can earn WellnessWins through food tracking, fitness tracking and even getting a good night's sleep.

What is a WeightWatchers workshop?

With the Unlimited Workshops + Digital plan, you have access to an endless supply of workshops. They occur both virtually and in-person—you can find a location near you with an easy search feature on the website. Similarly, you can find the right coach for you by browsing coach profiles on the WeightWatchers site.

During a WeightWatchers workshop, you can expect practical, science-backed tips from the leading coach to help you on your weight loss journey, as well as plenty of motivation. It also gives you the opportunity to meet with other members to bond over your struggles, share ideas and cheer each other on. While I haven't participated in a workshop myself, I can see the appeal, as I'm often commiserating with friends or family in a similar way that the workshops provide.

How much does WeightWatchers cost?

The price of WeightWatchers varies depending on the plan that you select. For the **Digital** plan, there is a standard monthly fee of \$22.95 plus a one-time starter fee of \$20. If you want to pay on a monthly basis with no commitment, you'll pay the standard monthly fees each month and a one-time starter fee in full. If you commit to 3-months of the Digital plan, you can waive the starter fee completely and pay only \$10 for the first month instead of the standard \$22.95. After the first month, your monthly fee will increase to \$22.95 per month but you'll have saved \$32.95 in total with the discounted rate and no starter fee. If you

make a 6-month commitment, you also waive the starter fee and pay \$10 per month for the first three months of your program. After the first three months, the rate will increase to \$22.95 per month until you cancel. This option saves you a total of \$58.85. Important note: There is a termination fee of \$42.95 if you end either a 3-month or 6-month plan early.

With the **Unlimited Workshops + Digital** plan, you'll find similar options for your level of commitment but at a higher price. Monthly plans costs \$44.95 with a \$20 starter fee. For a 3-month commitment, you'll wave the \$20 starter fee and pay \$10 for your first month. After your first month, your monthly rate will increase to \$44.95. You'll save a total of \$54.95 by committing to three months. For a 6-month commitment, you'll wave the \$20 starter fee and pay \$10 per month for the first three months, and will then pay \$44.95 per month. This ultimately saves you a total of \$124.85.

For the **1-on-1 Coaching + Digital**, there is only a monthly option. There is a standard monthly rate of \$59.95, plus a starter fee of \$20 to begin with. There is currently a 40% off promotion saving you a total of \$31.98 in your first month. After that, you'll be billed the full \$59.95 per month until you cancel.

What are the downsides of using WeightWatchers?

Food tracking can be time-consuming, and it's especially annoying when products aren't in the database, or you have to assemble recipes from scratch on the app. You'll often find yourself selecting food that's close enough to what you're looking for. It works OK that way, it's just not as precise. This is why ZeroPoint foods are essential to improving your WeightWatchers experience.

That being said, you don't want to fall into the habit of consuming the same ZeroPoint foods all the time. While they are a blessing, they can turn bland and boring if you eat them too frequently. I have gotten into ruts where I was sick of some of the ZeroPoint foods: That's a good time to readjust your ZeroPoint food list. I also recommend adding extra flavor to level up your foods. While you may be focused on keeping your meals as low-point as possible, add some hot sauce. Season it excessively with herbs and spices. And use your weeklies for those indulgent foods you crave so that you don't feel burnout.

Like me, you may find that the first plan you choose isn't the right one for you. I didn't enjoy having a coach, but other people love it. While I enjoy doing my own thing, others may want

more comradery and socializing. Take some time to experiment to figure out what plan will work best for you and your goals.

Lastly but perhaps most importantly, it can get discouraging when you're not seeing the progress you want at the pace you want it (though this is an issue with weight loss in general, not just WeightWatchers). I lost weight pretty quickly at the beginning and plateaued. But there are so many resources to inspire you to switch things up food-wise, try new workouts and find your way forward. When you're feeling discouraged, the key is to not give up. There were times when I wanted to throw discipline to the wind and eat mac and cheese and cookies for dinner. But I didn't, and eventually, I saw results.

Is WeightWatchers worth it?

I would not be doing WeightWatchers three years later if I didn't think it was worth it. I am living proof that WeightWatchers can work. But the keyword here is *can*. You have to put in work and make some sacrifices. If you don't follow your plan thoroughly or "cheat" a lot, you're only cheating yourself. I'd be lying if I said I've never fallen off the wagon—after three years of tracking, I've relaxed my food logging a bit. But I'm still able to maintain my weight and even continue to lose weight. That just proves that the program really motivates you to stick to a healthier lifestyle. So sometimes my weight will fluctuate, but because of the lessons ingrained in me and the resources that WeightWatchers provides when needed, I've learned how to not completely sabotage myself.

In total, I've lost 30 pounds and have cultivated a healthier mentality towards food. I'm much more conscious of how healthy certain foods or ingredients are and exercise caution with those that are not. The program helps me to make better decisions when given the choice between an indulgent meal and a healthier option. I now feel empowered when I turn down unhealthy options, and I find ways to make healthier choices more appealing.

You may find that you don't want to pay for this program forever, but in my experience, it provides a great starting point for a lifelong journey of taking care of your body. For now, it keeps me in check. And once you internalize how WeightWatchers works and why, you can retain healthy habits for long after you use this program—or, of course, rejoin if you need a refresher.

Sign up for WeightWatchers today

***There's a lot more where this came from.** Sign up for our weekly newsletter to get all our reviews, expert advice, deals and more.*

*The product experts at **Reviewed** have all your shopping needs covered. Follow Reviewed on **Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok** or **Flipboard** for the latest deals, product reviews and more.*

Prices were accurate at the time this article was published but may change over time.