



Best Body Countdown Outcomes

Kelsi Brock, MS; Katie Ochwat, BS
 Augusta Area Dietetic Internship
 University Hospital

Email: KelsiLaurell@Gmail.com, KatieOchwat@Gmail.com



ABSTRACT

"I'll keep my 'fat clothes' just in case." Many people lose weight or make efforts to improve their health, knowing they'll just gain it back and return to their "old ways." By using evidence-based research, Sohailla Digsby, RD/LD has created a practical program that gives participants the daily blueprint and tools for establishing life-long healthy habits incrementally of 52 days. Surveys were created to take a deeper look into participants' struggles, obstacles, journeys, accomplishments, and outcomes.

Methods: Two surveys were administered to all Fall 2014 participants. The initial survey, given at the midpoint of the 52 days, had a total of 39 initial responses. It examined the participant's health foundation, motivational factors, and reason for participation. After they completed 52 days, another survey was administered with a total of 23 responses. The final survey analyzed the success of the participants and how the memorized building blocks for a healthy foundation may influence their future.

Results: On the initial survey, 39 participants had varied responses for beginning the program, with the most common being to develop better eating habits, weight loss, and to have accountability. Short-term and long-term goals were identified and consistent with reason for participation. At the midpoint of the Countdown, 91% of participants were able to recall the 5 basic nutrition principles for the "Countdown 5,4,3,2,1" maintenance challenge. 90% of participants said they would continue using these fundamentals (54% of participants said they definitely would continue using these fundamentals and another 36% have plans to).

After completing the program, 23 participants responded to a final survey with their ending results. All participants reported final successful changes that met their beginning goals. Though this program is not exclusively for weight loss, weight lost over the 52 days varied from 2 to 28 pounds. Of those whose goals included weight loss: 61% reported a weight loss of 1 to 9 pounds, 22% reported a weight loss of 10 to 19 pounds, and 4% reported a weight loss of 20 to 28 pounds. 65% reported losing 1-4 inches in the waist, with another 35% of participants reporting success in achieving a goal other than weight loss. 100% of all respondents stated they would do the program over if given the opportunity and would recommend to others in the future.

INTRODUCTION

According to the American College of Preventative Medicine, "those who complete weight-loss programs lose about 10% of their body weight, only to regain about two-thirds of it within a year, and almost all of it within 5 years." Every year, Americans are spending on average \$50 billion on weight loss programs, and dieting supplements. Many studies have shown the best approach to long term weight-loss is a combination of healthy eating and engaging in a physical activity program. These methods combined helped produce 20% greater initial weight loss and sustainability after 1 year than diet alone (International Journal of Obesity 2005). Furthermore, science-based evidence shows that individuals using a food journal while trying to lose weight have greater success with short-term and long-term weight loss goals than those without an accountability method (Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics 2012).

Sohailla Digsby, RD/LD and author of "52 Day Countdown to Your Best Body," has created a realistic and affordable approach to short-term and long-term health, and weight control by providing nutrition education, physical activity recommendations, and practical accountability tools. With daily nutrition and exercise challenges, participants are able to practice lifestyle changes one day at a time, learn by personal experience, and develop skills for life-long healthy eating and physical activity. Accountability methods are integral to the success of this 52-day program: daily challenge check-list, online group forum, 10 check-points with incentives for completion, daily reminder e-mails, motivating contests with prizes, phone chats every 2 weeks, food and exercise journals, and all are strongly urged to have an accountability partner.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Do accountability, regular mnemonic review of essential principles introduced incrementally, and brief journaling lead to successful weight loss and/or long-term healthy lifestyle changes?

"Countdown 5, 4, 3, 2, 1"

- ⑤ **FIVE** grams of added sugar to start with, then **10** Limit added sugar: then 25 g for Women/37 g for Men
- ④ Drink "REAL" water: **FOUR** water bottles, or 64+ ounces every day.
- ③ Balanced fuel all day: **THREE** balanced meals plus a midday "Strong Snack."
- ② Fill half your plate with non-starchy veggies: **TWO** or more non-starchy veggies at lunch & dinner.
- ① Move for 52 minutes! **ONE** hour (just about) of make-it-count movement 5 days per week.



METHODS

Initial surveys were sent out to all Fall 2014 participants with 39 total responses for a midpoint assessment. The survey consisted of 10 questions and evaluated the participants' understanding, struggles, accountability, short-term, and long-term goals. All survey responses were formatted into graphs and charts for comparison among individuals. Another survey was administered to the same participants on the final day of the 52-day Countdown. The final survey consisted of 5 questions analyzing the outcomes, trials, and perceptions of the participants after completion of the program. Both sets of surveys were formatted into graphs and charts for comparison among individuals.

INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

Chart 1: When participants were asked to provide their reasoning for taking part in 'The Best Body Countdown,' results varied among individuals. The most common responses included better eating habits, weight loss, and accountability. Ultimately, each response focused on short and long-term lifestyle changes. Participants could provide as many responses necessary to identify their specific objectives for joining this program.

Chart 2: Sohailla Digsby mentions the "Countdown 5,4,3,2,1" principles repeatedly throughout the 52-day Countdown. Each participant's retention was tested when asked to provide it's meaning. "5" represents the number of grams of added sugar allowed at the first week of the program, "4" represents the amount of water bottle equivalents (64 oz) that should be consumed each day, "3" represents 3 balanced meals each day, plus a "Strong Snack," "2" represents 2 or more non-starchy vegetables at lunch and dinner, and "1" represents the hour of physical activity recommended 5 days each week. 91% of participants answered this question correctly from memory.

Chart 3: A positive correlation was found between chart 2 and 3. When participants understand the meaning behind the Countdown principles, they're more likely to utilize these basics for future success.

Chart 4: Of those who desired weight loss, 87% of participants succeeded, and 91% decreased inches in their waistline. Some participants did not take waistline measurements, accounting for the unknown responses.

CONCLUSION

Achieving healthy lifestyle changes has proven to be more than just a short-term endeavor, but involves education, self-awareness, motivation, and accountability. The systematic nutrition, fitness, and lifestyle challenges of this 52-day Countdown are strategically designed to help participants reach 'Best Body' results one small step at a time; that is, to meet their personal health goals, regardless of starting fitness level or weight. This program encourages small changes to daily habits, and the reduction of barriers to success by adjusting one's environment, both of which are critical elements for long-term behavior change according to Stanford Researcher BJ Fogg. The "Countdown 5,4,3,2,1" mnemonic checklist provides participants with daily accountability and instills 5 building blocks for maintaining long-term health. Based on the data collected, the majority of participants revealed that developing better eating habits, weight loss, and having accountability were the most positive outcomes associated with the Best Body Countdown.

LIMITATIONS

There were 77 total participants who joined for the Fall program. Out of these participants, 39 completed mid-point surveys, and 23 completed final surveys. All survey participants had the option of skipping questions or providing more than one answer. The number of respondents from the mid-point survey to the final survey declined from 39 to 23 surveys completed. It is unknown whether those who declined completing the surveys were successful in accomplishing their goals.

Chart 1 Mid-point Survey:
 Why did you decide to participate in the Countdown this year?

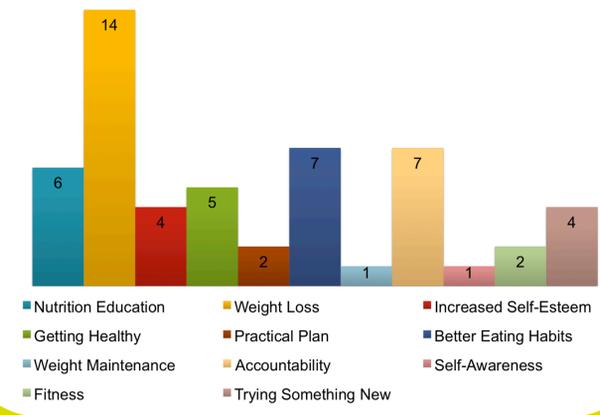


Chart 2 Mid-point Survey:
 What does "Countdown 5,4,3,2,1" stand for (from memory)?

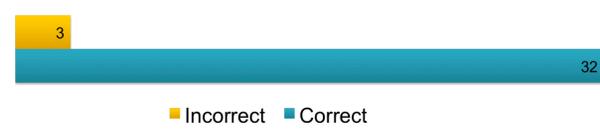


Chart 3 Mid-point Survey:
 What is the likelihood you'll keep these "5,4,3,2,1" essentials in mind beyond the 52 days of this program?

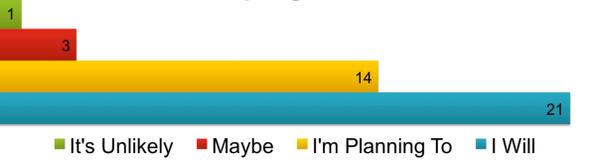


Chart 4 Final Survey:
 How much weight have you lost, in pounds?
 (comment on those whose intention was weight loss)
 How many inches around the waist have you lost?
 (comment on those whose intention was weight loss)



60 Pounds in 9 months
 "I recommend this book because it spells out step-by-step what one must do to lose weight (eating, exercise, sleep, food log, meal planning, etc.)"
 -Esmeralda Rivera

Success Journal
 Sohailla Digsby, RD, LD
 YOU'RE 52 DAYS AWAY FROM YOUR BEST BODY