

Title: The Ultimate Weight Solution: The 7 Keys to Weight Loss Freedom

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Credentials: Dr Phillip McGraw received a PhD in clinical psychology from the University of North Texas and is now most popular for his hit television show, Dr. Phil, and #1 best seller's of Life Strategies, Relationship Rescue, and Self Matters.

RATIONALE/CLAIM:

Dr. Phil uses his education and experience to take a more therapeutic approach to managing weight and issues that are negatively affecting weight loss attempts. He believes that by following his 7 keys described in his book, readers can re-align and change their lives internally and externally in a way that will create, achieve, and maintain lasting weight loss. (9) These "keys" are:

Key 1: Right Thinking

This key revolves around what Dr Phil calls, "personal truth". He explains that if you believe with certainty that you will fail and never become able to manage your weight, then failure is what your personal truth dictates you. Right thinking will help you manage your personal truth to teach you to love yourself from the inside out, and get rid of negative thoughts that encourage failure. To achieve a positive personal truth, think realistically and set achievable goals that replace the past conflict you once had of feeling shame, guilt or disgust. This key focuses on self control.

This is the most important and challenging key to weight management. Right thinking lets you discard toxic messages and replace them with positive, realistic thoughts.

Key 2: Healing Feelings

Negative emotions such as anger, guilt, loneliness, stress, or boredom are common reasons to why people may use food to heal their feelings. Some people eat in response to happy emotions as well and use food as a form of celebration. This key emphasizes its focus on emotional control, and intends to educate on how to break the cycle of overeating in response to different emotions and stress.

Key 3: A No-fail Environment

This key focuses on external control. *External control is the ability to shape, design, and manage your environment so that it is virtually impossible for you to fail. (pp 107) This key emphasizes minimizing opportunities that invite needless snacking, overeating, or bingeing. A major concept of this key is incorporating physical activity and creating healthy hobbies that can replace those that may encourage not so healthy habits such as unhealthy eating. Dr Phil provides a “Personal Environment Audit” which is a series of questions that are intended to monitor the amount of exposure you have to food and to take inventory of it. He believes that without this critical review, you will continue to be influenced by situations in your environment that are setting you up for disaster. (108)

Many people struggle with external control and in order to conquer it, you must make sure your environment is safe by limiting the amount of food in your environment, the food you surround yourself with is of healthy choices, and your shopping strategies must improve. Dr Phil enforces that the choices made away from home must be changed. Be conscientious of portion sizes, variety of food groups, and how much energy you are consuming in that one meal.

Key 4: Mastery over Food and Impulse Eating

This key focuses on habit control. Dr Phil emphasizes the need to reshape and control your behavior, first by identifying why you persist in these bad habits, and second, by replacing them with actions designed to weaken their hold over you. This key is very therapeutic by including a series of questionnaires to rank your individual behavioral devotion to weight loss. He also lists common behaviors that lead to undesirable weight gain such as simple things like eating too fast or too much, eating leftovers or dessert, high fat foods, sneaking food, giving in to urges, making sure to clean your plate, nighttime eating, and more. By recognizing these, Dr Phil hopes that his readers will learn to focus more on intuitive eating rather than looking at the external cues.

I feel that it is very important that Dr Phil directed attention to using food to reward oneself for something. For example, if you have a stressful day and treat yourself to a double fudge sundae after work as a way to unwind because you “deserve it”. Many people are guilty of falling victim to the reward beliefs, just make sure to choose a treat that you will not feel guilt or shame over later.

Key 5: High-Response Cost, High Yield Nutrition

This key focuses on Food Control. This key emphasizes nutritional balance and helps teach the importance on nutrition. Dr Phil impressed me very much with this key. He went over the role of exchanges and food groups and even went into detail teaching about economic factors when purchasing food. He wants readers to take into account food yield, or the portion of the food product that is not edible and goes to waste, and ways to make smarter and healthier choices for your money.

Dr Phil created a nutritional assessment that addressed the number of meals and snacks consumed each day, nutritional balance to see what kind of variety of foods are being consumed, fiber intake, sugar and processed carbohydrates, fat intake, salt intake, and fluids. This way, he allows the reader to analyze their own diet and guide them in a direction to making healthier food choices and teach them the importance of variety in moderation. He makes sure to inform that he is not planning to completely cut out the less healthy foods that you enjoy the most, only limit how much of it you consume to allow a variety of other foods to be included in moderation.

Key 6: Intentional Exercise

This key focuses on body control. Through body control, Dr Phil tries to help the reader find their own strategies for physical activity to become more active and slowly work toward a realistic goal. Each day, try to challenge yourself with small, simple obstacles such as climbing the stairs at your workplace rather than taking the elevator. Also, try parking further away from your destination in order to increase the number of steps walked each day. There are numerous ways to gain exercise and it doesn't have to be slaving away at the gym. Dr Phil's emphasis for this key is to making exercise motivational. Take one of your hobbies and find a way to include exercise.

When addressing exercise, Dr Phil emphasized five steps to increase physical activity:

- Step 1- Make it motivating: choose activities that are fun to you such as playing sports, swimming, home exercising, yoga, and more.
- Step 2- Program an active lifestyle: commit to exercise and make it a familiar ritual
- Step 3- "Consequence" your exercise behavior: reward your accomplishments with positive self talk
- Step 4- Monitor your progress: set a number of days and the duration of workout
- Step 5- Maximize your weight loss: start slowly and over time you will surely see results

Key 7: Your' Circle of Support

This key focuses on social control. This key recommends that you create an assembly of support people to encourage you to achieve your goals. If you can surround yourself with likeminded people, you will not only feel more confident but it will become easier for you to achieve your goals and stay motivated. Dr Phil also provides numerous methods to create an ideal and achievable goal. First, you are to follow an assessment and calculate your personal BMI, waist circumference, waist to hip ratio, he provides strategies for goal settings, and on top of that he assesses an in-depth emotional analysis through multiple questionnaires that you answer within the book- very similarly to the food and feelings workbook.

One thing that really surprised me is how Dr Phil interpreted different assessment measurements and described the physiological complications that come with being overweight and obese. Even though his specialty is in psychology, the simple fact of someone hearing or reading these consequences from a doctor has a stronger impact on them then hearing it from anyone else.

OVERVIEW OF DIET

(Seven Day Diet Plan- to reduce cost and yield)

Day 1 Sunday

Breakfast

Banana, oat bran (cooked), low-fat milk, coffee or tea

Snack

Apple, meal replacement beverage

Lunch

Tuna, vegetable soup, salad greens and sliced tomato, whole-wheat roll, reduced fat salad dressing

Snack

Orange

Dinner

Sirloin steak, baked potato with fat-free sour cream, broccoli, green beans

Day 2 Monday

Breakfast

Raspberries or other seasonal fruit, multigrain bread, egg, coffee or tea

Snack

Low-fat milk or sugar free yogurt, fresh fruit

Lunch

Low fat cottage cheese, salad vegetables, ½ cup unsweetened pineapple chunks, 2 tablespoons light fruit salad dressing

Snack

Low fat milk, orange

Dinner

Turkey breast, stewed tomatoes, steamed summer squash, brown rice

Day 3 Tuesday*Breakfast*

Grapefruit, vegetable omelet, grits, coffee or tea

Snack

Pear, Sugar free yogurt

Lunch

Chili (meat and beans), cut up raw vegetables, reduced-fat ranch salad dressing for vegetables

Snack

Smoothie: meal replacement beverage blended with frozen strawberries

Dinner

Chicken breast, kale, small tossed salad, mashed sweet potatoes

Day 4 Wednesday*Breakfast*

Orange juice, sugar free yogurt, bran muffin, coffee or tea

Snack

Sugar-free coffee, vanilla, or lemon yogurt

Lunch

Open-faced turkey sandwich: turkey breast and 1 slice reduced fat Swiss cheese, whole wheat bread, lettuce and tomato slices, reduced fat mayonnaise

Snack

Apple, meal replacement bar

Dinner

Lean pork roast, spinach, small tossed salad with reduced fat salad dressing, small baked potato

Day 5 Thursday*Breakfast*

Blueberries, high fiber bran cereal, low fat milk, coffee or tea

Snack

Smoothie: low-fat or soy milk with frozen unsweetened peaches

Lunch

Pita sandwich: canned salmon, whole-wheat pita, chopped celery and reduced fat mayonnaise; sliced tomato and raw carrots

Snack

2 small apricots, meal replacement bar

Dinner

Roasted Cornish game hen, winter squash, tossed salad, reduced fat salad dressing

Day 6 Friday*Breakfast*

Grapefruit, bran muffin, egg (scrambled), coffee or tea

Snack

Sugar-free yogurt, diced mango or other seasonal fresh fruit

Lunch

Greek salad: reduced fat feta cheese, romaine lettuce, chopped onion, and reduced-fat salad dressing; whole wheat bread, apple

Snack

Low fat milk or soy milk, meal replacement bar

Dinner

Grilled swordfish, turnip greens, small fresh fruit salad, small baked yam

Day 7 Saturday

Breakfast

Cantaloupe, sugar free yogurt, small diameter (2 ½ inch) whole wheat bagel, fat free cream cheese, coffee or tea

Snack

Smoothie: meal replacement beverage blended with a frozen banana

Lunch

Steamed shrimp, col slaw, sliced tomato, cocktail sauce, whole wheat role

Snack

Grapes

Dinner

Lean ground beef, mixed vegetables, whole wheat pasta with spaghetti sauce

Portion size and options:

My first issue with Dr Phil's menu is that he does not provide portion sizes. You can tell someone what to eat but it defeats the purpose if they eat an excessive amount of that one thing. I also feel that he does not adequately provide options, for example, if someone does not like one item on the menu, there should be another option that might work better for that person. Here is an example of a meal that I feel is more suitable and easier for a reader to follow...

Dinner

1 medium grilled chicken or turkey breast, 1 cup of steamed broccoli, ½ cup of green beans, 1 small baked potato with fat free sour cream and ½ tsp low fat margarine or ½ cup mashed potatoes with ½ tsp low fat margarine and a glass of flavored crystal light

Calorie Composition:

In order to determine calorie composition, I decided to plug the menu for Monday into the mypyramid tracker to determine the number of calories in regards to protein, fat, and carbohydrates and determine if the meal plan is meeting the needs of someone following the diet. The average person requires 2000 calories per day, and maybe even more if the person is active. For someone who is

following Dr Phil's diet menu, Monday would only give them 1619 kcals which is 381 calories less than the average person. This person would also be consuming 109g of protein, 222g of carbohydrates, and 42 g of fat. I feel that the composition of calories is off because the number of grams of protein is very high in comparison with the number of grams from fat. If the person is strictly following Dr Phil's keys for success, they will be burning a lot of calories from activity and that needs to be taken into consideration.

When analyzing micronutrient needs, it appears that the diet prescribed by Dr Phil meets all nutrient needs.

IS IT WELL-ROUNDED AND SUSTAINABLE?

I feel that reaching goal weight loss might be difficult due to Dr Phil's emphasis on control. People tend to relate more to negative emotions of guilt and shame more when they experience difficulty with control and are more likely to give up. In my opinion, weight management is not just about control but it is about many emotional, external and internal conflicts. If his emphasis was more directed toward taking small steps toward lifestyle changes and emotional construction, readers may be more successful at maintaining weight loss.

If a client is able to fully devote themselves to these 7 keys and become successful at accomplishing their weight loss goals, I feel that they will be able to apply their new knowledge long term and be successful in keeping the weight off. Dr Phil's approach focuses on diet and exercise with a major emphasis on behavior modification.

When looking at diet and behavior modification, Dr Phil addresses the issue of emotional eating. He focuses on emotional stress that influences poor food decisions, as well as ways to recognize satiety cues. One helpful tool that was included in Key 2 was a short survey called "stress scale". The stress scale consists of 25 questions to help you recognize the core issues that may contribute to your stress. He also provides much information to help manage your emotions and also ways to manage how you react to those emotions and ways to avoid overeating.

Key 5 addresses nutritional status and effective economic strategies to boost your nutrition while spending little money. In many of my nutrition classes I have heard that economic status plays a large role in contributing to overweight and obesity. People of a lower economic status are more likely to consume processed or fast foods which contain a much higher amount of total calories, fat, saturated

fat, and much fewer valuable nutrients. I believe that Dr Phil addresses this issue very appropriately and effectively encouraged purchasing fresh foods along with cheap and easy preparation methods.

In key 6 Dr Phil addressed the five steps to incorporate intentional exercise. He had set realistic goals over an eight week period that slowly increased exercise level and provided different ways to encourage motivation within yourself and involving others.

Due to the concepts addressed in Key 2,5, and 6, I feel that Dr Phil's diet is very well-rounded and provides much information regarding diet, exercise, and behavior modification. It can easily be followed by people of any economic status and provides a variety of tips to increase your health while decreasing the cost of your food.

CRITICAL COMMENTS:

Pros

- Dr Phil's diet provided 222g of carbohydrates and 106g of protein. His menu meets needs to prevent ketosis. The menu meets macronutrient needs, therefore, not deficiencies are of concern.

- This diet is definitely nutritionally adequate and balanced.

- I feel that many of the meals are very easy to follow and will take little time to prepare. The only problem that I see is that today's society has become so dependent on food away from home that the menus that are provided require home preparation skills.

- This diet would definitely be very cost effective. It requires a lot of frequent grocery shopping and will save a lot of money when comparing to the amount of money that is being spent on already prepared food at restaurants and fast food chains.

Cons

- The kcal level is low at 1619 kcals, however, Dr Phil did not provide portion sizes in his menu which makes it very difficult to calculate the number of calories that will be consumed. One major

problem is that the average person is not educated on what a proper portion size looks like. Dr Phil's diet provides a wide variety fruit and vegetables which generally run around the same size, however, when he included meats and starches into his meals, I feel that people who are following his diet will not know exactly how much to consume and may overeat.

- I believe someone who is following Dr Phil's diet menu will feel feelings of deprivation and hunger. He is choosing meals that are mainly composed of fruits and vegetables. His diet contains very little fat and a lack of variety in food groups other than fruits and vegetables.

- His expectations seem a little too good to be true for starters due to the large amount of fruit and vegetables, extremely small meals, and no sweets or salty foods and snacks

- I feel that someone who is following this diet may become bored because many of the menus for the days contain similar ingredients and are very repetitive.

- The menu contains mainly fruits, vegetables and other very light dishes for breakfast and lunch, but when it comes to dinner, the meal became much heavier. I feel that the menu is not proportional throughout the day and that may lead to unhealthy eating habits.

- Another concern that I had with this diet plan is that it is very personalized. I feel that many people who are followers of Dr Phil are middle aged and have families. Dr Phil's diet plan might be more appropriate if it took into consideration a menu that could be followed by the entire family. This might also help boost motivation for the weight management and encourage team work.

OVERALL CONCLUSION:

This book focuses more on self improvement and behavior modification in regards to diet and exercise rather than following a strict diet. For this reason, I would highly recommend it to someone who is interested in losing weight and making appropriate lifestyle changes.

Education is very important when it comes to exercise and nutrition. I feel that the initial direction that Dr Phil takes in assessing behavior patterns and internal challenges as the primary cause

to most people's unhealthy eating habits should always be the first step. His 7 keys to success do not just tell you what to do like most diet books, but they come up with ways to deal with the issues that most people are experiencing with depression and stress and he lists multiple recommendations that would be helpful in coping with these issues. He also teaches his readers about food groups and exchanges and also teaches them about cheap ways to purchase and prepare foods that are healthy.

His 7 keys to success emphasize developing a new way of thinking about their health by removing the negative self talk, the learned helplessness, and ridding of the feelings of guilt, shame, and disgust. He makes the reader feel empowered and confident which is a wonderful way to boost motivation. His therapeutic approach to weight management is half of the puzzle, and the second half is the actual diet and exercise.

When it comes to the actual diet that Dr Phil presented, I was a little concerned. I feel like it would be difficult to follow because it is such a drastic change from what the typical American diet consists of today. I feel that his diet should be a slow conversion that includes some of the foods that are typically eaten and gradually increasing the new foods that would like to be introduced. If the reader were to make the drastic change and go from one day eating their typical diet to the next day strictly following Dr Phil's menu, the outcome would not turn out very good. The reader would probably convert back to their typical diet very fast.

However, if someone were to follow Dr Phil's menu and consume his menu items in moderation, the amount of weight loss would be significant and be a very healthy way of doing so for the participant. By following the 7 keys, a significant lifestyle change would be definite, and improve the overall health and happiness of the individual.