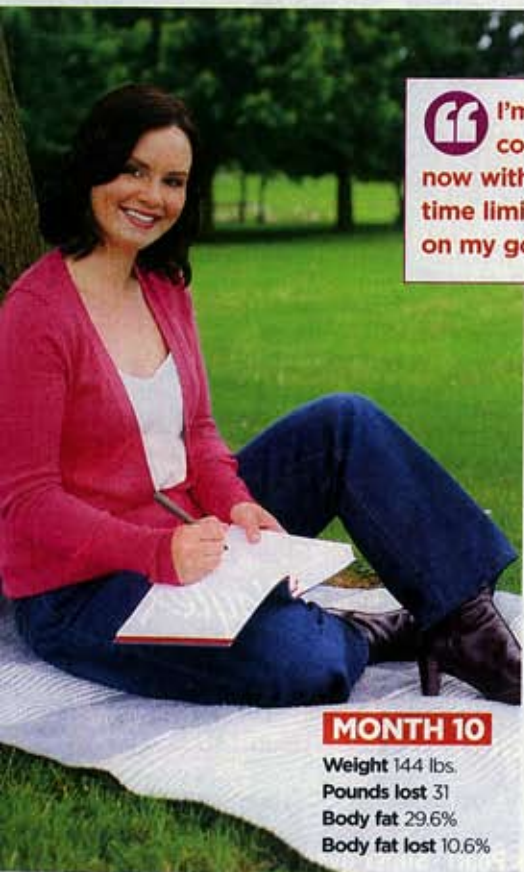


## a new way to measure success

There's more to winning at the weight-loss game than seeing that magic number on the scale. BY MAUREEN HEALY

As I hit the home stretch of my year-long slim-down program, there's one word for the way I feel: anxious. I thought that by this point I'd be elated—after all, I've never stuck out an exercise routine long enough to see real changes before—but that wasn't the case. During the last few months, I've lost just a pound or two at each weigh-in. And while I'm pleased that I'm making progress, I still have 9 more to go by December to reach my goal weight. I kept thinking that if I didn't get to 135 by then, I'd let down the people who are rooting for me: my friends, my family, *Shape* readers—and, of course, myself.



**“I'm not as concerned now with putting a time limit on my goal.”**

**MONTH 10**

Weight 144 lbs.  
Pounds lost 31  
Body fat 29.6%  
Body fat lost 10.6%

**Living in the now**

When I expressed my concerns to Rosemary O'Neill, my life coach, she urged me to try to stay in the present. I should think only of what I can do today—not tomorrow or next week—to reach my goal. “Looking ahead only causes unnecessary worry, which can sabotage your weight-loss efforts,” she told me. This year is simply the start of a lifetime journey, during which I'm laying a foundation of healthy habits, and I should feel proud of the work I'm doing.

To make it easier to see how far I've come already, she suggested I get a notebook and jot down the good things that have happened since January. As I did, I noticed a pattern: My thoughts soon turned to victories that had nothing to do with the gym or my diet. I've begun taking pride in my wardrobe, wearing stylish, body-skimming clothes. I've even spruced up what I wear to bed, replacing my old boxers and T-shirts with girly PJs. This confidence has spilled into my social life too. I'm now going on dates and chatting up new people when I'm out. Seeing my successes in black and white has given me a record of the shift in my perspective—one I can refer to on days when I'm not living in the moment or, worse, when I want to give up.

**A whole new attitude**

Do I still want to get down to 135 pounds? Of course. And I know I will. But I'm not as concerned now with putting a time limit on my goal. All along I've been so focused on losing (weight, inches, calories) that I never stopped to think about everything I've *gained*: pride, balance, and self-awareness. These are changes I can hold on to long after I've dropped the last pound.

**WEIGHING IN****Month 1**

Height 5'4"  
Weight 175 lbs.  
Body fat 40.2%  
VO<sub>2</sub> max\* 33.8 mL/kg/min.  
Aerobic fitness average  
Resting blood pressure  
110/70 (normal)  
Cholesterol 177 (normal)

**Month 9**

Weight 146 lbs.  
Pounds lost 29  
Body fat 31.6%  
Body fat lost 8.6%

**STAY TUNED**

Next month, Maureen finds a new body-sculpting regimen.

\*VO<sub>2</sub> max testing performed at Oregon Health & Science University's Division of Health Promotion and Sports Medicine. For more information, go to [ohsu.edu/hpsm](http://ohsu.edu/hpsm).

online bonus!

For more attitude-altering tips, check out Maureen's blog at [shape.com/weightlossdiary](http://shape.com/weightlossdiary).