



**Week 10: April 4-10
Changes for the Better**

Scale Back Alabama encouraged participants to lose 10 pounds in 10 weeks by changing their eating habits and increasing their physical activity.

Ten pounds in 10 weeks may not sound like much, but evidence shows that people who lose weight gradually and steadily (about one to two pounds per week) are more successful at keeping the weight off. Therefore, we believed the goal of 10 pounds in 10 weeks was very realistic and based on solid health practices. As you know, healthy weight loss is not just about a particular diet or program, it is about an ongoing lifestyle that includes long-term changes in daily eating and exercise habits.

No matter what your weight-loss goal is, even a modest weight loss, such as five to 10 percent of your total body weight, is likely to produce health benefits, such as improvements in blood pressure, blood cholesterol and blood sugars.

Even though Scale Back Alabama is over, these lesson plans will remain on the Web site throughout the year. We hope you have found them useful and that you'll refer to them later in the year to remind yourself and your team members of the commitments you've made. The following are some final questions you can ask.

To create a cultural change, people must not only embrace the health change, but be able to do it. Worksite changes, even small ones, are imperative for long lasting changes. For instance, if we want more people to be physically active, we need to encourage walking at work during breaks. What changes were seen at your place of work? What changes will you try to make at your work place?

Small changes add up to a lifestyle change. The changes made during these 10 weeks can be used as a foundation for healthy living. What changes did you make personally?

In summary, we've listed four key lessons proven successful in weight-loss efforts:

- 1. Accountability makes it real.**

- a. Keeping a daily food record helps you see what was really consumed. Just by seeing the foods already eaten, a person will make better decisions about the next meal or snack.
 - b. Many participants report that they weigh on a regular basis. This monitoring helps to correct undesirable practices before they get too out of hand.
 - c. Checking in with an accountability partner. Having someone to walk with or to share diet struggles with gives needed support. Just be careful in selecting that accountability partner; a friend who talks you into going out for drinks or food instead of going to exercise may not be a great friend after all.
2. **Think ahead to learn and know what to do.** Thinking through possible options and solutions ahead of time helps to manage reactions in high risk situations. These situations might be eating when stressed, going to a party, or being mentally tired and not wanting to exercise.
 3. **Being physically active is a lifetime commitment.** One of the most popular exercises is walking. Remember, by selecting something you enjoy, you will stick with it.
 4. **A balanced meal pattern as a lifestyle replaces diets.** After going through Scale Back Alabama, the focus for eating should be on choosing foods that are nutrient dense and healthy. Diets set you up for failure. But on the other hand, a healthy lifestyle is a lifelong commitment and must be taken slowly, day by day.

We hope Scale Back Alabama has been helpful in reinforcing healthy lifestyle choices for a healthier you, which will make a healthier Alabama!