

THE 5-STEP CHANGE PROCESS FOR WEIGHT LOSS

A sustainable fat loss system for women who are done starting over.

by Ashley English
motivationweightloss.com

Important Notice

This ebook is for informational and motivational purposes only. It is not intended as medical advice and does not replace the guidance of a qualified healthcare provider. If you are managing a health condition, taking prescription medication (including GLP-1 medications), or have concerns about your weight or nutrition, please consult your doctor before making changes to your diet, exercise, or supplement routine.

Some links on motivationweightloss.com are affiliate links. We may earn a small commission if you purchase through them — at no extra cost to you. We only recommend products we genuinely believe in.

*Copyright 2026 motivationweightloss.com. All rights reserved.
You are welcome to share this ebook with others who might benefit from it.*

INTRODUCTION

You Don't Have a Willpower Problem.

If you've ever lost weight and gained it back, started a new program on Monday and quit by Thursday, or found yourself wondering why it feels so much harder than it used to — this ebook is for you.

Here's what I want you to know before we get into the five steps: you are not broken. You don't have a discipline problem or a laziness problem. What you have is a systems problem. The approach you've been using was built for a different version of your life — one that probably didn't involve the hormonal shifts, schedule demands, and metabolic changes that come with your 30s, 40s, and beyond.

The 5-Step Change Process isn't another diet. It's a framework for building the habits, mindset, and physical foundation that make fat loss sustainable — not just possible for 30 days before life gets in the way.

Each step builds on the last. You don't need to do them all at once. In fact, I'd encourage you not to. Real change happens one layer at a time.

A note on 2026: Weight loss has changed. GLP-1 medications like Ozempic and Wegovy have changed who's in the conversation, and natural GLP-1 support supplements have changed what's available without a prescription. This framework works whether you're on medication, considering it, or looking for alternatives. The steps apply either way.

What's Inside

Step 1: Reset Your Identity

Stop trying to lose weight. Start becoming someone who lives at a healthy weight.

Step 2: Build Your Fuel Foundation

High-protein, real-food eating that preserves muscle and keeps you full.

Step 3: Move to Preserve, Not Punish

The workouts that change your body composition without breaking your body down.

Step 4: Stack the Right Support

Which supplements actually help — and how to think about GLP-1 options.

Step 5: Install Your System

The habit loops and 30/60/90-day framework that make the other four steps stick.

STEP ONE

Reset Your Identity.

You don't rise to the level of your goals. You fall to the level of your identity.

Every sustainable change starts with a question that has nothing to do with calories or cardio: *Who am I?*

Most people approach weight loss as a destination. They want to lose 20 pounds, and they set up a plan to get there. The problem is that plans end. When the 20 pounds are gone, there's no new instruction. And often — the old habits, the old identity, reasserts itself.

Identity-based change works differently. Instead of asking "what do I need to do to lose weight," you ask "what does someone who is naturally healthy and fit do?" Then you start doing that — not as a temporary program, but as an expression of who you are.

What this looks like in practice:

- You don't say "I'm trying to eat less sugar." You say "I'm someone who doesn't eat processed sugar."
- You don't say "I should exercise more." You say "I'm someone who moves her body every day."
- You don't say "I'm on a diet." You say "This is just how I eat."

This isn't positive-thinking fluff. It's how behavior change actually works. Every action you take is a vote for the person you're becoming. String enough votes together, and the identity becomes real.

The motivation paradox:

Most people wait to feel motivated before they act. But motivation doesn't come first — action does. You feel motivated after you act, not before. The women who maintain healthy weight for years don't have more willpower than you. They've built an identity and systems that make the right actions feel automatic. Motivation barely enters the picture.

Step 1 Action Items

- ✓ Write down 3 sentences starting with "I am someone who..." describing your healthy identity
- ✓ Identify 1 behavior that contradicts that identity and decide what you're changing
- ✓ Tell one person about the identity you're building — accountability starts here

STEP TWO

Build Your Fuel Foundation.

You can't out-exercise a bad fuel strategy. But you can eat in a way that makes the rest easy.

Before we talk about what to eat, let's talk about what most approaches get wrong: they cut too many calories, too fast, which triggers muscle loss instead of fat loss. This is the #1 reason women feel weaker, flabbier, and more tired after a diet — even one that "worked" on the scale.

In 2026, we know more about this than ever. Studies on GLP-1 medications found that without a deliberate protein and exercise strategy, up to 40% of weight lost can come from lean muscle — not fat. The same principle applies to any aggressive calorie cut.

The Three Non-Negotiables:

- **Protein first.** Aim for 0.7–1g of protein per pound of your target body weight. This preserves muscle while in a calorie deficit, keeps you full, and has the highest thermic effect of any macronutrient (your body burns more calories just digesting it). Chicken, eggs, Greek yogurt, cottage cheese, fish, and quality protein powder are your tools.
- **Real food baseline.** 80% of your diet should come from whole, minimally processed foods. This isn't about being perfect — it's about giving your body the micronutrients it needs to function well while you're in a deficit.
- **A moderate deficit, not a drastic one.** A 300-500 calorie daily deficit is sustainable. 1,200-calorie crash diets are not. Slow and steady fat loss preserves muscle, keeps hormones stable, and is infinitely more maintainable.

A note on GLP-1 medications:

If you're on Ozempic, Wegovy, or Zepbound — or considering them — these same principles apply, and they matter even more. GLP-1 medications reduce appetite dramatically, which makes it easy to under-eat protein. Prioritize protein at every meal even when you're not hungry. Your muscle depends on it.

Step 2 Action Items

- ✓ Calculate your protein target (body weight in lbs x 0.8 = daily grams to aim for)
- ✓ Plan 3 high-protein meals for tomorrow — write them down tonight
- ✓ Remove one ultra-processed item from your regular rotation this week

STEP THREE

Move to Preserve, Not Punish.

The goal isn't to burn off last night's dinner. It's to build a body that works for you.

Exercise culture has sold women a damaging lie: more is better. More cardio, more sweat, more soreness means more results. For women over 35, the opposite is often true. Chronic cardio without strength training accelerates muscle loss, elevates cortisol, increases appetite, and leads to the "skinny fat" physique that feels like a punishment for all the work.

The science is clear: resistance training is the single most effective form of exercise for long-term fat loss, metabolic health, and body composition in women 35 and over. It builds and preserves muscle, which raises your resting metabolism. It improves insulin sensitivity. It makes everything else easier.

The Minimum Effective Dose:

You don't need two hours a day. The research on resistance training shows that 2-3 sessions per week, 30-45 minutes each, targeting all major muscle groups, is enough to build and maintain muscle while in a calorie deficit.

Add 7,000-10,000 steps of daily walking. Not as punishment — as the most underrated fat-burning and stress-reducing tool you have. Walking is low-cortisol, joint-friendly, and sustainable indefinitely.

What about cardio?

Cardio is a tool, not a foundation. Use it for cardiovascular health and stress management — 2 sessions of 20-30 minutes per week is plenty. If you enjoy running, cycling, or swimming, keep

doing it. Just don't make it the centerpiece of your fat loss strategy.

Step 3 Action Items

- ✓ Schedule 2 resistance training sessions this week (body weight counts — no gym needed)
- ✓ Track your steps for 3 days to establish your baseline before adding to it
- ✓ Choose ONE form of movement you genuinely enjoy and protect time for it weekly

STEP FOUR

Stack the Right Support.

Supplements don't do the work. But the right ones remove friction and fill real gaps.

The supplement industry is full of noise. Magic fat burners, proprietary blends, before-and-after photos that were taken three months apart. Most of it is marketing. But some things genuinely help — not by replacing the work of Steps 1 through 3, but by filling real nutritional gaps and supporting the physiological changes you're making.

Worth considering:

- **Protein powder.** Not a supplement in the magical sense — just concentrated food. If you're struggling to hit protein targets through whole food, a quality whey or plant-based protein makes it easier. Look for NSF-certified brands with minimal ingredients.
- **Berberine.** The most-researched natural compound for blood sugar regulation and metabolic support. Often called "nature's Ozempic" — a comparison that oversells it but points to real mechanisms. Works through AMPK activation, the same pathway targeted by metformin. Not a replacement for GLP-1 medication, but meaningful support for those managing blood sugar naturally.
- **Magnesium glycinate.** Most women are deficient. Supports sleep quality, muscle recovery, and cortisol regulation — all of which directly affect fat loss.
- **Creatine monohydrate.** The most evidence-backed supplement in existence for muscle preservation and strength. Especially important for women over 40. 5g per day. Cheap, safe, and effective.

- **Vitamin D3 + K2.** If you're not getting regular sun exposure, you're likely deficient. Vitamin D supports immune function, mood, and hormonal health.

On GLP-1 medications:

Ozempic, Wegovy, and Zepbound are legitimate medical tools, not shortcuts. If you're considering them, talk to your doctor. If you're already on them, the nutrition and exercise steps in this guide matter more, not less — because reduced appetite makes protein and resistance training even more critical for preventing muscle loss. Visit motivationweightloss.com/glp1 for a complete 2026 guide to GLP-1 support.

Step 4 Action Items

- ✓ Audit your current supplements — remove anything with a proprietary blend you can't verify
- ✓ Add creatine monohydrate if you're doing resistance training (5g/day, any time)
- ✓ Get your Vitamin D levels tested at your next doctor visit

STEP FIVE

Install Your System.

Motivation gets you started. Systems keep you going when motivation disappears.

Everything in Steps 1-4 is worthless if it doesn't actually happen consistently. That's not a motivation problem — that's a systems problem. And systems are something you can build deliberately.

The 30/60/90 Framework:

Days 1-30: Foundation

- Focus on ONE change at a time — don't overhaul everything at once
- Build your protein habit before adding anything else
- Track what you're doing (not calories — just behavior consistency)
- Expect friction. This is normal. Don't interpret it as failure.

Days 31-60: Stacking

- Add resistance training 2x per week once eating habits are stable
- Introduce your step goal once training is consistent
- Evaluate your supplement stack — add one targeted item if needed
- Review your identity statements — update them to reflect who you've become

Days 61-90: Reinforcement

- Identify your highest-friction point and solve it structurally
- Find one person or community for accountability (not just a gym buddy)
- Plan for disruptions: travel, stress, holidays — have a "minimum viable" version
- Measure progress by behavior consistency, not just the scale

On accountability:

Research consistently shows that people who share their goals with a specific person — not just write them in a journal — are significantly more likely to follow through. Find your person. Tell them what you're building and ask them to check in with you weekly.

Step 5 Action Items

- ✓ Write down your Day 1-30 single focus — just one habit to build this month
- ✓ Set a weekly check-in with yourself (same day, same time, 10 minutes)
- ✓ Tell one specific person what you're doing and ask them to follow up

What Comes Next

You now have the complete framework. Five steps. Each one building on the last. None of them requiring perfection — only consistency.

The most important thing you can do right now is start. Not Monday. Not after the holidays. Today — with the smallest possible version of Step 1.

Everything else on motivationweightloss.com is built to support your progress through each of these steps. Here's where to go next:

- motivationweightloss.com/weight-loss-motivation/

The complete motivation and habit guide — goes deeper on Step 1 and Step 5

- motivationweightloss.com/meal-plans-for-weight-loss/

Practical high-protein meal plans to build your Step 2 foundation

- motivationweightloss.com/exercise-for-weight-loss/

The muscle-preserving workout approach covered in Step 3

- motivationweightloss.com/supplements-for-weight-loss/

Honest supplement reviews and recommendations for Step 4

- motivationweightloss.com/glp1/

The complete 2026 GLP-1 support guide — what's new, what works, what to know

You've got this. Not because it's easy — because you've decided to build the identity, the habits, and the systems that make it inevitable.

— Ashley English, motivationweightloss.com

Share this guide with a friend who needs it. The more people who have the right framework, the better.