

# Losing Weight Is a Lifestyle

GROWING up, Robin was told a thousand times the story of how his grandma who raised him had to use Chinese herbs to plump him up as a skinny child. Throughout his childhood and teenage years, he was egged on to eat a lot, to make sure he would never become underweight.

He got larger still in his mid-twenties when he started to work night shifts at the call centre of a fast-food chain. “We would get free delivery at midnight, so my dinners were very unhealthy, loaded with sodium,” says Robin.

Later, he switched jobs, but his stomach and appetite were already out of control by then. At “economy rice” stalls, Robin would get four dishes plus three bowls of rice. To make matters worse, he was skipping breakfast, slowing down his metabolism.

One day, Robin went to the doctor for a bout of flu and learned that he had high blood pressure. He had had no clue. And then the fainting spells started. He hit his head on the floor at home the first time it happened. During a trip to Taiwan, he fainted again.

“Fainting definitely worried me more than my weight did. I thought I could die anytime,” says Robin.

At that point, he had reached 125 kg, putting him at the highest health risk category despite his 1.80m frame. He decided to get medical help.

Over the course of 16 months, Robin lost 38 kg, under the guidance of a dietician, a physiotherapist and a TCM doctor. “The most important thing I learned was that losing weight is a lifestyle. It’s really a commitment you make for the rest of your life,” he says.

“Now that my pant size has dropped from 44 to 34 and my shirt size, from XXL to L, I can buy clothes anywhere. But most importantly, I feel so much healthier, livelier. I don’t worry about dying young anymore.”



*In a little more than a year, Robin Sim managed to lose 38 kg, about 30 per cent of his body weight. He may have saved his own life in the process.*

What are your best 3 tips for people who wish to emulate you as weight loss champion?

## 1. Go slowly, don’t shock your body.

If you’re a big eater, you will need to cut food gradually. I went from 3 bowls of rice to 2, then 1. I switched from regular Coke to Coke Zero, and then to Chinese tea. Taking it slow is also important for exercise. If your body is not used to exercising, you can start by just alighting from the bus one stop earlier and walking the rest of the way, or taking the stairs instead of the lift. You need to build your stamina so that exercise naturally becomes a part of your lifestyle. I started by exercising only once a week. Now, nearly two years later, I exercise twice a week.

## 2. Know your calories.

There are apps for this. Once you know how many calories there are in some of Singapore’s favourite dishes, your choices become quite clear when you need to stick to a 1500-calorie diet. I don’t eat fried stuff or coconut curry chicken anymore. I still have chicken rice, but only with white rice and no skin. In the beginning, I actually stopped eating out for the most part. Even vegetables are typically very oily when eaten outside. My dietician taught me many tricks, including how to cook with a non-stick pan and use white wine to add natural sweetness to my dishes.

## 3. Don’t attempt to lose weight unless you are very determined.

During national service, I lost a bit of weight, but it all came back when I resumed my normal life and stopped exercising. When I first tried to lose weight by myself, I couldn’t sustain it and I quickly gained it all back and some more. Before going on a diet, make sure you have the right mindset and understand that your lifestyle will have to change for good. Get clear on your motivations to lose weight, and never lose sight of them.

### Fact Sheet on Sanjeev Gathani

Personal data	:	Age 29, Single
Occupation	:	IT Entrepreneur
Hobbies	:	Chilling out with friends and renovating his uncle’s house in Johor
Cool fact	:	He hopes to retire in Taiwan