



## **AskTheInternetTherapist.com**

### **Newsletter December 2004**

#### **Featured Article**

### **For Health: How to Adjust Your Brain's Weight Regulating Controls**

**By Serena Harstad**

<http://aanutrition.com>

Have you ever watched someone who appears thin and healthy eating a piece of chocolate cake and wondered how they stay thin? Part of the reason is that they have a set-point in their brain that keeps their body fat and weight from varying~ that is, until they do something that causes the brain to change its settings for weight control.

That's what happened when I quit smoking. I had been thin all my life. Then I stopped smoking and gained about 25 pounds! By quitting I had inadvertently triggered a process that changed the body-weight regulator in my brain. I started making fat out of everything I ate, whereas my body used to eliminate excess calories. (Stopping smoking is only one of many major changes that can cause your brain's body-weight controls to be altered.)

I'll refer to the weight and fat control mechanism in your brain as the \*set-point.\* One image for understanding the way the set-point functions is to think of the thermostat for cooling and heating your house. When the temperature is set for 72 degrees, the room doesn't change by more than a couple of degrees before the thermostat triggers the air conditioner or the furnace to get the temperature back to 'normal' - in this case 72 degrees.

Your brain's set-point functions much the same way. It maintains a steady body-weight and body-fat level through a complex interaction of hormones and metabolic processes. The chemistry of how this works is beyond the scope of this article. Suffice it to say that if you've gained weight or lost weight, it is because your set-point has moved. And if you want to lose or gain weight, you can take certain actions to re-adjust your set-point to a level more acceptable to you.

First, Eat the right things. This is not difficult, if you follow these clear guidelines: a) Keep refined carbohydrates to a minimum. That is, avoid foods made with sugar or flour. b) Eat less fat, but that doesn't mean to use products labeled 'low-fat' such as low-fat mayonnaise.

Producers have to use so many chemicals to make low-fat, processed foods taste OK that you're better off just eating the real thing - only less of it. Also, eat less animal fat, like cheese, butter and marbled meat. c) Eat complex carbohydrates: whole grains, vegetables and fruits. Your body recognizes these as normal foods, so it will process them to give you energy now, instead of giving you stored energy (fat).

Second, Drink water. It is necessary to your metabolism and helps your body eliminate toxins and other excesses. Sweetened juice, coffee, tea, diet or regular soda, and alcohol don't contribute to good metabolism or health. Keep use of them minimal, if at all.

Third, Exercise - the right kind is rhythmic, uses the large muscles, and is sustained for up to an hour. If this seems like a lot of time to dedicate, ask yourself how important it is to you to lose the weight and how much value you place on your health. The set-point in your brain won't change without this specific type of exercise. That's all. However, the exercise is a pleasure when you do the right kind. You're not expected to do calisthenics, thank heaven.

The term 'large muscle' means to use your legs especially. The ideal exercise to start first is walking because you don't need special equipment or gear. Additional possibilities include swimming, biking, and jogging. Chose what you will enjoy. 'Rhythmic' means exercise that is steady and repetitive. 'Sustained' refers to continuity - no stops to rest, lowering your heart-rate. Thirty minutes a day is the minimum. An hour a day will produce quicker results. About heart-rate: keep it at a level that requires some exertion, but you could still carry a conversation. Any higher level, and you're not doing exercise that affects your set-point. It's unnecessary to think 'no pain, no gain' in this case.

If you make a habit of these three things, (eating, drinking and exercising the right way), your set-point will change. You'll lose weight. By adopting these habits, I shed the 25 pounds I had gained when I quit smoking. In the process, I developed some pleasant behaviors that have improved my overall health as well as the quality of my life. It's an enjoyable lifestyle to eat tasty whole foods, have the pleasure of a daily walk, and quench thirst with pure water. I feel good these days, and being slender is a nice bonus. You'll feel good, too when you adopt these habits. Your body will thank you, and bless you with glowing health.

Please note: This article is for information purposes only. Always consult your doctor or health-care professional.

Serena Harstad has written on a range of nutrition, health, and fitness topics for [The News from All About Nutrition](#), your best resource for nutrition information. Visit: <http://aanutrition.com/> to find more articles by Serena Harstad.

**Featured Therapist**  
**Deborah Stengel, R.N.**  
**Psychiatric Nurse**



Deb has been working as a nurse for 27 years and as a Psychiatric Nurse for 22 years. She has a nursing degree from the University of South Dakota and completed further training in Humanistic Psychology from the University of Oregon. She has worked in an outpatient oncology practice and was the volunteer director of the American Cancer Society's outreach counseling program. She has worked as a nurse in an inpatient Chronic Pain program, acute adult and inpatient Psychiatry and Chemical Dependence. She was a crisis assessor for ten years for a major metropolitan hospital. Her most recent experience is in utilization management and is currently employed in administration for the local behavioral health agency as an advocate for about 10,000 seriously mentally ill clients. She believes firmly that people can survive great hardship and go on to be great BECAUSE of their life experiences, not in spite of them. She has been called the queen of optimism! Deb loves animals, and has

four dogs, a cat, a parrot, a guinea pig, and an Iguana (Gordon). She lives with her very tolerant partner Terence, who does not like animals. (Does this make her a relationship therapist??) Her other interests are computers, reading (true crime), building animal habitats, pet therapy, and animal nutrition. **At the present time Deborah is only available for chat and e-mail counseling.**

**December Contest Winner**

Congratulations to Vicki S. She is our December 2004 winner and she picked the Chemical Dependence Video Tape. Enjoy Vicki.

**Featured Product**  
**Brain Balancing CD**  
**by Dr. Doug Gilbert**

This Brain Balancing CD that guides the listener through 4 sets of exercises that help both sides of your brain work together. Integrating the hemispheres of your brain in this way can help you use logic and intuition together so you can come up with more powerful solutions to the problems of your life. The newest research shows that a large part of what we have called logical reasoning is intertwined with intuition.

Combined with cranial work, this CD can help with dyslexia problems.

Dr. Gilbert has helped many dyslexia patients eliminate or reduce their learning disabilities with a combination of these technologies. This CD uses binaural beats to assist in the integration process. All speech on this CD is audible, nothing is hidden so you will know exactly what is being said at all times.

Dr. Doug Gilbert is a chiropractor who has worked extensively with clients over the last 16 years to eliminate personal emotional baggage that keeps them from doing and being the humans they choose to be. Dr. Doug has taken hundreds of hours of post graduate classes dealing with the physiology of emotions and has done years of personal research into the creation and use of self-hypnosis CD's to remove blocks to health and success. Some of the classes Dr. Doug has taken and uses material from are; Applied Kinesiology, Neuro Emotional Technique, Total Body Modification, Reiki, The Reconnection, Touch For Health and Landmark Forum.

## **Special Announcements**

Please take a few moments to take a short survey to help us better our website and your experience when you visit us. It is completely anonymous; we will not give this information to anyone. The information gathered here will be completely private (we do not ask for your name or contact information).

Just follow this link: [http://www.asktheinternettherapist.com/online\\_survey.asp](http://www.asktheinternettherapist.com/online_survey.asp) and answer the questions. Thank you very much for your valuable time and cooperation.

We are now offering another way that you can order Educational Mental Health Videos and Hypnosis Tapes and CDs. You can fax or mail your order using or [downloadable order form](#). Just fill it up and send it to us via mail or fax. Fax: 480-998-1058 or mail to:

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As you have already seen, all of our videos are digitally re-mastered and are available on VHS and DVD. Although we still have some of the old videos, which we are selling for \$25.00 each to make room for more of the new, digitally re-mastered ones. They are available at the price above only by calling 1-800-881-7693 and placing an order over the phone. ***We have just a few left!! Hurry before this offer expires 12/31/04*** (This offer is available only for the Love Addiction, Communication Assertiveness, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Chemical Dependence, Co-dependence, and Dysfunctional Families videos).

Be sure to utilize our **free** discussion boards. These forums are formatted by the following special topics- Hypnosis, Chemical Dependence, Co-Dependence, Parenting, Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder, Medical Issues, Dysfunctional Families, Attention Deficit Disorder, Relationships, Veterinary Concerns, and Depression. You might find useful information in the various topics. These forums are usually monitored by our clinicians in a weekly basis.

As you are probably aware asktheinternettherapist offers online individual paid appointment times for in depth assistance with any of our professionals. Our discussion groups however are

visited from time to time by our staff and their comments to discussions or questions are provided free of charge. This is an added benefit in addition to client self-help that makes up the bulk of the discussion group traffic. Visit soon.

**PLEASE REMEMBER:**

*This is a pay for session site, so please email only if after you have paid for a*

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***We believe better health  
begins with better Mental Health.  
Jef Gazley M.S., L.M.F.T., D.C.C.  
6540 E. Kelton Ln.  
Scottsdale, Arizona  
1-800-881-7693  
[www.asktheinternettherapist.com](http://www.asktheinternettherapist.com)***