



How to Return to a Meal-Replacement Program and Be a Smashing Success!

By Linda Spangle, RN, MA

It's easiest the first time...

You were so determined when you started your meal-replacement program. You created a daily routine and adapted to the boredom of the products.

Perhaps you learned how to avoid the wrong kinds of food. You may even have started exercising. The pounds melted off and your progress helped you stay motivated.

Then you stopped.

Perhaps you reached your goal or you simply needed a break. Maybe holidays, finances or family issues contributed to your decision.

Now you've decided to go back on your plan. But you may discover it's much harder than before.

The honeymoon's over!

Regardless of what prompts your decision, returning to the program may present some challenges. In spite of your determination, you can't recapture the magic of the first time.

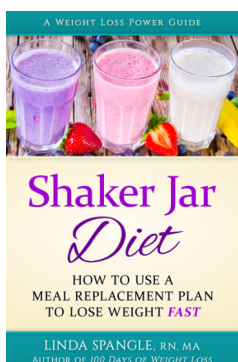
Use this guide to help make your program work. You did it before, you can do it again—maybe this time even better!

I'll start over tomorrow...

Every morning you wake up and say, "Today I'll do it! I'll take all my packets. I won't eat foods that aren't allowed, and I'll be solid on my plan."

But in the middle of the afternoon, you waver and eat a few crackers or a piece of candy.

Then you tell yourself you've blown it and nibble a little more. By evening, you give up and eat a regular meal, saying, "I'll start over tomorrow and do it right."



Except, the next day you do the same thing. Somehow you have to stop this pattern and make your plan work. Keep tightening your efforts to stay with it instead of giving up the day's work.

You can't TRY to do a meal-replacement program. You either *do* your plan or you *don't*. Here's why it's so important to stay on track.

- It takes three days to build the ketosis level high enough to decrease hunger and fatigue.
- Every time you eat non-protein food, you slow the process.
- If you keep struggling with eating, you never achieve ketosis.

So do make every effort to actually get back on track and stick with your program consistently.

Get a strong start

Sometimes the best way to get back on track is to simply jump in and start. Here are three steps that will help you make it work.

Step 1. Choose a day to begin

Once you're ready, pick a day and stick to it. Plan to begin your program when you have at least three days where you can focus on protecting yourself.

Just as if it was the first day of school, mark it on the calendar, then step over the line and go for it.

Step 2. Set up for success

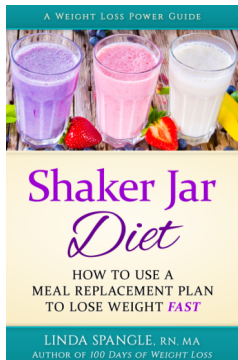
Don't start right before a vacation or the week a stressful project is due at work. Even though you'll never have a *perfect* time when everything is calm, at least pick a starting time when you can minimize distractions.

Also, make sure you have all of your supplies in place, and the leftovers or other tempting foods are taken care of.

Step 3. Take it one day at a time

Tell yourself, "I can make it. I'm choosing to avoid food that's not on my plan. I will get through it."

Take it one day at a time— one hour at a time if you need to. Affirm your progress. Pat yourself on the back and celebrate compliance.



How to survive three days

As you know, it takes three days to adapt to the program again. So do everything possible to get through the first three days without eating foods not on your plan.

Here are some ideas to help you make it through three days:

- Space your products carefully, not more than four hours apart.
- Keep a chart. Mark off the products as you take them. Put stars on the chart if it helps.
- Take extra products. If hunger and fatigue are too strong, take an additional food packet or bar. It won't affect your weight loss, but giving in and eating will.
- Drink lots of liquids. Use any non-caloric fluids that feel soothing or comforting. Try herb teas, bouillon or club soda.
- Munch on celery. It helps decrease the desire to eat.
- Build in non-food rewards. Perhaps buy a new book or CD at the completion of Day Three.
- Keep telling yourself, *"I can do anything for three days!"*

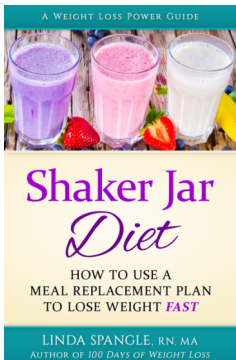
Build a self-talk plan

Don't hang on to old messages that plague you. Beating yourself up for being a failure, not following through, not starting sooner, or regaining weight only deepens your discouragement.

Instead reframe your self talk into powerful statements that affirm your progress and continued success. In the list that follows, decide which phrases fit for you. Create lots more of your own.

Check (✓) the phrases that fit for you:

- ☐ I'm making progress daily.
- ☐ I'm stronger than last week.
- ☐ I'm learning how to make this work.
- ☐ I'm glad I started now instead of letting it go longer.
- ☐ I'm becoming more successful each day.
- ☐ I'm very capable of staying on my program.
- ☐ This time I'm choosing to stay successful.



Go back to what worked

Use this worksheet to recall everything that helped you stay on your program when you were being successful.

When things were really working for me on my program, what was helping the most?

How did I protect myself from eating the wrong foods?

How did I make my exercise plan work?

What helped me drink enough fluids?

Do I need to clean out my cupboards or my refrigerator?

_____ Yes _____ No

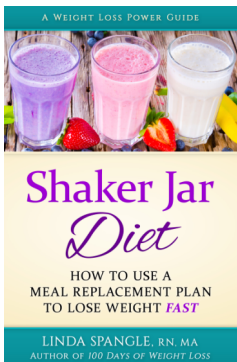
What times worked best for taking my products or having my meal?

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____

What kind of support do I need? Who can I ask for support?

What people or social situations do I need to avoid for awhile?

What are the keys to my long-term success?



When you finish the worksheet, look for ways to build these strategies into your current plan and use them to give back your power.

Remember your goals

Focus on what you *want*, not on what you *don't want*. Picture the outcome you are trying to achieve and stay dedicated to your goals.

- Carry a positive picture

Find a picture of yourself closest to your ideal size. Post it on your refrigerator or carry it in your billfold. Tell yourself daily, “This is what I’m aiming for.”

- Put up a visual reminder.

Hang a favorite outfit or a size smaller pair of jeans where you can see it daily. Use this as an incentive to keep striving toward your goals.

- Imagine feeling healthy

Remind yourself daily that you are moving toward how you want to look and feel.

No Man’s Land

Here are the two primary ways to lose weight safely without harming muscle tissue.

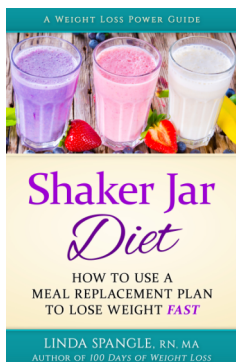
1. Nutritionally balanced meal plan that maintains adequate calorie levels, at least 1200-1500 calories per day.
2. Meal-replacement program or similar plan that provides an excess protein balance to compensate for the low calorie level.

Between these two options, you risk living in a destructive pattern called “No Man’s Land.” You aren’t taking in enough calories to meet the body’s need but don’t have the protein level of ketosis to protect muscle tissue.

If you are “partly” doing a meal-replacement plan, you can easily slide into this pattern.

No Man’s Land decreases the amount of weight loss as well as causing hunger, fatigue and food cravings. The longer you stay in No Man’s Land, the more you will struggle with getting out of it.

Eventually your body may increase its “famine response” conserving itself for survival and no longer giving up any weight. In some people, this may even put the body at risk for becoming more resistant to future weight-loss efforts.



Symptoms of No Man's Land

- Weight loss slow down or stops
- Hunger and fatigue increase
- Food cravings return and become stronger
- Increased difficulty staying on your plan

Don't allow yourself to stay in the No Man's Land trap very long. Not only will you not lose weight, but you will feel very defeated in your efforts. Set a limit of three or four weeks for pushing your efforts to make program work.

Don't give up on yourself!

If you give every possible effort to your program but can't make it work, accept that you need to do something else, at least for right now.

Maybe you can return to the plan in a few weeks or months, and it will work fine. In the meantime, don't give up. Maintain the goal of taking care of yourself and improving your health and your life.

This special report provides support for the book *Shaker Jar Diet* by Linda Spangle.

