

Turn Down the Noise, Turn up the Knowledge - Dissecting Commercial Weight-loss Plans

OAC National Convention
October 25-28 2012
Stephanie Deivert, RD, LDN



Commercial Weight-Loss Plans

- Weight Watchers®
- Jenny Craig®
- LA Weight Loss®
- Nutrisystem®



Weight Watchers®

- Available at <http://www.weightwatchers.com>



The Overview



- Healthy choices – based on the Weight Watchers® Points system
- Power foods - foods defined by Weight Watchers® as filling and healthy choices for you to rely on if you do not want to keep track of points
- No required or prepackaged foods - just a “simple” easy to follow plan
- Fitness goal – to help obtain and maintain weight loss goals
- Various ways of support throughout the program

Weight Watchers® The Plan

PointsPlus 2012

- Every food has a **PointsPlus** value
 - Based on protein, carbs, fat, and fiber
 - Wraps it all up into one easy-to-use, number
 - You get a daily personalized **PointsPlus** Target
 - You also get extra “weekly” points to spend

Fitness Goals

- Give you “extra points” to spend throughout the day
- Based on:
 - Height, weight, gender
 - Intensity of exercise
 - Type of exercise



How to Figure Out Points

- Given a Weight Watchers® calculator or can use calculator online
- Subscribers can use etools to look up and count daily points
- etools has over 40,000 food point values
- Complete book – 20,000 food point values
- Dining Out Companion – from A-Z food point values
- Weight Watchers® does have a line of food that you can purchase

The screenshot shows a Firefox browser window displaying the Weight Watchers website. The address bar shows the URL: www.weightwatchers.com/PointPlusValues. The page features a navigation menu with links for Home, Find Us On (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube), Find a Meeting, Help, LOGIN, and LOG IN. A search bar is located below the navigation menu.

The main content area includes a sidebar on the left with sections for "Explore our site", "Ready to start?", "Find a meeting", "Weight Watchers Online", and "Free E-mail Newsletter". The main content area contains a message about a shortage of PointsPlus Calculators and a calculator interface titled "PointsPlus Values".

The calculator interface shows the following values:

Component	Value
Fat (g)	4
Carbohydrates (g)	12
Protein (g)	2
Fiber (g)	3
Result	2

Below the calculator, there is a note: "PointsPlus value not what you expected?".

At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with links for "About Us", "Advertise", "Press Room", "Careers", "Site Map", "Contact Us", "Help", "Affiliate Program", "System Requirements", "Terms & Conditions", and "Privacy".

Simply Filling



- Choose the defined green triangle foods
- Instead of keeping track of the points
- These foods typically are higher protein, fiber and water foods that would help you to feel more full
 - Greek yogurt
 - Fat free milk
 - Fruits
 - Vegetables
 - Soups

Two Options

- Weight Watchers® Meetings
 - Weekly – educational topic
 - Run by success stories of Weight Watchers
 - Confidential weigh ins
 - Supportive staff
 - You do not have to talk
- Online
 - PointsPlus® instruction online
 - Use online tools
 - Track food, exercise
 - Look up recipes - 3500
 - Interactive cooking help
 - Chart your progress
 - Look up workouts
 - Cheat Sheets
 - Recipe builder for lightening up your favorite recipes

Cost



Weight Watchers® Meetings

- Depends on Location
 - 35\$ to join
 - 13\$ per week
 - OR 10 week package 124\$

Online

Standard Monthly Plan

- \$48.90 for the first month
- \$18.95 each additional month

Lifetime members are free, must meet and maintain weight loss goal for 6 weeks and maintain within 10 lbs at monthly weight checks

Pros



- Overall a very sound diet, exercise and behavior plan
- Widely available (sites or online)
- Incorporates behavior, exercise, nutrition and education
- No commitments, you pay as you go
- No special foods, teaches healthy eating and is personalized
- Children between the ages of 10-17 need a doctor's note with a goal weight
- Offers a great deal of Weight Watchers® professional as well as peer support



Jenny Craig ® Overview

- Personalized consultations (in-center or online)
 - With Jenny Craig ® certified consultants
- Activity plans
- Tools for success
- Meal plans, prepackaged foods
 - Based on calories
 - Use gender, height, weight, age and activity for estimations
 - Meal plans range from 1200-2400 calories



Program Choices

- Jenny Set Go – trial program (10-12 weeks)
- Premium Success – 1 year program with maintenance factor, weaned off of Jenny Cuisine ® and on to real foods
- Metabolic Max – Premium Success + Body Media ® Arm Band and access for 6 months

The Diet

- Can choose from pre-planned menus or personalized (of the Jenny Cuisine®) menus with your consultant
- Meals purchased initially are breakfast, lunch and dinner plus 1 snack or dessert
 - For the premium and metabolic max programs you are weaned from the Jenny foods to all regular foods starting around 6 months
 - Meals do not include fruit, vegetable, low fat dairy but these are incorporated into the meal plan

The Theory

- Teaches portions with pre-packaged foods, then wean to prepared food in correct portions
- Teaches the Volumetrics® Approach
 - Feeling full on fewer calories by choosing foods higher in water, fiber and protein and lower in fat
 - Mixing non-starchy vegetables into a pasta dish will lower the calorie density without decreasing the portion
 - Lean meats over higher-fat meats or drinking two cups of fat-free milk for the same calories as one cup of whole

Volumetrics © Barbara Rolls, PhD, professor of nutritional sciences at Pennsylvania State University



Jenny Craig ® Support

- **One on one consultations**
 - As often as you want
 - Weight checks 1 time per week; measurements taken 1 time per month
- **Community support** – community forums and blogs with information and support
- **Online tracking tools** - menu planner, activity tracker, online journal and progress tracker, guide to nutrition labels, dining out guide, educational videos, tips and strategy guides
- **Personalized workout ideas**



Jenny Craig ® Cost

- Jenny-Set-Go – \$30, for 12 weeks plus \$12-18 per day for the cost of food (\$360-540 per month)
- Premium Success – \$499 for 1 year plus \$12-18 per day for the cost of food
 - They often run specials for \$100 off
 - Some locations will give half of your money back if you meet and maintain your goal for 1 year
 - \$49 per year after your first year
- Metabolic Max - \$599 for 1 year plus \$12-18 per day for the cost of food
 - Body Media ® Core Armband plus 6 months of access = \$160



Pros

- One on one counseling approach (online or in center)
- Easy planned menus with convenient pre-prepared foods
- Longer programs wean on to regular food
- Widely available, if not in center than online
- Online support message boards and blogs as well as tools
- Incorporates behavior, exercise, support, nutrition and education
- Based on portion sizes, calories, and Volumetrics® overall very sound diet and education
- Will counsel “healthy” children ages 14-18 with parental signature



Cons

- Cost (you could easily spend up to \$3000 just in Jenny Cuisine alone® for one person for the year) assuming you are weaned off around 6 months
- Can not incorporate special diets, allergies etc.
- May not work well if you have to cook for the family
- May have trouble truly “learning” if you are relying on prepackaged foods
- Could make dining out or socializing difficult due to the reliance on prepackaged foods
- Lacks face to face support from others going through the program

LA Weight Loss ®

- Available at <http://www.laweightloss.com>



LA Weight Loss ® - Overview

- Based on an LA-Exchange system (similar to the concept of the diabetic exchange system)
- Uses weight and height to give you meal plan
- Focuses on food groups and portions and eating a “LA-Balanced Diet”
- No ‘prepackaged foods’ but does incorporate 2 bars into daily meal plans

LA Weight Loss: Options

- In-Center or At-Home programs
 - Only about 40 centers open now mostly in PA, DE and NJ
 - At home, you can speak with or CHAT with a counselor every day except Sundays
 - They recommend you call weekly to monthly for check-ins and weights, they will also review your food diary
- LA-Advantage
- LA-Drive
- LA-Express

LA Advantage Includes

- A 2-part LA Weight Loss Menu Plan
 - Rapid Results – for the first 20 lbs. (more strict eating plan)
 - LA My Way Menu Plan – gives more food choices, and just gives a guide of how many exchanges of each food to eat each day
 - For example: for 150 lb. weight loss goal 1 day would be
 - 2 protein, 2 starch, 3 veg, 1 fruit, 1 fat, 1 dairy, 3 extras and 2 bars
- Flexible Meal Combos - pre made guide, developed by dietitians, that tells you how many servings you should have with each meal based on LA's recommendations

LA-Advantage

- Monthly Diary- a food diary with the LA exchanges in them
- Takeoff Juice - recommend starting the diet with a 2 day juice cleanse and for 2 days every 14 days
- LA Lites - Nutrition Bars in 11 flavors (2 incorporated into your daily meal plans)
- Weight Loss Tools & Support –program guide and counseling
 - They do have some recipes online and recipes of the month
 - All recipes are broken down for LA exchanges

LA-Drive

- LA-Advantage products plus
- LA Metabolic MultiSystem: a multivitamin, mineral, and herb combination
- LA PlateauBreaker- a strict 5 day diet plan, “skinny sticks” that you put into your water 3 x per day, LA Lites, and everything else you need for the plan
- Shopping List-a note pad with only foods allowed on your diet

LA-Express

- LA-Drive products plus
- SnackBuster: another vitamin “with chromium for healthy glucose metabolism”
- SlimDown Powder: A meal replacement, it counts as 1 LA-Starch exchange and 1 LA-Protein exchange
- LA Shaker Bottle: Holds up to 20 oz. (600ml) of liquid. BPA free
- The Free-to-Live™ Lifestyle Guide: Weight loss tips on exercise, stress, dining out, dealing with pressures in dieting

LA Weight Loss ® - Products

- Helpful items available for purchase:
 - 7 cookbooks
 - Food Scale
 - The Right Portions Plate
 - Portion Control Kit
 - Various food and supplements



Cost

- In-clinic counseling is \$9.95 per week
- At home customers do not have an additional charge for phone or computer chat services
- Other products sold individually



Costs

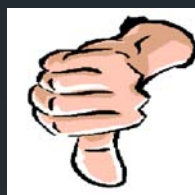
- LA-Advantage –
 - \$149.95 on auto shipment (you can cancel after 2 months with no additional fees)
 - \$199.95 for single shipment
- LA-Drive –
 - \$249.95 on auto shipment
 - \$299.95 for single shipment
- LA-Express –
 - \$349.95 on auto shipment
 - \$399.95 for a single shipment





Pros

- Flexible with foods and dining out
- Teaches portions and incorporates all food groups
- Teaches menu planning, cooking methods
- Counselors do have dietitians on staff to call for support
- Parents can purchase products for children 13 yrs or older
- Simple system to follow if you are measuring portions
 - Check Box System
- Support available – chat rooms, tools available for purchase



Cons

- Cost
- Little component of exercise
- In center is not available in most states
- You are a little more on your own unless you are actively seeking guidance
- Some products or claims seem questionable or gimmicky
- Is very carb/sugar weary
 - “Too many sugars in carrots”

Nutrisystem®

- Available at www.nutrisystem.com

The logo for Nutrisystem, featuring the word "Nutrisystem" in a sans-serif font with a small green leaf icon above the letter 'i'.

Nutrisystem® Overview

- Prepackaged meals delivered to your home
 - 140 meals to choose from
 - You add fruits, vegetables and dairy
- Based on calories
 - Women's meal plans average around 1200-1300 calories
 - Men's meal plans average around 1400-1500 calories
- Incorporates Glycemic Index
 - The entrées themselves are tested
- Balanced meal plans
 - 50-55% carbohydrate, 20% protein, 20-25% fat

Nutrisystem ®

- Has pre-made meal plans as well as personalized meal plans
 - Pay more for personalizing your meal plan
 - Access to a counselor or dietitian for personalization
 - Have pre-made meal plans up to 2200 calories
 - Breakfast meal options – 60-210 calories
 - Lunch meal options – 100-250 calories
 - Dinner meal options – 80-280 calories
 - Snack/dessert options – 60-170 calories
- Meal plans are 3 meals per day, 3 snacks
 - Includes 3 prepackaged meals and 1 snack/dessert option per day

Nutrisystem ® Grocery Guide

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Smart Carbs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low GI foods ▪ Starchy vegetables, whole grain rice or bread, fruit ▪ Power Fuels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Protein foods or fats from nuts ▪ Eggs, lean meat, string cheese, fish, fat free milk, light yogurt | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vegetables <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Essentially all of the non-starchy vegetables ▪ Extras <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Free foods ▪ Sugar free gelatin, spices/seasoning, broths, fat free dressings, calorie free beverages |
|--|---|

Daily Planner

- A guide for each meal and snack
- Check them off as you go throughout the day
- Sample
 - Dinner Entrée (prepackaged)
 - Smart Carb
 - Vegetable
 - If you are still hungry you can eat more vegetables

date: / /

breakfast	Food/Time Eaten
<input type="checkbox"/> Nutrisystem® Breakfast Entrée	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Dairy or Protein	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Fruit	_____

morning snack	Food/Time Eaten
<input type="checkbox"/> Dairy or Protein	_____

lunch	Food/Time Eaten
<input type="checkbox"/> Nutrisystem® Lunch Entrée	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Vegetable	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Vegetable	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Carbohydrate	_____
<i>with 2 tbsp. fat free dressing, if desired</i>	

afternoon snack	Food/Time Eaten
<input type="checkbox"/> Dairy or Protein	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Fruit	_____

dinner	Food/Time Eaten
<input type="checkbox"/> Nutrisystem® Dinner Entrée	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Fruit or Vegetable	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Vegetable	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Vegetable	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Carbohydrate	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Fat	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Fat	_____
<i>with 2 tbsp. fat free dressing, if desired</i>	

dessert	Food/Time Eaten
<input type="checkbox"/> Nutrisystem® Dessert Entrée	_____

Total Glasses of Water: _____ (recommend 6-8 eight as glasses daily)
 Physical Activity: _____ Minutes: _____
 Weight: _____

Nutrisystem Success ®

- Free grocery guide and dining out guide
- Interactive online and mobile tools and trackers
- Counselors and registered dietitians are available 7 days per week, 7 am –midnight
- Specialized RD's and RN's
- Message boards, blogs and chat rooms
- Exercise - My Daily 3 fitness plan
 - Recommends many different exercise or activity options
 - 10 minutes, 3 times per day

Who can't do Nutrisystem®?

- Vegan or gluten free
- Soy, peanut or latex allergies
- Does not recommend plan to those needing to be on a sodium restricted diet, like those with CHF or CKD
- Need physician approval on certain medications
- Men weighing over 450 lbs and women weighing over 400 lbs need physician approval, and monthly doctors visits and individualized meal plans can be created

Specialized Nutrisystem®

Nutrisystem® D

- Same plan, plus Omega 3 supplement
- Eliminated some menu items
- Educational materials are directed towards diabetes
- Access to certified diabetes educators
- Research shows a 0.73% reduction in A1c over 6 months

Nutrisystem® Silver®

- Focus on heart health by incorporating an omega-3 supplement
- 65 yrs + or those 51 yrs + *with* conservative weight loss goals
- Women additionally receive a calcium plus vitamin D supplement to support bone health

Specialized Nutrisystem®

Nutrisystem® Vegetarian

- 80 Nutrisystem food items are meat-free
- Lacto-ovo vegetarian diet

Nutrisystem for Teens (NS4T)

- ages of 14-17
- Children need to be above 85th percentile and have doctors prescription
- 1400 calories per day for girls
- 1700 calories per day for boys
- meets age-appropriate nutritional recommendations

Transition and Maintenance Programs

▪ Weekends on Your Own

- 5 days of entrees and snacks/desserts per week
- At Home Tool Kit, including portion-control tools (e.g., plating guide and graduate serving utensils), cookbook, eating out guide

▪ Dinners on Your Own

- Breakfast and lunch entrees plus snacks/desserts
- At-Home Tool Kit

Transition and Maintenance Programs

- **Just Lunches and Snacks**
 - Lunch entrees and snacks/desserts
 - The meal planner and At-Home Tool Kit
- **Success A La Carte**
 - For an annual fee 50\$ per year
 - Select what you want
 - Receive free shipping and a 20% discount on all A La Carte orders

Cost



- Basic – \$8.21 per day or \$230 per month with auto delivery
 - Pre-selected foods
 - Does not include counseling, but it can be purchased separately
 - Includes daily tracker and resource guide, VIP access to online tools
- Core - \$8.75 per day or \$245 per month with auto delivery
 - Customization of foods
 - Includes counseling
- Select - \$10.71 per day or \$300 per month with auto delivery
 - Includes Fresh-Frozen food selections (taste better)

Cost



- Month to Month
 - You do not receive access to counselors, dietitians or specialist
 - 40% more expensive
 - You do not receive full access to online tools
- Remember this cost is providing about 60% of calories per day
 - Higher caloric needs, would provide less % of calories per day
 - You are also paying for the additional 40% or more of calories in the grocery store

Pros



- One on one counseling approach widely available (online or over the phone)
- Access to specialist and dietitians
- Easy menu plans and convenient pre-prepared meals/snacks
- Has maintenance components
- Incorporates behavior, exercise, support, nutrition and education
- Online support message boards, blogs, tools, trackers
- Based on portion sizes, calories, and Glycemic Index
 - Overall very sound diet
 - Although GI has not been shown to be helpful when combining foods
- Can accommodate many different ages and health conditions



Cons

- Cost (\$2700-\$3600) per year + grocery
- A little lacking on exercise, but great for beginners
- Mostly expects maintenance plans to somehow continue to incorporate their foods
- Can not accommodate all diets, allergies etc.
- No face to face interaction available
- May not work well if you have to cook for the family
- May have trouble truly “learning” if you are relying on prepackaged foods
- Could make dining out or socializing difficult due to the reliance on prepackaged foods

Research

- “Little evidence supports the efficacy of major commercial and organized self help weight loss programs”
 - [Tsai AG, Wadden TA. Systematic review: an evaluation of major commercial weight loss programs in the United States. Ann Intern Med. 2005 Jan 4;142\(1\):56-66.](#)
- Many studies have been done
 - Very significant weight loss over a 6 month period for most commercial weight loss programs
 - Longer studies (2 years) , Weight Watchers ® has done the best with a 3.2% weight loss
- These studies have not been done on the “new” programs

Research

- What does make a difference across the board is whether an individual sticks to the plan
- Sticking to a diet is more important than the type of diet
- Other studies show that the more contact available, (one on one or telephone) the better people do
- Group contact/counseling has been shown to have more significant weight loss

[JAMA. 2010 Oct 27;304\(16\):1803-10.](#)

[Effect of a free prepared meal and incentivized weight loss program on weight loss and weight loss maintenance in obese and overweight women: a randomized controlled trial.](#)
[Rock CL, Flatt SW, Sherwood NE, Karanja N, Pakiz B, Thomson CA.](#)

JennyCraig ® and NutriSystem ® Taste Off

- **Diet taste-off: Jenny Craig edges out rival Nutrisystem**
 - Consumer Reports, January 2011
- "Of the 59 items we tasted in our main round of tests, only five scored Very Good—all from Jenny Craig. Of the 10 items we deemed Fair, eight were from Nutrisystem. Overall, the foods from Jenny Craig did slightly better than Nutrisystem's."





Words of advice

- You need to choose a program that will work for you, your lifestyle, your budget and your goals
- Any program will work if you stick to it
 - Pick something that you will stick to long term
 - Try to pick something that has group support
- Be realistic with your expectations
 - 1-2 pounds per week is a safe weight loss
- Try using a combination
- Be cautious of “magic pills or foods” as well as “bad foods”

Thank You

“Nothing is IMPOSSIBLE,
the word itself says
I’M POSSIBLE”!!

-Audrey Hepburn