
COURSE RESOURCE

YOUR FIRST 12 WEEKS ON A GLP-1 - WHAT TO EXPECT

Client handout | Working With GLP-1 Clients for Personal Trainers

Starting a GLP-1 medication is a big change, and the first three months are when your body does most of its adjusting. This handout walks you through what tends to happen week by week, what you can do to feel your best, and the signs that mean you should check in with the doctor who prescribed it. Nothing here replaces your medical team - it's here so you know what's normal and where our training work fits in.

SCOPE OF PRACTICE

I'm your trainer, not your doctor. I can coach your workouts, help you build steady eating habits, and track your progress with you. I can't diagnose anything, change your dose, or tell you to start or stop medication. Anything about the medication itself - side effects, dosing, how you're feeling health-wise - goes to your prescriber. My job is to notice, write it down, and point you to the right person.

HOW APPETITE AND ENERGY USUALLY SHIFT

The most common early change is that you simply feel less hungry. Meals fill you up faster, cravings quiet down, and you may forget to eat. That's the medication doing its job - but it also means you have to be a bit more deliberate about getting enough of the right foods, especially protein.

- Weeks 1-4: Appetite often drops noticeably. You may feel full after a few bites and less interested in snacking.
- Weeks 4-8: Many people find a rhythm - smaller meals feel natural, and early side effects often settle. Energy can dip if you're under-eating, so this is when protein and fluids matter most.
- Weeks 8-12: Things tend to feel more predictable. If your dose steps up during this window, you may notice appetite and side effects shift again for a few days - that's common.

Energy is the one to watch. Low energy usually means you're not eating or drinking enough, not that anything is wrong. Tell me if your workouts suddenly feel much harder - we can adjust, and it may be worth mentioning to your prescriber too.

WHY PROTEIN AND RESISTANCE TRAINING MATTER RIGHT NOW

WHY IT MATTERS

When you lose weight quickly, some of what comes off can be muscle, not just fat. Muscle is what keeps you strong, keeps your metabolism up, and keeps you moving well as you get older. The two best tools for holding onto it are eating enough protein and lifting weights. This is the single most important idea in this handout.

Because you're eating less overall, protein has to become a priority rather than an afterthought. A simple habit: build each meal around a protein source first, then add the rest.

- Aim to include a palm-sized portion of protein at every meal - eggs, Greek yogurt, chicken, fish, tofu, beans, or a protein shake if food feels like too much.
- If a full meal feels like a lot, a protein shake or yogurt is an easy way to hit your target without forcing a big plate.
- Spread protein across the day rather than saving it for one meal - your body uses it better that way.

On the training side, resistance work is the priority. Here's the kind of plan we'll build together:

Focus	What it looks like	How often
Full-body strength	6-8 basic moves (squat, hinge, push, pull, carry) - 2-3 sets of 8-12 reps	2-3 days per week
Progression	Add a little weight or 1-2 reps when the last set feels manageable	Gradually, week to week
Movement / cardio	Walking or easy cardio you enjoy	Most days, as energy allows

We start lighter than you might expect and build up. Consistency beats intensity here - showing up twice a week and getting a little stronger each session protects your muscle far better than the occasional hard workout.

COMMON SIDE EFFECTS AND SIMPLE WAYS TO COPE

Most early side effects involve the stomach and tend to ease over the first weeks, especially between dose changes. These self-care ideas are general comfort tips, not medical treatment - if anything is severe or won't settle, contact your prescriber.

You might feel	Simple things that often help
Nausea	Eat smaller, slower meals; go easy on greasy or very rich foods; keep bland options handy; sip fluids
Constipation	More water, more fibre (fruit, veg, whole grains), and daily walking
Feeling full very fast	Smaller plates, stop when comfortable, protein first
Low energy / lightheadedness	Check you're eating and drinking enough; don't skip meals even if you're not hungry
Heartburn or reflux	Avoid lying down right after eating; smaller meals

KEY SIGNAL

Not being hungry is normal. Not eating for a day, feeling dizzy at rest, or being unable to keep fluids down is not - flag those to me and your prescriber. Fuel is what powers both your recovery and your workouts.

WHAT 'GOOD PROGRESS' REALLY LOOKS LIKE

The scale is only one number, and it bounces around day to day for reasons that have nothing to do with fat loss (water, food timing, sleep, hormones). If you only watch the scale, you'll miss most of the wins. Here's what we'll actually track together:

- Strength: are you lifting a bit more, or getting more reps, than a few weeks ago?
- How clothes fit and how you look in the mirror - often changes before the scale does.
- Energy, sleep, and mood across the week.
- Everyday tasks - stairs, carrying groceries, getting off the floor - feeling easier.
- Habits holding steady: protein at meals, training sessions completed, water, steps.
- Waist measurement and progress photos every few weeks (optional, and totally your call).

A steady, gradual pace is the goal. Losing weight slowly while keeping your strength up is a much better outcome than a fast drop that leaves you weak and tired. If progress ever stalls,

that's normal and something we adjust - not a failure.

WHEN TO CALL YOUR DOCTOR

You know your body best. Reach out to the prescriber or medical team - not me - if you notice any of the following. When in doubt, call them; that's exactly what they're there for.

- Severe or lasting stomach pain, especially if it spreads to your back.
- Vomiting or diarrhea that won't stop, or you can't keep fluids down.
- Signs of dehydration - very dark urine, dizziness, a racing heart.
- Any allergic-type reaction: swelling, trouble breathing, a spreading rash.
- Rapid, unexpected weight loss, or feeling too weak to do your normal day.
- Anything new that worries you - trust your gut and ask.

EVIDENCE NOTE

The guidance here reflects widely accepted principles for training and nutrition during rapid weight loss - prioritising protein and resistance training to protect muscle. It's kept general on purpose. Our course team will attach verified, up-to-date citations; this handout intentionally avoids specific statistics or study claims.

HOW WE'LL WORK TOGETHER

Bring how you're feeling to each session - appetite, energy, side effects, and any doctor's notes. I'll keep a simple log so we can adjust your training and habits as your body changes. My role is to help you come out of these 12 weeks stronger, not just lighter. Recognise, document, refer: if something's outside my lane, I'll say so and point you to your medical team every time.