SAADI AKADEEMIA

Free guide · Weight

What is keeping your weight from changing?

10 questions about the biological factors behind your weight.

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SELF-ASSESSMENT

What is keeping your weight from changing?

Weight does not depend on calories alone. This test helps you see whether insulin, sleep, stress or muscle mass may be having an effect.

For each question, choose one answer that best describes you over the past month. Write down the points and add them up at the end. This takes about 5 minutes.

Question	0 points	1 point	2 points
1. Have you tried several diets and regained the weight?	☐ No	☐ Once	☐ Several times
2. Do you eat protein at every meal (fish, meat, eggs, legumes, quark)?	☐ Yes	☐ Sometimes	☐ Rarely
3. How many times a week do you do strength training?	☐ 2 or more	☐ 1	☐ Never
4. How many hours do you usually sleep at night?	☐ 7–9	☐ 6–7	☐ Less than 6
5. Do you eat late in the evening or snack after dinner?	☐ Rarely	☐ Sometimes	☐ Often
6. How would you rate your daily stress?	☐ Low	☐ Moderate	☐ High
7. Do you drink sugary drinks or juice?	☐ Hardly ever	☐ A couple of times a week	☐ Every day
8. Is your waist circumference more than half your height?	☐ No	☐ Don't know	☐ Yes
9. Do you take medications that may affect your weight (e.g. some antidepressants, corticosteroids)?	☐ No	☐ Don't know	☐ Yes
10. Has your weight increased after a life change (pregnancy, menopause, a job change)?	☐ No	☐ Don't know	☐ Yes

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RESULT

What your score indicates

Add up the points for all your answers. This test is not a diagnosis—it helps you identify which areas may need attention and what to discuss with your doctor.

Points	What this generally means
0–6	There does not appear to be a major biological obstacle. Consistency is your strength.
7–13	Several factors are working against you. Start with 1–2 areas where you scored 2 points.
14–20	There may be a metabolic reason behind your weight. Discuss tests (HOMA-IR, TSH, HbA1c) with your family doctor.

If you have symptoms that interfere with everyday life, or you take medication, discuss your result with your family doctor. The Academy is an educational platform and does not provide personalised medical advice.

Read the article again: saadiacademy.ee/akadeemia/teemad/ulekaal

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HOW IT WORKS

Why the body defends its weight

When you eat less over a prolonged period, your body adapts: resting energy expenditure may decrease, the hunger hormone ghrelin rises, and the satiety hormone leptin falls. This is not weakness, but biology. That is why weight often returns after a strict diet.

Factor	How it affects weight	What you can do
Sleep	Lack of sleep increases hunger and cravings for sweet foods.	7–9 hours, with a consistent sleep schedule.
Stress	Cortisol promotes fat accumulation around the abdomen.	Daily moments of rest and outdoor physical activity.
Muscle mass	Muscle uses energy even at rest.	Strength training 2–3 times a week, with adequate protein.
Insulin	High insulin levels may make it harder to use fat for energy.	Food quality and physical activity after meals.
Medications, hormones	Some medications and life stages affect weight.	Discuss this with your doctor – do not stop taking medication on your own.

Two scientific perspectives

One school of thought emphasises energy balance, while another emphasises the role of hormones and insulin. Both are supported by strong research. The truth probably lies somewhere between them, and the practical steps are the same.

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A PRACTICAL PLAN

4 weeks without a strict diet

Week	Focus	What to do
1	Protein at every meal	Add a palm-sized portion of protein to every meal. This increases satiety and protects your muscles.
2	Drinks and snacks	Replace sugary drinks and juices with water, and plan 3 meals without constant snacking.
3	Strength and steps	2 strength-training sessions a week and daily walking. Increase your step count gradually.
4	Evening routine	Eat dinner earlier, put screens away before sleep, and maintain a consistent bedtime.

Measure more than just weight

- Waist circumference at navel level, measured in the morning as you breathe out – aim for less than half your height.
- Body composition (fat % and muscle mass) – shows whether you are losing fat or muscle.
- How you feel: energy, sleep, hunger – these often change before your weight does.

The Ainevahetuse Kood course helps you identify what is keeping your weight from changing over 8 weeks: saadiacademy.ee/kursused

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TESTS

If your weight is not dropping – what to discuss with your doctor

Marker	Why It Matters
TSH (FT4 if needed)	An underactive thyroid slows metabolism.
Fasting glucose, insulin, HOMA-IR	Insulin resistance makes weight loss more difficult.
HbA1c	Long-term blood glucose level.
Lipids	Triglycerides and HDL reflect metabolism.
Ferritin, B12, vitamin D	Deficiency may cause fatigue and reduce physical activity.
Hormone testing in women, if needed	PCOS and menopause affect weight and insulin.

There is no scientific consensus on optimal ranges – they are based on individual studies. The laboratory's reference ranges apply.

New weight-loss medications are a decision for a doctor. They do not replace muscle mass, sleep or food quality – strength training and protein are especially important while taking medication, to lose fat rather than muscle.

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WORKSHEET

Myths and a 7-day tracking sheet

Myth	What science says
“Eat less, move more – and that’s all there is to it.”	The body adapts; sleep, stress and hormones affect the outcome.
“Breakfast is essential.”	What matters is food quality and your own rhythm, not the time of day.
“Cardio is the best fat burner.”	Strength training protects muscles and supports metabolism over the long term.
“Rapid weight loss is better.”	Rapid weight loss may also lead to loss of muscle mass.

My week

Dayti me	Protein at every meal	Steps / exercise	Sleep (h)	Stress (0–3)
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				

The Dr Saadi Club features a new topic, protocol and live broadcast every month: saadiacademy.ee/klubi

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WHAT NEXT

Explore the topic in more depth at the Academy

We discuss weight and metabolism in depth in the Ainevahetuse Kood course and the Dr Saadi Club.

Step	What it is	Where to find it
Free resources	Practical guides with worksheets: blood sugar, sleep, the vagus nerve, inflammation, lab tests.	/tasuta-materjalid
Webinars	One topic at a time, with questions and answers.	/veebinarid
Dr Saadi Club	A video lecture, a protocol and a live stream every month. A Facebook community.	/klubi
Ainevahetuse Kood	An 8-week core course for understanding metabolism and developing a daily plan.	/kursused
Book	“Veresuhkru ohtlikud saladused” (published by Varrak).	varrak.ee

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