

Dieting through operant conditioning

Psychology



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Dieting Through Operant Conditioning Dieting is a common challenge for people who wanted to lose weight due to the fact that it involves not only the process of eating itself but the behaviors and attitude surrounding this activity. Due to this fact, it had been a known knowledge for the past few years that psychological affective measures can be used to effectively change the eating habits of people. When my roommate asked me to help devise a weight loss program to be able to increase his chances in being accepted in the football team, the operant conditioning was considered as a psychological process that can be applied.

Operant conditioning is a process by which behavior can be modified, changed or developed through the application of positive or negative reinforcement/s (Gerrig 159). In the case of food intake or eating behavior, positive reinforcement can be an enjoyable activity. For the objective of creating a weight loss program for a roommate, it is important to know first his goals and his eating behavior. This is the primary step in the program, the person needs to record or write in a food journal the target weight and the different foods he regularly eats. Since the program would need to be in a span of 1 month, it is important to write the amount and types of food he is eating and the liquid he is drinking in the week before that. It is also important to take note of the baseline information such as the present weight to serve as a reference.

The information for the preliminary week will be used to plan for the month-long program. For example, it was observed that due to his active lifestyle and busy schedule, he often eat junk foods including take out hamburgers and fries, it is important to consider that he need not stop is altogether. This can be attributed to the fact that habits are not easily thrown or stopped. In <https://assignbuster.com/dieting-through-operant-conditioning/>

this case, behavior in eating is the main target. Operant conditioning had been considered effective since the changes are associated with reinforcements. This can be undertaken through reward system. In the first week, one snack of junk food should be eliminated and as a reward he is allowed to do one fun activity for the day. In case he fails to do the challenge, he should strictly follow the consequence. There are important points to remember though. This diet should be self-observed which means that he himself should take down notes and honestly follow it. Since, he asked for my help I can check on it but to be able for him to succeed, he needs to have self-discipline. Also, it is important to remind him that food cannot be a reward or reinforcement. For the following week, since there are fewer snacks, another extra food intake can be removed. But in case of people who only eat 1 snack a day, meals can be the target for improvement on the second week. Thus, the second week can be a chance to change into a healthy breakfast. The following weeks then, little changes can be undertaken. One goal should be set every week. Habit is built by doing the said goal every day for that week.

The end of the month can be the determination of the result through the weight although record of weight loss every week and the checking of the food journal can also be done on a weekly basis. It is also important to put if a reward was achieved on a daily basis.

Work Cited

Gerrig, Richard J. Psychology and Life. Pearson Education, 2012. Print.