

Self Your SELF Challenge

The April 2010 issue of *Self* magazine featured a photo of Girls4Sport's boy briefs in Bloomin' Dots (pictured on the far right) in a featured section encouraging women to get in shape for spring.



Your SELF Challenge

Slip up and still slim down!



Falling off? Your weight fate doesn't hang in the balance.

So you skip a workout (but not a chocolate-chunk cookie) on occasion—no worries! With the Challenge, you can cheat and *still* score your dream body. “The secret is learning to manage those mistakes,” says Michael Vallis, Ph.D., associate professor of psychiatry at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Years of motivation research have led Vallis to sort the slipups most of us fall prey to into three categories. Figure out your pitfall and get back on track by asking yourself...

Why did I stray from the Challenge?

No idea!
intended to work out, but it didn't happen.

What's going on All of us days when we blow off exercising or fail to eat fully. Chalk it up to low energy, a misalignment of planets, whatever. Not having a good reason for a faux pas means it's just likely a fluke. Your motivation drive is still alive. **What to do** Forgive yourself. Accepting, even if you're sure that you'll have to repeat failing once again, really being a failure could lead to your motivation going altogether. Vallis says to get the day off; then get back on the horse!

Bad choice.
Drinking sounded better than cardio!

What's going on A tendency toward impulsive flubs can seem tough to overcome. Heck, it takes only a second to order the fudge cake instead of the fruit plate! In truth, that instant is your opportunity for a save: Recognizing an urge gives you the chance to decide to resist it, Vallis says. **What to do** The next time you're tempted, ask, Will I be pleased with this choice in an hour? The reality check may set you straight. (If not, use that moment to devise a damage-control plan: Hit happy hour, but pop in a pilates DVD before bed.)

I truly wanted to exercise, but I had to work late.

What's going on Hey, life gets in the way sometimes. No blame! The key is to acknowledge patterns. (Impromptu meetings always hijack your lunch hour.) “It's really a positive when the roadblock is that clear-cut,” Vallis says, because it means you can easily find a work-around. **What to do** Be honest about how much of your day is under your control and maximize those minutes. Get up a half hour earlier. Make better use of weekends. Brainstorm multiple solutions and try them until one sticks.

Prose is waiting? There's always tomorrow.

Doughnuts! Chow now and lament the sugar bomb later?

Sick kid. Yoga is a no-go. I'll take the Tuesday class instead!