

Likelihood of an Obese Person Achieving Normal Weight within a Year of Starting Bright Line Eating

A recent study published in Journal of American Medical Association (Snook, Hansen, Duke, Finch, Hackney, & Zhang, 2017) found that, while people are getting heavier, the fraction attempting to lose weight is decreasing. They note, “The longer adults live with obesity, the less they may be willing to attempt weight loss, in particular if they had attempted weight loss multiple times without success” (p. 971).

And indeed, the odds of success for an obese person aiming to live at a normal weight have been found to be grim. A recent study published in the *American Journal of Public Health* reported that the annual probability of an obese person (BMI 30—35) attaining a normal weight (BMI < 25) was “1 in 210 for men and 1 in 124 for women” (Fildes, Charlton, Rudisill, Littlejohns, Prevost, & Gulliford, 2015, p. e54). The odds decrease as the starting BMI increases.

Participants of an online Bright Line Eating (BLE) Boot Camp are beating those odds. Bright Line Eating tracks participant weight loss by collecting 10 online surveys during the eight-week Boot Camp. Monthly follow-up surveys continue after the Boot Camp ends. Seven hundred and sixty one (761) women who were obese (BMI ranging from 30 to beyond 45) were tracked for at least one year. The data shows that 19.4% now have successfully achieved a normal BMI, no matter the severity of their obesity at the start.

The Fildes et al. study determined the odds for each BMI classification, so it is useful to compare the probabilities for each obesity category. Compared to the general obese population, what are the odds that, 12 months after the start of the Bright Line Eating Boot Camp, an obese woman will have attained a normal weight? The following table summarizes the results.

Starting Obesity Class (BMI kg/m ²)		Odds of a Woman Reaching a Normal Weight (BMI <25) within 1 Year		BLE Comparison to the 2015 Study Success Rate
		BLE	2015 Study	
30-35	Obesity (Class 1)	1 in 3	1 in 124	41 times more successful
35-40	Obesity (Class 2)	1 in 7	1 in 430	65 times more successful
40-45	Obesity (Class 3)	1 in 22	1 in 677	30 times more successful
>45	Extreme Obesity	1 in 55	1 in 607	11 times more successful
All Obese Categories Combined		1 in 5	1 in 282	55 times more successful

Clearly, the lower the starting BMI, the greater the probability of attaining a normal weight within one year. For the higher obesity classes, it is reasonable to assume that many are still losing weight and have simply not been able to attain a normal BMI within one year. When all obese categories are averaged, the Bright Line Eating cohort was 55 times more successful than the cohort in the Fildes et al. study at attaining a normal BMI within one year.

There were also 27 men in the Bright Line Eating follow-up database who were obese at the start of their BLE Boot Camp and for whom 12-month data were available. Of those 27, 4 attained normal weight within one year, for a success rate of 15%. In comparison, the men in the 2015 study had an overall probability of 0.27% of attaining a normal BMI within one year. A much larger cohort is needed for a meaningful comparison, but from just these preliminary results, obese men completing the Bright Line Eating Boot Camp are 55 times more likely to achieve a normal weight within one year than obese men in the general population.

Note that subjects in the Fildes et al. study were not necessarily trying to lose weight. Their data were obtained from electronic medical records from the UK Clinical Practice Datalink, the world's largest primary care database containing health records of more than 70% of the UK's population. However, research by Snook et al., published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, shows that, in any given year, an average of approximately 60% of overweight or obese women and approximately 40% of overweight or obese men are trying to lose weight.

Hence, if compared only with individuals actively trying to lose weight, it is reasonable to conclude that obese persons doing the Bright Line Eating Boot Camp are in the range of 25-35 times more likely to attain a normal weight within one year than obese persons using any other approach.

References

- Fildes, A., Charlton, J., Rudisill, C., Littlejohns, P., Prevost, A. T., & Gulliford, M. C. (2015). Probability of an obese person attaining normal body weight: Cohort study using electronic health records. *American Journal of Public Health, 105*(9), e54–e59. Retrieved from <http://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2015.302773>
- Snook, K. R., Hansen, A. R., Duke, C. H., Finch, K. C., Hackney, A. A., & Zhang, J. (2017). Change in percentages of adults with overweight or obesity trying to lose weight, 1988-2014. *Journal of American Medical Association, 317*(9), 971–973. doi: 10.1001/jama.2016.20036. Retrieved from <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2608211>