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# MOTHER NATURE DOES HER BEST TO THROW MAXIE OFF HIS CHALLENGE

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*For demonstration only: Maxie Bishop is staying true to his commitment to eat healthy foods, which does not (usually) include Girl Scout cookies.*

Who knew it wouldn't be Christmas or Thanksgiving that threw me off the track, but Mother Nature herself? Austin got cold, very cold, in January and February, and the prolonged freezing temperatures in Austin put the biggest roadblock yet in my path. Or, should I say, I let it be my biggest roadblock.

When I was in nursing school we discussed the effects of immobility on a patient and how the systems are affected by the patient being in bed. We were encouraged to ambulate the patient or get physical therapy started as soon as possible. I was determined my challenge would be done without adding a financial burden on my budget,

so my plan was to go to the neighborhood gym to use the treadmill on these cold days. But the treadmill was broken and I stayed home. Being shut up in the house for just a few days caused me to fall back into my old routine of sitting on the sofa watching western movies. Big mistake.

I maintained my eating habits, eating fresh vegetables and smaller, more frequent meals. But once I went several days without being active, I found that the weight loss came to a standstill. Then I began seeing a slight increase in my weight. But I'm creative, and I justified this increase in my mind by saying I was losing weight too fast anyway. When the office was closed due to weather, I convinced myself that I can't go to work so surely I can't get out of the house for anything. Again I justified my actions by staying inside accomplishing some work on the computer. I could always catch up on my exercise later, I told myself. Big mistake.

So, what have I learned? I learned I have to look at this new way of doing things (smaller meals plus more activity) as a permanent change that I need to do every day. I learned to pay attention to the saying "out of sight out of mind." Here's a tip: If you can't see your workout clothes, you forget about them. Leaving my workout clothes laying out where I can see them motivates me to put them on and get outside. And I have to plan better for cold days – actually for Mother Nature. I hope the cold days are over for this year, but I could see myself saying that it's too hot this summer, or too cold next winter. Because I am planning to still be doing daily activities this time next year, I need to plan how I'm going to exercise when the weather is less than perfect.

Another lesson learned: For about six weeks in January and February, go to Wal-Mart, Walgreens or other stores only very late at night or early in the mornings to keep from being tempted with Girl Scout cookies. How do you say *no* to a Girl Scout? I am particularly at risk because my cousin was famous a few years ago for having sold the most cookies in the U.S. She was even the answer to the question on Jeopardy. I admit that I did buy a few boxes this year and had some cookies. But that's okay. The key is moderation most of the time, and if I told myself I'd never have another Girl Scout cookie, it would never work. So, it's back to daily activity, small and frequent meals and an occasional cookie or two.

Apple, anyone?