

A woman with long, dark brown hair and bangs is smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a sleeveless, grey, mesh-textured top. The background is a softly blurred indoor setting with warm lighting.

foodist

with **Darya Rose, Ph.D.**



Ask Darya: What Should My Relationship with the Bathroom Scale Look Like?

The Foodist Podcast with Darya Rose, Ph.D.

I'm Darya Rose, and this is The Foodist podcast, where real people use real food to get healthy and lose weight without dieting.

Hi everyone, it's Darya Rose here. Today I would like to try something a little different. As you may or may not know, there is a section on [Summer Tomato](#) called "[Ask Darya](#)." It's a place I set up on the blog years and years ago in order to address the types of questions that I get asked often. People have questions, they will want to email me, and while I really want to answer everybody's questions all the time, I get the same emails over and over and over again. I get dozens and dozens and dozens of them, and I can't keep up.

So, the idea was that somebody could ask a question in a public forum, and I can answer it for everyone so everybody can benefit from the answers. Today I got a really thought provoking question, and I felt like I can do a much better job answering in speaking rather than typing out my answer. So, I'm going to try that out today.

Recently Anna asked, "Everything you say about weight really resonates with me. I like the idea of weighing yourself every day, not as a point of shame but as a check-in and a means to hold yourself accountable." I'm going to pause for one minute to explain what she is talking about. Anna is referring to a blog post I wrote last year called, "[The Worst Thing You Can Do If You're Trying to Lose Weight](#)," and the point of that post was the worst thing you can do is equate your body weight with your self-worth. Those should not be the same thing. That's tempting to do that in our society, but you shouldn't. An exercise I offer at the end of the post is to practice weighing yourself daily. It's not to be obsessed with your weight, and not to feel good or bad about yourself; but to actually make it so that the feeling goes away and you can actually see the number on the scale for exactly what it is—a data point and nothing more. It doesn't say anything about your health—maybe a little bit, but it doesn't have the weight we often attribute it to. So, that is what she is referring to in this question.

She goes on to say, "the only thing I keep wondering is about building muscle, and how that affects weight. My weight is relatively low compared to some of my friends, but they are a lot more muscular and have less body fat than I have. I guess my question is what your outlook on that issue is, and how do I approach my relationship with the scale, because I'm trying to lose body fat and build muscle."

Anna, this is a great question and it is really thoughtful, and I really appreciate that. My answer to this is I want to go back to the idea of dissociating what the scale means from your self-worth.

You're absolutely right that the number on the scale can mean a number of things. You can be 135lbs and shredded, have very low body fat, and be in incredibly good shape. Or you could be the exact same height, be 135lbs, and be a little pudgier, a little softer around the edges, and not have a lot of muscle mass. Those look incredibly different. They have incredibly different meanings for health. You'll obviously feel much different in those two body scenarios. To answer your question, as you're trying to get in shape and your body is changing,



there's going to be some variation. Maybe the scale won't be going down all the time, but you will be eating well, and it can be confusing. What I would ask you to do is to remember that the number on the scale is only one data point, and it's not a very informative one. It's useful and it has its uses, but only in a relative context to the rest of your life. You have other measures you can use to help let you know for yourself what the number on your scale means. For example, maybe your jeans start fitting differently. If I'm in better shape, certain parts of my pants will be looser than when I'm in worse shape. They'll be tighter there and looser in other places. Muscle will go down in one area and fat will go up in another area. They tend to not be the same areas. I can tell that no matter what I weigh, if my body shape is changing in a certain way I feel differently than if it's changing in a different way.

The scale is a very useful tool. It can give you an idea of how different things affect you. It can give you an idea of a trajectory you're on, but it doesn't paint the full picture. Always take it with a grain of salt. What I can say for you is this is tricky for you, now, because this is new. When you're new to exploring your health in this way (trying out different habits on for size, seeing if you like them, if they stick, if they work with your lifestyle; trying different types of foods, trying different types of exercises and seeing how they affect you) it's hard to get your bearings at first, because there is a lot going on. There's a lot of emotional change, a lot of physical change, and a lot of habit change. As you get more and more accustomed to this healthstyle, you'll learn to know you. I can't tell you what you should weigh. I can't tell you what size you should wear. I can't tell you what exactly you should eat. You need to test and figure it out. Over time, you will get a sense of your healthstyle that is yours. You will start to know what it means if the scale goes up or down a pound or two, and kind of stays there (it's not a random fluctuation). You'll start to know. That's really your goal. Your goal is to get to the place where you feel very confident that if you eat this way, "I will have this energy level, my skin will be clear. I will be at a weight, body fat and muscular level that I am comfortable with, that I'm happy with and feel good about." If there are changes then, the scale will be more useful for you.

I recommend that you stick with it. I think you're doing great, and it's awesome that you're working on this. Just stick with it, and eventually it will all become clear for you, and less confusing as you continue. Thank you so much for your question. I appreciate it.

Thanks for listening to The Foodist podcast. I'm Darya Rose, and if you're interested in upgrading your own healthstyle—learning how get healthy and lose weight, without dieting, and without all of the suffering that it brings—then head over to my website, [Summer Tomato](#) and sign up for my weekly newsletter. When you sign up, you'll get a free starter kit that will teach you the basics of how to start changing the way you think about food, health, and weight-loss. You'll also get a free chapter from my book, [Foodist](#), called "The Myth of Willpower" that explains the science behind why the "No Pain, No Gain" mantra of the weight-loss industry is the absolute worst approach into getting healthy.

So come over the [Summer Tomato](#) and sign up. We have a fantastic community, and we would love, love, love, to have you. Thanks for listening, and I will see you next time.