

# Weight Gain 4000, the competition

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Some years ago, one of my colleagues mentioned at the lunch table, “I went hiking this weekend, and man, my backpack was so heavy. I weighed it, and it was like 35 pounds. And then I realized, wait a second, I’m overweight by 35 pounds. I’m carrying this heavy backpack *all the time!*” Thus began a collective weight loss competition we called *Weight Gain 4000*, named after an episode of *South Park* which had aired recently. (“I’m not fat; I’m big-boned!”) I set up a Web page where people could enter their current weight, and it charted everyone’s *pounds over target weight* as a function of time. Oh, and the goal was to lose weight, not gain it. It so happened that I won this little competition with the aid of some extra bike rides. Then again, I also had the least amount of weight to lose. And my colleagues accused me of cheating because I managed to accelerate my weight loss as the deadline approached. (But I didn’t cheat, honest!)

I was reminded of this competition from years ago when I read about [John Dirks and Adam Orkand](#) who also learned that an effective way to make you stick to your weight loss plan is to [make a wager out of it](#).

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