

Lose the pounds, gain the dollars

NYC contest offers cash prizes for weight loss

WANT to get paid a few thousand dollars to lose weight? You can, like accountant Jerome White of Brooklyn, who hopes to shed 25 pounds.

NYPD cop Joy Currence of The Bronx, meanwhile, declares she'll drop enough weight to finally be able to skydive.

The pair credit this newfound motivation to capitalism — they and hundreds of other New Yorkers have joined the Healthy Wage contest to win a grand prize of \$10,000, plus other cash awards, to drop the pounds.

Says Stacy Atkinson, 39, manager at St. Luke's/Roosevelt Hospital: "Getting paid is a great incentive."

No one knows this better than David Roddenberry, 31, a former hedge fund financier turned public health advocate and the brains behind the contest. "I saw how powerful financial incentives can be," he said.

Contestants must be a part of a team of five. You can join even if you don't already have a team, however. "It's not easy to give up when you have a support system, I made an agreement, a bond," says LaToya Selby-Pullett, 29, a teammate and co-worker of Atkinson's.

To keep weight loss healthy over the 12-week challenge,



Stacy Atkinson (above) along with Jerome White, Joy Currence and LaToya Selby (right) start on their weight-loss goals at Gold's Gym.

Jonathan Baskin (2)

participants can't lose more than 18 percent of their starting weight. All participants starting out with a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 30 and above who reduce to 25 or below for a year after first starting the contest receive \$100.

Enrollment is open through the end of June, with 50 gyms in the tri-state area providing

free use of their equipment.

Currence hopes that she'll eventually lose 80 pounds.

"I've struggled with my weight most of my life," she says. "This contest lends itself to my personality. I am highly competitive and I love money. It's a big bonus."

To sign up, go to healthy-wage.com. —Diane Herbst

