



Tips to Lose Weight

To lose a pound of fat, you must burn about 3,500 more calories than you take in. You can increase your activity, or reduce your caloric consumption. A combination approach works best for most people.



Activity

If you increase your activity and eat the same amount of food, you will lose weight.

Daily exercise for 15-30 minutes a day not only helps to lose weight but relieves stress, and may promote increased coordination, body tone, cardiovascular fitness, and social interactions.

It is important to find an activity that you enjoy. Exercising when you don't like what you are doing is a chore and not likely to continue.

Frankly, swimming one or two laps of the pool or walking to the garage to get in your car is not enough. At least moderate activity is required. An exercise group (aerobics class, bicycling or running club, swim team, walking program, etc.) may provide extra motivation to keep you active.

Eating

1. Eat only when you are hungry.
2. Buy a calorie counter. Set your calorie goals. Learn the nutritional value of foods.
3. Arrange to do all your eating in only one place. For example, eat only in the kitchen or only in the dining room.
4. Avoid eating while you are doing something else. It is easy to eat when you don't really need or want to, if you eat while watching TV, or at a ball game.
5. Avoid having tempting foods around with lots of calories. If you open the refrigerator and a piece of cake is staring you in the face, it is hard to avoid eating it. Keep "no-no foods" out of sight, stored away in cupboards.
6. Snacks should be available that are low in calories and that satisfy a desire to have something in your mouth. Keep carrots or celery sticks in the refrigerator as snack foods. It is said that eating celery takes more calories than the celery gives.
7. Do not have second servings available readily. At dinner, for example, do not bring the pot to the table. Make it an effort to get that second helping. Keep it on the stove. If you are in the dining room and you have to get up to go to the kitchen to get the pot, often you won't have that second helping you do not really want. If the pot is on the table, it is easy to put "just a little more" on your plate.
8. Serve smaller portions. Serve portions attractively, but on smaller plates. Restaurants do this all the time. Large plates are served, then a smaller "soup bowl" is placed on the plate, and then inside the soup bowl an attractive small size portion appears. Your brain sees the large plate and thinks you are getting a lot. But there really is not that much there!
9. Increase the amount of liquid and fiber in your meal. For example, have a large bowl of soup full of vegetables.
10. Eat slowly, chew each piece more thoroughly. Sometimes people eat so fast that their brain does not have time to catch up with their stomach. They shovel the food into the stomach before the brain realizes it's there, and find they have eaten more than needed to be satisfied.
11. Shop with a list. Don't shop for food when hungry. Studies show that shopping without a list on an empty stomach is the best way to buy garbage you don't need or want.
12. Keep a diet diary. See when you eat. Be a detective, figure out why. It is not unusual for people to skip supper as a way to cut caloric intake. Then they wake up at midnight, go the refrigerator and pig out. A modest supper meal—for example, a bowl of soup—might prevent overeating when hungry later.

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13. Consider enlisting support from friends and relatives. Or from a support group: Weight Watchers, TOPS, or weight classes offered through other sources.

Not Recommended

Crash diets, fads, diet pills (they contain: caffeine, decongestants, amphetamines, or laxatives). These may help you lose weight initially, but if you don't change your basic eating and exercise habits these will be only a temporary fix.

Weight loss of more than one or two pounds per week is also associated with fatigue and diminished exercises tolerance.

Some medical evidence suggests that up and down weight gain and loss may be quite harmful. Better is to lose weight slowly and continuously.

Alcohol has a lot of "empty" calories" (few vitamins or minerals). Alcohol is best avoided or used in moderation. It can also affect your willpower to say no to other calories.

Skipping meals often leaves you so hungry you binge later.

Laxatives give you diarrhea and prevent the food from going into the body. But they stop working when you stop taking them.

Diuretics get rid of water, not fat. You see immediate results of a quick few pounds. But your weight comes back the next time you drink to quench your thirst.

Body wraps or "special weight reducing clothes" make you sweat when you put them on. They don't work in the same way as diuretics don't.

Summary

Long-term studies have shown that there is really nothing magic about losing weight and keeping it off. It can be done. The majority of success stories simply involve people who are committed to a lifetime of moderate exercise and moderate caloric intake.

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