



## Slow and steady: How to lose weight and keep it off

### Looking for solid weight loss advice? Set modest goals and take it slowly if you want to keep pounds off.

Your skirt is too tight. You can't zip your jeans. You don't even want to think about putting on a swimsuit. You look in the mirror and mutter about how you've got to lose weight.

Though there's enough dieting advice out there to fill a dozen refrigerators, be wary of programs that offer quick weight-loss solutions. Remember, modest goals and a slow course will increase your chances of both losing the weight and keeping it off.

### Back to basics

If you are really serious about long-term weight loss, look to change habits, not slash calories and deprive yourself. Start with these tips:

- **Maintain a sensible calorie intake.** If you cut back too much, you will risk failure and lose muscle tissue - not fat. A one- to two-pound per week weight loss is optimal.
- **Spread your calories evenly throughout the day.** Do you eat as little as possible during the day so you can "save" calories for later? This approach almost always backfires. You'll find yourself raiding the kitchen in the late afternoon. On an 1,800-calorie meal plan, for instance, aim to have 300 to 500 calories at your meals. This leaves room for two snacks of 100 to 200 calories in between. Eat every three hours to keep hunger at bay.
- **Combine food groups for best blood sugar control.** This also helps keep you feeling satisfied and away from the cookie jar. Examples would be: one or two eggs with a whole-grain English muffin, salad with tuna and a little olive oil, hearty bean soup, oatmeal with a handful of walnuts, low-fat cottage cheese with almonds and sliced fruit.
- **Eat high-fiber foods that are wholesome and satisfying.** These will keep you full without breaking your calorie budget. Eat bean soups, lots of cooked vegetables, salads and whole grains (brown rice, barley, whole-grain breads and cereals). Also include some healthy fat in your meal plan, such as some avocado, nuts or olive oil.

- **Keep a food journal.** Write down everything that you eat and drink for at least three days, along with the time. Little things can add up. Are you drinking some of your calories that you are not aware of? Picking at leftovers? Going long periods without eating? Do you eat most of your calories in the latter part of the day? Are you getting enough healthy fat and protein? Are your carbohydrates coming from wholesome sources or are they refined (lots of white bread, pastas)?
- **Be positive.** Don't approach this with a diet mentality. You are changing your eating habits for health, weight control and quality of life. Feeding your body nutritious food is truly a gift you can give yourself.
- **Exercise!** If you want to trim down, you will need to include regular exercise in your life on most days of the week. Walk briskly, swim, bike - work up to anything that will get your body moving. To lose weight, aim to work in 60 to 90 minutes, five days a week. Working with light weights at least twice a week can help keep your muscles from wasting and your bones from shrinking. Always check first with your doctor before you increase your activity level.

Losing weight isn't just a matter of looking good but of staying healthy. Carrying extra pounds puts you at risk for developing many diseases, especially heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer.



## In this issue:

- **Slow and steady: How to lose weight and keep it off**  
Page 1
- **How to rev up your metabolism**  
Page 2
- **The top five dieting and nutrition myths**  
Page 3
- **Mini-meals versus three squares a day**  
Page 4



## How to rev up your metabolism

### Can the way you eat have an effect on your metabolism? Read on to learn what strategies really work.

Can the way you eat really have an effect on your metabolic rate? Are there types of foods that will burn fat more efficiently than others? The answer to both questions is yes.

Beyond the calorie in-calorie out theory, you can help control the timing of your eating and how your body responds to food. Check out the following guidelines to see if you are practicing any of these healthy eating habits. If you're not, it's time to start.

### Eat lots of small meals

- Split up your calories between breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks.
- Don't make dinner your largest meal.
- Eat every three to four hours. Your body works hard to digest and absorb the food we eat, and your metabolism revs up in response.

### Don't skip breakfast

- Eat a healthy breakfast to jumpstart your metabolism.
- Have breakfast within two hours of waking. Studies show that if you do this, you are more likely to control your weight.
- Don't let coffee ruin your appetite.

### Never starve yourself

- Don't skip meals. It's like going on a mini-diet. Going long periods of time between meals each day may slow your metabolic rate so that you burn calories more slowly.
- Stop dieting. The same metabolic slowdown that kicks in when you skip breakfast also works against you whenever you drastically cut back on the amounts of food you eat.
- Don't take in too few calories or your body will try to store more fat.

### Eat protein with almost every meal/snack

- Eating protein boosts your metabolism more than carbohydrates or fats.
- Eating enough protein will help you maintain and build muscle mass.
- Keep protein intake anywhere from 0.5 gram to 0.8 gram of protein per pound of body weight. Use the higher end only if you exercise vigorously.
- Good sources of low-fat protein include lean meats, turkey breast, skinless chicken breast, fish, cottage cheese, low-fat yogurt, tofu and beans.



### Balance your other nutrients

- Choose whole-grain carbohydrates instead of refined. That means oatmeal, brown rice, whole-wheat bread, barley, sweet potatoes, whole-wheat pasta, beans, etc.
- Eat enough healthy fats. These include avocados, olive oil, nuts and seeds, natural peanut butter, ground flax seeds and fatty fish.
- Round out your diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables. The more color and fiber, the better.

### Exercise!

- Exercise to burn calories and speed up your metabolic rate.
- Move your body to stimulate fat-burning enzymes to break down fat.
- Do aerobic exercise (at least 30 minutes) four or five times a week. Your metabolism rises every time you work out.
- Do strength training at least twice a week. Lifting weights and doing push-ups or crunches will help you increase muscle tissue, which burns slightly more calories than fat.

### Sample meals

#### Breakfast

- Cottage cheese or yogurt with fresh fruit
- One or two eggs and a slice of whole-grain bread

#### Lunch

- Turkey burger on a whole-grain bun and a salad
- Salad with grilled chicken and small amount of dressing

#### Dinner

- Fish with vegetables and a baked potato
- Shrimp and vegetables over a small amount of brown rice or pasta

#### Snacks

- 1 tablespoon of natural peanut butter on a large rice cake
- A pear and a piece of low-fat string cheese



## The top five dieting and nutrition myths

You've heard these "facts" about nutrition before. Like many people, you may believe they are true. Are they? Here's the truth about five common nutrition myths.

### Myth #1: Excess protein is good for energy and muscle building.

#### Facts:

- The body uses protein as fuel only as a last resort. Most extra protein is stored as body fat. Most athletes don't realize that they need plenty of carbohydrates to build muscle tissue.
- Eating some extra protein is necessary to build muscle mass, but only if you are also doing a lot of weight training at the same time. Even then, your increased needs can easily come from other foods.
- Too much protein can be hard on the kidneys. It also means you may not be getting enough healthy fat or wholesome carbohydrates.

### Myth #2: Eating eggs will raise your cholesterol.

#### Facts:

- This myth began because egg yolks do have a lot of cholesterol compared to other foods. However, studies suggest that eating one egg per day will not raise cholesterol levels.
- Eggs are actually a great source of nutrients.
- Most people don't realize that the saturated fat content of a food raises cholesterol levels. Eggs have a very low saturated fat content. Just don't eat them with lots of cheese, butter or a side of bacon or sausage. Pair them with fresh fruit and whole-wheat toast and you're good to go.

### Myth #3: All fats are bad.

#### Facts:

- We all need fat in our diets. Fats help us absorb certain nutrients. They make up an important part of every cell membrane in our body and help with proper nerve function, among other things.
- When we eat too much fat, it can lead to weight gain, heart disease and certain types of cancers.

- Some fats are good for us, but some increase our risks of heart disease, cancer and weight gain. The key is to replace bad fats (saturated, hydrogenated and trans) with good fats (monounsaturated and polyunsaturated).
- Best bets? Olive, canola and flax oils; fatty fish like salmon and sardines; avocados; raw nuts and seeds; natural peanut butter and ground flax seed. Nutritionists recommend that 25 percent to 30 percent of a person's diet comes from healthy fats.

### Myth #4: Avoid carbohydrates to lose weight.

#### Facts:

- It is important to limit the amount of carbohydrates in your diet that come from white flour and sugar. However, people who go to extremes to cut out the carbs are missing out on a very important food group that includes fruits, vegetables, beans and whole grains.
- Allow 45 percent to 50 percent of your diet to come from these healthy carb sources (half of those from veggies). Then fill in the rest with about 25 percent to 30 percent healthy fat and 15 percent to 20 percent lean protein.
- Severely limiting carbs will result in the loss of more muscle and water than fat. Balance is the key.

### Myth #5: To lose weight, follow a very low-calorie diet.

#### Facts:

- Many people think that eating less and/or skipping meals will make them lose weight. However, one of two things will happen. They will get so hungry that they'll overeat later in the day - or they will eat too little.
- When you eat too little, your body thinks it's in starvation mode. This slows down the rate at which you burn calories.
- At first you might see some weight loss. This is usually the loss of lean muscle tissue and water - along with just a little fat.
- When you gain the weight back, it will be all fat. A better approach is to eat smaller, more frequent, healthy meals and snacks to keep your blood sugar balanced.
- To lose one pound a week, try decreasing your total daily calories by just 500 a day. Eat every three to four hours. This will maximize fat loss and keep your metabolism operating at top speed.



## Mini-meals versus three squares a day

### Eating small, frequent meals can take the edge off your appetite. But which is better for controlling your waistline - eating three squares a day or grazing?

Amy was trying to lose weight, but she found herself in the employee break room every day at 4 p.m. Pretzels, chips and candy bars called to her from the vending machine, and she was usually too hungry to resist. Though she had a nutritious lunch around noon, it never seemed to carry her through until dinner.

Sure, your mom used to tell you to quit nibbling or you'd spoil your appetite. But which is better for controlling your waistline – eating three squares a day or having smaller, more frequent meals?

Actually, it depends. Many people eat three nutritious meals a day and have no trouble maintaining their weight. But studies have suggested that grazing (eating smaller amounts of food more frequently) can make it easier to maintain or lose weight.

Eating four to six small meals each day can take the edge off your appetite. This makes it less likely you'll binge on fast food or empty calories. And some research has shown that more frequent, smaller meals may help increase your metabolism.

Mini-meals may have health benefits, along with making it possible to fit into your blue jeans. Research has shown that this eating pattern may contribute to lower cholesterol levels and better blood sugar control. That means added protection from heart disease and type 2 diabetes - two conditions also linked to obesity.

### Smart grazing tips

That being said, your mini-meal choices still have to be nutritious to count. If you are not careful, more meals can easily turn into more calories per day. In the end, total calories are going to count, no matter how many meals you eat.

If you decide to try eating mini-meals for weight control, keep the following tips in mind:

- **Keep a food diary** so you can keep track of your calories. Eating more meals is not permission to overeat. After all, calories from even small snacks and meals can add up quickly.
- **Use mypyramid.com guidelines** set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to help guide you on reasonable serving sizes.
- **Eat whole foods instead of processed foods.** A mini-meal is just that - a smaller version of a larger meal, not an excuse to eat junk food. Go for things like a bowl of soup, a large rice cake with natural peanut butter, half a sandwich, yogurt and fruit, a hard-boiled egg and raw veggies, or whole-grain crackers and low-fat cheese.

- **Plan ahead.** Don't get caught at the vending machine. Keep your kitchen or work place stocked with nutritious options.
- **Make sure your mini-meals balance out.** Choose from the various food groups (meat, poultry, fish, beans, eggs and nuts, grains, fruits, vegetables and dairy) to get protein, carbohydrates and a little fat.

Almost all nutritionists agree that the most successful formula for maintaining a healthy weight includes:

- Portion control
- Balance of calories consumed versus calories burned off
- Exercise
- Daily breakfast
- Regular eating pattern (whether that means three or six times/day)
- A healthy balance of complex carbs, lean protein and healthy fat
- A good night's sleep

In the end, do what you feel works best for you. A good eating plan is only as successful as the person who is able to stick with it.