A Common Sense Guide To Weight Loss

Thank You for Purchasing...

Common Sense Guide To Weight Loss!

Please sign up below to have
Common Sense Weight Loss Tips and Updates
Instantly delivered to your inbox!

Name:

Email:

We respect your privacy! Your personal information will never be shared or sold.

Yes, Send Me Updates & Tips!

PEOPLE WHO BOUGHT "COMMON SENSE WEIGHT LOSS" ALSO BOUGHT "EXERCISE FITNESS AND YOU"

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....5
Why is it so hard to lose weight?.....7
Common Dieting Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them.....10
Metabolism and weight loss.....12
Metabolic disorders 14
Diabetes.....15
Type 1 Diabetes.....17
Type 2 Diabetes.....18
Are you at Risk of Developing Diabetes?.....20
What are the Risk Factors for Developing Diabetes?..... 22
Symptoms of Insulin Resistance.....25
Waist to Hip Ratio.....26
Why is it so Important to Reach a Healthy Weight?.....28
Setting Realistic Weight Loss Goals.....33
What is Your Ideal Weight?.....35
Emotional Hurdles to Weight Loss.....37
Emotional Eating.....37
Tricks to Control Emotional Eating.....39
Using Food as a Reward.....43
Do you Know how to Eat Healthy?.....45
Drink Water to Lose Weight.....47
The Skinny on Popular Diets – Do They Work?.....48
Low Carb Diets.....48
Low Fat Diets.....50
Good Carb Diets.....52
40/30/30 Diets.....53
Why Fad Diets Can Make You Fat.....54
How to Recognize a Fad Diet.....56
Common Weight Loss Myths.....57

How to Pick the Right Diet for You.....61
Joining a Weight Loss Group – Does it Really Help?.....62
The Common Sense Diet 64
Eat a Smaller Amount of Calories Lose Weight. 65
Keeping a Food Diary.....69
Counting Calories and Weight Loss.....71
Why Portion Control Matters When Counting Calories.....72
How Many Calories Should you Eat Each Day?.....74
Overhaul Your Kitchen – Get the Junk Out!.....76
Low Calorie Foods to Keep on Hand.....79
Are There any Healthy Fast Foods?.....86
A Few Words about Exercise.....88
Making Time to Exercise.....90
What If you Hate to Exercise?.....92
Exercise for the Whole Family.....94
Tips and Tricks to Stay Motivated when Dieting.....96
Conclusion.....100

INTRODUCTION

Most people in the US need to lose weight. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2006 at least 20% of the population of the US could be considered obese based on their Body Mass Index. In some states, especially in the Midwest, that number was closer to 30%.

The US is getting fatter, but the experts can't seem to find out why. There's a lot of blame put on the American diet, and the vast amounts of fast food that Americans eat but is that really the reason that so many Americans are overweight or obese? It's hard to pinpoint just one cause.

It's ironic that a culture so obsessed with thinness and beauty has such a high percentage of overweight and obese people. Some experts claim that the national obsessions with thinness and fitness is causing people to use drugs, herbal supplements, and artificial foods in an effort to get slim when in reality those are the things that are making people fat.

The sedentary lifestyle of most Americans plays a role in the national obesity epidemic too. Experts say that everyone should get at least 30 minutes of brisk exercise per day but most Americans don't get 30 minutes of brisk exercise every other day.

Regardless of the causes of this crisis the bottom line is that millions of people are trying to lose weight. Every day someone wakes up to start a new diet, or makes a commitment to get healthy, and every day someone falls off their diet, or gains back all the weight they have lost.

Millions of people have been battling their weight and their unhealthy relationships with food since childhood.

Why is it so hard to lose weight?

Some people have medical conditions that make it difficult for them to burn calories and lose weight. Others are on medication where weight gain is a side effect so that they have to work twice as hard to lose weight. And some people just can't get off the fad diet rollercoaster even though fad diets have been proven to be ineffective over a long period of time.

WHY IS IT SO HARD TO LOSE WEIGHT?

If you have ever struggled to lose weight you know how difficult it can be when you think you're doing really well and eating healthy and still the pounds just don't come off. Why is it so hard for people to lose weight?

There are a number of different factors that can make it much more difficult for some people to lose weight than others. If it's harder for you to lose weight than it is for other people to lose weight, one of these factors might be contributing to your weight loss problem.

Medical conditions – Many people have undiagnosed medical conditions like diabetes, insulin resistance, thyroid problems, or metabolic disorders that can make it difficult for them to lose weight.

If you have tried dieting and exercise but still can't seem to lose weight you should make an appointment with your doctor for some tests to rule out a medical problem that keeps you from losing weight.

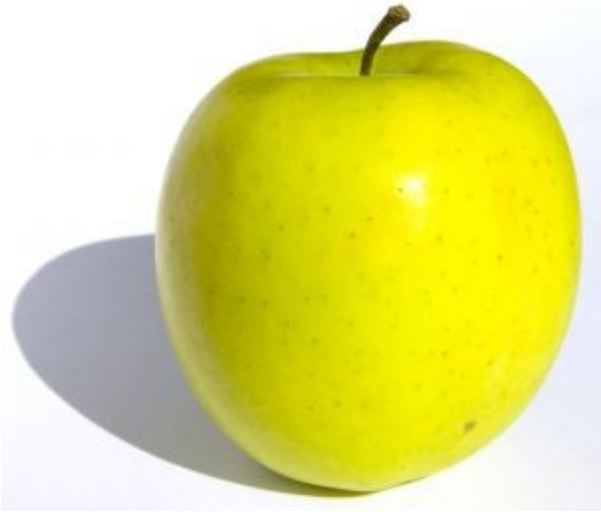
Also, if you are taking medication for another health problem you should check out the side effects of any medications that you take. Sometimes, the medication that you take for one condition might make it hard for you to lose weight.

Portion Control – Lots of people can't lose weight even when they think they are eating healthy because they simply don't realize how much food they eat.

If you're only eating healthy food but you're eating triple the amount that you should be eating you won't lose weight.

Portion control is crucial to weight loss success. Keeping a food diary is a great way to keep track of how much food you actually eat every day.

Breaking bad habits isn't easy – If you have battled your weight for many years you have probably picked up some very bad eating habits.



Giving in to cravings, denying yourself meals, picking the wrong types of foods to eat or eating when you're happy or sad or bored or lonely are all bad habits that people pick up through the years. It's tough to break bad habits.

You have to be committed to changing your behavior for good; not just for a few weeks or a few months if you want to lose weight and keep it off.

Not exercising – If you think that you don't need to exercise to lose weight if you watch your calorie intake, think again. Controlling your calorie intake will help you maintain your weight but if you want to lose weight the only way to burn calories is through exercise. Adding a few aerobic workouts that last more than 30 minutes per week can make a big difference in how much weight you lose.

COMMON DIETING PITFALLS AND HOW TO AVOID THEM

Dieting is no fun. Most people will fall off their diets within a week. Those that don't fall in that first week usually fall within three weeks. That's because most people set themselves up to fail when they start a new diet by falling into one or more of the most common pitfalls. Recognizing these common dieting pitfalls and how to avoid them can mean the difference between staying on track with your diet or falling back into your old, unhealthy eating patterns.

Making radical changes to your eating habits – This happens all the time on diets, especially fad diets. If you go on a diet where you can only eat fruit, or only eat protein, or you must cut out all of one of kind of food it will be very difficult for you to stay on the diet. When you make changes to the way you eat you should make them gradually. If you make an extreme change to the way you eat and you do it fast then you will deprived and you will start to crave foods, making it more likely that you will go off your diet.

Setting unrealistic goals – When you first start dieting you might lose anywhere from five to ten pounds in the first couple of weeks. When that happens, of course, you feel like the diet is great and you want that kind of weight loss to continue but most of the time that is all water weight. Real weight loss does not happen that fast.

Experts say a healthy rate of weight loss is one to two pounds per week. So if you tell yourself that you want to lose ten pounds a week every week you are setting yourself up for disappointment. And if you're disappointed and you feel like you're failing on the diet you are more likely to give up on the diet and go back to your unhealthy lifestyle.

Using food as a reward – One of the most common ways that people reward themselves is food. How many times have you told yourself "I stuck to my diet all week so one cheeseburger won't hurt me"? Well that cheeseburger will hurt you. In the long run, that cheeseburger will be just more calories that you need to burn off.

Instead of rewarding yourself with food for a job well done, take the same amount of money that you would have spent on a food treat and spend it on a new blouse, a new lipstick, a book, a new CD, or something else that will motivate you to keep going on your diet.

METABOLISM AND WEIGHT LOSS

Metabolism is brought up in nearly every discussion about weight loss but do you know what metabolism really is and how it affects weight loss? The number one reason that people think they have trouble losing weight is that they have a slow metabolism. And they might be right. Years of dieting and not dieting can have an impact on your metabolism, which, in turn, can affect your ability to lose weight.

What is Metabolism?

Metabolism is the rate at which your body burns calories for energy. Sounds simple doesn't it? But it's more complicated than it sounds. The metabolic process, simply put, is a simple math equation. Your body needs a certain amount of calories per day to use for energy. Unused calories turn into fat. So in order to lose weight you need to burn those leftover calories. The only way to burn those calories is to raise your metabolic rate.

There are many different factors that influence how fast your body burns calories or what you metabolic rate is. Everyone starts with a basic metabolic rate, or BMR. That is how fast your body burns up calories if you are not trying to lose weight but are just maintaining your current weight. When you are trying to lose weight you are trying to raise your BMR so that your body is burning more calories for energy.

How is Your Basic Metabolic Rate Determined?

There are several different factors that influence the rate of your BMR. Most experts agree that your BMR is largely inherited from your parents. So if your parents have a low BMR you probably will too. But you can change your BMR.

Lifestyle plays a large role in determining your BMR. What you eat, how much you eat, and how active you are, are all things that can raise or lower your BMR. Your age can also impact your BMR.

If you are over 30, have you noticed that you have a harder time losing weight than you did when you were younger?

This is because once you hit 30 your muscle mass starts to decrease. The more muscle mass you have the more calories your body burns for energy. So when that muscle mass decreases you will start to put on weight.

One of the reasons that exercise is so important when it comes to weight loss is that exercise will increase your muscle mass, which will increase your BMR and make your body burn more calories.

METABOLIC DISORDERS

If you have significant problems losing weight or seem to gain weight no matter how healthy you eat or how much you exercise you may have an undiagnosed metabolic disorder that is keeping you from reaching a healthy weight.

Usually, the body will regulate itself and the metabolism will speed up or slow down whenever it needs to in order to keep the body at a normal weight.

But if you have a metabolic disorder then your metabolism isn't functioning normally so eating healthy and exercising won't be enough to regulate your weight.

There are different types of metabolic disorders but usually they involve either an excess or a lack of certain enzymes and hormones produced by the body to keep your body functioning normally.

Metabolic disorders can be hard to diagnose because often, the symptoms of a metabolic disorder mimic symptoms of other illnesses.

Here's a brief look at the most common types of metabolic disorders. If you think that you might have a metabolic disorder you should make an appointment to see your doctor right away to get tested.

DIABETES

Diabetes is the most common type of metabolic disorder. There are more than 20 million people, adults and children, living with diabetes in the US.

Thousands more will contract diabetes this year. Millions of people have diabetes and don't even know it. The American Diabetes Association estimates that as many as 6 million people have diabetes and don't even know it.

There are two types of diabetes, Type 1 and Type 2. Type 1 diabetes is a condition that you're born with and Type 2 diabetes is a condition that you develop over time.

Most of the time, people who contract Type 2 diabetes are adults. Type 2 diabetes is also called "adult onset diabetes" for that reason. Both types of diabetes stem from a lack of insulin.

Insulin is a hormone that helps the cells in your body process starches and sugar in your blood stream.

Those starches and sugars, which are commonly called glucose, is what feeds your cells. So if there is no insulin helping the cells break down the glucose in your blood your cells don't get the nutrients they need to function properly.

In addition to the cells not getting what they need, a lack of insulin causes the sugar in your blood to build up, which can lead to other problems like heart disease, kidney damage, or blindness.

Have you ever heard someone say they are suffering from “low blood sugar” or “high blood sugar”?

Low blood sugar means they are not getting enough glucose and high blood sugar means they are getting too much. Both of those can be indicators of diabetes.

TYPE 1 DIABETES

If you're born with Type 1 diabetes then your pancreas is not working properly. The pancreas is what produces the insulin that you need to break down glucose.

The symptoms of Type 1 diabetes are extreme weight loss, extreme thirst, and fatigue.

If left untreated, people who are suffering from Type 1 diabetes might develop heart disease, kidney damage, nerve or blood vessel disease, or blindness.

People who have Type 1 diabetes have to measure their blood sugar regularly to keep track of how high or low it is.

Then they need to manage their glucose levels by injecting themselves with insulin on a regular basis.

Many diabetics have a tough time, at first, adjusting their lives to accommodate frequently pricking their fingers to test their blood sugar and then injecting themselves with insulin but after awhile it becomes second nature.

Managing Type 1 diabetes through insulin shots is extremely effective.

TYPE 2 DIABETES

Type 2 diabetes occurs when a person's body either isn't making enough insulin to support the breakdown of glucose in the blood or the cells are ignoring the insulin.

When the cells ignore the insulin that the body produces, that is called insulin resistance. People can suffer from insulin resistance without having diabetes but insulin resistance is often a pre-cursor to diabetes.

African-Americans, Latinos, Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans are statistically more likely to be at risk of developing Type 2 diabetes, but lifestyle also plays a role in who will end up developing Type 2 diabetes.

If your diet consists mostly of fast food, fried food, sugary sodas, starchy snacks and foods with lots of fat and carbs, your lifestyle may put you at risk.

When it comes to Type 2 diabetes, the treatment depends on how much insulin your body is producing.

If you are just not producing enough insulin then you may need to treat yourself with insulin injections the way that someone suffering from Type1 diabetes would have to do.

If your body makes plenty of insulin but your body ignores it then injecting more insulin is useless as a treatment. Then you need to use diet, exercise, and a great nutrition plan to treat your diabetes.

Untreated Type 2 diabetes can cause heart disease, kidney disease, obesity, blindness, and even death.

If you think that you might be at risk of developing Type 2 diabetes you can prevent diabetes with diet and exercise. So if you have risk factors for diabetes you should make some serious changes to your diet and exercise routine immediately so that you don't end up with Type 2 diabetes.

ARE YOU AT RISK OF DEVELOPING DIABETES?

Type 2 diabetes doesn't just simply appear one day. There is usually plenty of warning that something is wrong but people either misread or don't want to see the signs and symptoms that they have. According to experts, there are more than 54 million people in the US alone that have "pre-diabetes."

If you have pre-diabetes, your body is already being damaged by the effects of insulin resistance or lack of insulin, but you can still turn things around.

When you have pre-diabetes you won't necessarily develop diabetes. You can still heal your body. More than 58% of people who were able to identify that they had pre-diabetes were able change their lifestyles in time to prevent the onset of diabetes.

If you have two or more risk factors for developing Type 2 diabetes you should make an appointment with your doctor immediately. Your doctor can give you two different tests to determine if you have pre-diabetes, which is putting you at risk of developing full blown diabetes.

The Fasting Glucose Plasma Test and Oral Glucose Tolerance test both require that you fast for at least 12 hours before the test is given. Both measure your blood sugar level at different times to see if your body is processing glucose normally or if you have elevated glucose

levels. Elevated glucose levels indicate that your body is not using insulin properly and the cells are not getting what they need.

If you have pre-diabetes then you have a 50% greater chance of having a heart attack or stroke than people who don't have pre-diabetes so finding out if you have pre-diabetes isn't just important to prevent diabetes, it's also important to prevent serious problems like a heart attack or stroke.

The good news is that even if you have pre-diabetes all your symptoms are completely reversible if you change your diet and lifestyle.

Because Type 2 diabetes is preventable, it's very important if you are overweight or have other risk factors for diabetes to complete a pre-diabetes screening.

If you don't want to make an appointment with your doctor or if you don't have health insurance, the American Diabetic Association website at:http://www.diabetes.org has a free, interactive pre-diabetes test that you can take to determine if you are at risk of having pre-diabetes.

WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS FOR DEVELOPING DIABETES?

If you have two or more of these risk factors then you may already have pre-diabetes. Take the American Diabetes Association test and if the test indicates you are at risk then you should see your doctor to find out if you have pre-diabetes.

Remember, you can still prevent diabetes but only if you are proactive and take control of your health immediately.

Obesity – Obesity, or having a Body Mass Index higher than 30, is the main risk factor for developing diabetes. More than 60 million people in the US are technically obese. If you are overweight, there is a higher chance that you suffer from some type of insulin resistance, which can lead to diabetes.

If you are obese, it is crucial that you get checked out by a doctor to evaluate your diabetes risk.

Unhealthy diet – Most people these days don't eat healthy. Busy schedules and financial problems mean eating lots of fast food, fried food, starchy food, sugary food, and high fat food.

Eating a lot of foods that are overly processed and chemical laden can lead to insulin resistance and diabetes.

No Exercise – Are you one of the millions of people that never get more exercise than walking to and from your car? That lack of exercise could lead to diabetes.

Muscle cells function differently than other cells. Muscle cells are more likely to fight insulin resistance so the more muscle cells you have the better your chance of reducing your insulin resistance. Exercising also helps you lose weight and can help keep your heart healthy.

Just 30 minutes of walking five days a week can reduce your diabetes risk and help you lose weight.

Genetics – It's completely unfair, but if other members of your family, especially your parents, have Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes, you are more likely to develop it as an adult. Your genetic makeup can mean that you are predisposed to insulin resistance and obesity, which, in turn, can put you at greater risk of developing diabetes. If you have a history of diabetes in your family, you need to be extra careful when it comes to diabetes.

You can prevent diabetes even if you have a family history of it but you will probably have to work harder than people who don't have a family history of diabetes. If you are worried that your family history means you have a higher risk of diabetes then you should start taking steps like getting more exercise and overhauling your diet immediately.

INSULIN RESISTANCE

Insulin resistance can be a precursor to diabetes or it can be a metabolic disorder by itself. Having Insulin Resistance doesn't mean that you will automatically develop diabetes, but most experts say that if you have Insulin Resistance you will have an increased risk of developing diabetes.

Most experts estimate that between 65 and 70 million Americans suffer from some degree of Insulin Resistance.

This is largely due to the American diet, which mostly consists of fast food, fried, high fat foods, sugary sodas and sports drinks, and other unhealthy foods.

If your body is insulin resistant, it means that your body is producing insulin but your cells are not recognizing the insulin. If you are insulin resistant that could be part of the reason that you have a hard time losing weight.

Insulin resistance is a relatively new disorder, but diabetes experts have said that identifying insulin resistance is an important step forward in identifying and treating early diabetes or pre-diabetes.

SYMPTOMS OF INSULIN RESISTANCE

If you have three or more of the symptoms that are commonly associated with Insulin Resistance, it would be a good idea to see your doctor. If you are really insulin resistant you can protect your health by making lifestyle changes now so that you don't end up with more serious health problems later on.

The symptoms of Insulin Resistance include:

- Fatigue
- Brain fogginess and inability to focus
- Low blood sugar. Intestinal bloating
- Sleepiness
- Weight gain, fat storage, difficulty losing weight
- Increased triglycerides
- Increased blood pressure
- Depression

WAIST TO HIP RATIO

Another good way to tell if you could be insulin resistant is to check your waist to hip ratio. Doctors that specialize in diagnosing insulin resistance say that if you have more fat around your waist than around your hips there is a strong chance that you might be insulin resistant.

Using the waist to hip ratio in conjunction with the other symptoms of Insulin Resistance is usually a more reliable way to tell if you might be insulin resistant since the other symptoms of insulin resistance could also be indicating another problem.

So how do you check your waist to hip ratio? You can do it right now. Just get a tape measure. Hold the tape measure taut across the thickest part of your waist. No cheating! Make the tape measure taut but not tight; about the same as a belt. Write that number down.

Then take the tape measure and hold it across the fullest part of your hips, usually about four to six inches below your bellybutton. Pull it taut but not tight, just like you did when you were measuring your waist. Write that number down.

Then divide your waist measurement by your hip measurement and that number is your waist to hip ratio. A waist to hip ratio of more than .8 for men and 1.0 for women is considered obese.

If you have a waist to hip ratio higher than that you could be insulin resistant.

So if your waist measures 30 inches and your hips measure 40 inches, your waist to hip ratio would be 0.75, which is within the acceptable range. But if your waist measurement is 40 and your hip measurement is 36, your waist to hip ratio would be 1.1, meaning that your abdomen is obese.

The waist to hip ratio is not a good indication of overall obesity. Experts use the Body Mass Index to determine general obesity. But if your abdomen has more fat than other parts of your body, which is measured by the waist to hip ratio, then you might be insulin resistant.

If you take your waist to hip ratio and you are concerned with the results, make an appointment to see your doctor. Your doctor can tell you if you should be concerned about insulin resistance or if you need to make some lifestyle changes to get healthier.

WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT TO REACH A HEALTHY WEIGHT?

Losing weight so that you reach a healthy weight is about much more than just looking better, although you will look better. Being at a healthy weight will make you feel better, give you more energy, and increase your life.

That's right, carrying around too much extra weight could be ending your life one day at a time.

Obesity is a serious problem, and can have serious consequences on your health. People who are obese suffer from increased rates of diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease, liver damage, sleep apnea, depression, cancer, high blood pressure, and a much higher risk of stroke and heart attack.

Being overweight also lowers your life expectancy. Losing just 5% of your body weight, or just 10 pounds if you weigh 200 pounds, can make a huge difference in how healthy you are.

A healthy weight doesn't necessarily mean that you have to be a size 0. There is a big difference between what is considered a healthy weight and what society says is an acceptable weight.

Most experts say that you should weigh 100 pounds at 5 feet tall, and add 5 pounds for every inch after that to find a healthy weight.

So if you are 5' 8" tall, a healthy weight for you would be 140 pounds. In a society where supermodels stand over 6' tall and weigh less than 120 pounds, it can seem like 140 pounds would still make you overweight but that's not true.

Quite often there is a huge difference between what a healthy weight is and what society tells people they should weigh to be considered attractive.

It is important to lose weight and get down to a healthy weight, but it's important to do it for your health and vitality and not just to look better naked. When you are ready to take control of your life, and take control of your eating and exercising you will realize that no one else can make you lose weight for any reason.

You have to choose to take control of your life and make changes in your life because it's what you want and it will make you happy. Get healthy for yourself.

The only way that you will be able to make real change in your life and your weight is by doing it to please yourself; to make yourself healthy. Do you value yourself enough to prolong your life and make your body healthy and strong? You must, or you wouldn't want to lose weight. Don't worry about the mistakes that you made in the past. Stop beating yourself up for failing at other diets or for gaining weight. It's time to move forward and take the first steps towards getting healthy by reaching a healthy weight.

MAKING A WEIGHT LOSS COMMITMENT

When you start a new diet it's always exciting. You always tell yourself that this time you're going to stick with it, this time will be different, this time you're really committed. But what happens? Do you really stick with the diet or do you go back to your old eating habits and end up not losing weight, or even gaining weight?

That's what happens to most people. Dieting is no fun. But change usually isn't fun and it usually is hard. But in order to make real, healthy, permanent changes you need to stick with your diet. You need to be committed to getting healthy and fit. So this time, make that commitment.

Don't just tell yourself it's time to get healthy; make a physical gesture to show that you are committed to staying on that diet and making healthy changes to your lifestyle.

Does that sound silly to you? It shouldn't. After all, people use all kinds of physical symbols to show commitment. Rings, tattoos, ceremonies, even certificates and trophies are signs of commitment.

You need a physical sign of commitment to mark the start of your diet.

Here are some fun ways to make a commitment to be healthier, happier, and fit by losing weight:

Write it down – Make a weight loss contract committing to stay on your diet for at least six months. Include in the contract penalties for breaking the contract.

Sign it and have a friend witness it.

Keep it on the refrigerator to remind you of your commitment.

Hire a personal trainer – Once you spend the money for a personal trainer, that money is gone whether you use those personal training sessions or not.

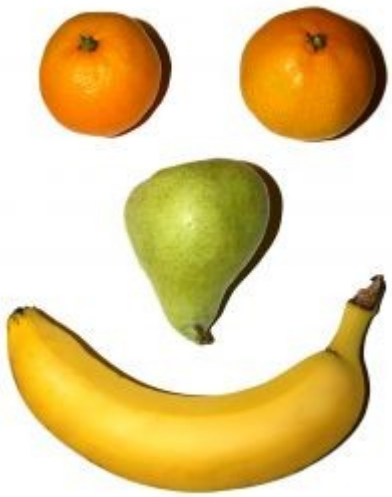
The same rule usually applies to a gym membership as well. So spending money on exercise is a commitment to getting fit. And knowing that money is gone whether you use that gym membership or get those personal training sessions or not might motivate you to exercise more.

Start a weight loss club – Get some friends together that also want to lose weight and agree to meet once a week for a weigh in. Your friends will keep you honest about whether or not you're sticking to the diet.

Tell people about your diet – Tell your friends, your family, the people at work, anyone that you see on a regular basis about your plans to lose weight, eat better, and exercise more.

Once you have told people you're going on a diet, they will ask you about the diet and how you're doing and you'll have to answer them.

Embarrassment about telling people that you fell off your diet can be good motivation to keep going in those moments when you want to quit.



SETTING REALISTIC WEIGHT LOSS GOALS

One of the most common mistakes that people make when it comes to weight loss is setting unrealistic expectations of how much weight they need to lose and how fast they can lose it.

Experts in weight loss say that a healthy weight loss rate is one to two pounds per week. That is not a lot.

If you tell yourself that you've got to lose ten pounds a week and that you want to lose fifty pounds by summer, that is not realistic. And if you set very unrealistic goals and then fail, you will be tempted to go off the diet thinking that you're a failure.

Setting unrealistic weight goals is really sabotaging your diet and your efforts to lose weight. Here are some tools you can use to set realistic weight loss goals for yourself.

Lower your expectations – Losing one to two pounds per week is healthy, so if you weigh yourself at the end of the week and you've only lost one or two pounds, don't consider that a failure because it's not. Congratulate yourself on losing that weight and focus on losing another one to two pounds the next week.

If you celebrate each pound lost you will be motivated to keep losing weight.

Think in percentages, not pounds – If you want to get down to a healthy weight and stay there you should focus on losing 10-20% of your whole body weight, not just the amount of pounds you want to lose. So if you weigh 200 pounds, losing just 20-40 pounds could put in a healthy weight range.

Do the math – If you want to lose 25 pounds and you know that a safe weight loss rate is 2 pounds per week then plan on it taking 12 to 14 weeks to lose the weight that you want to lose. In the beginning that might make it seem more difficult to lose weight, but if you have a realistic expectation of how long it will take to lose the amount of weight that you want to lose, it will help you stay focused and stay on your diet.

Try to reduce your daily calorie intake by 500 per day either by exercising more and burning more calories or by eating less. Losing weight is a numbers game so get familiar with those numbers and how to use them to lose weight.

Set short term goals, but think of long term goals – Set weight loss milestones and celebrate when you reach them. Buy yourself a new book when you lose 5 pounds, or a new dress when you hit 10 pounds lost. But even as you're celebrating each milestone, keep focused on the big picture and how much weight you want to lose total. You need to celebrate your progress but also stay focused on the big prize.

WHAT IS YOUR IDEAL WEIGHT?

Many people think that the ideal weight is to be as thin as a Hollywood starlet or model, but these people are often underweight. “Normal” people look heavy in comparison but really they are at a healthy weight.

You might think that the ideal weight is what you weighed in high school or college but as people get older it’s perfectly normal to gain weight. Conditions like pregnancy and other medical conditions can also change your body and make you heavier. It might not be possible for you to get back down to that high school or college weight and still be healthy now.

So how can you tell what is a healthy weight for you? Talk to your doctor if you’re not sure; your doctor should be able to give you some advice on what you should weigh to be healthy and fit. You should also take these factors into consideration to decide what a healthy weight for you is.

Your age – As you get older you will gain some weight. This is perfectly normal. Once you hit 30 your muscle mass starts to deteriorate, which can mean you burn fewer calories. When that happens you will start to gain weight and you will lose muscle tone.

Exercising is the key to getting older without gaining weight because exercise will raise your metabolism and rebuild muscle tone. Once you get to age 30 you should plan on adding at least 15 more minutes to your normal workout.

Your gender – The current trend is for men to be quite slim and small like women but men usually carry more muscle than women so men are generally heavier than women. The healthy weight for a man is usually 10-20 pounds heavier than the healthy weight for a woman of the same height.

Your starting weight – If you weigh 200 pounds now don't focus too much on getting down to a size 0. It's quite possible that your ideal weight based on your height and body type will be heavier than you think. Focus on losing 10-20% of your body weight and getting healthy rather than on a particular number on the scale that you want to reach.

Your BMI – Is your heaviness due to body fat or muscle? If you have a lot of muscle you will weigh more than other people but you might not be unhealthy, just heavy because of the muscle that you have. Take into account how much muscle you have when you are setting a weight less goal. It's ok to weigh more than you'd like if you are muscular but not ok if the extra weight is all fat.

EMOTIONAL HURDLES TO WEIGHT LOSS

Sometimes, what is keeping you from losing weight isn't a physical problem, it's an emotional one. Before you start a new diet, it's a good idea to look at some of the most common emotional hurdles to weight loss and see if any of them could be keeping you from losing weight. These emotional hurdles can sometimes be harder to break through than a medical problem that keeps you from losing weight, but in the long run dealing with these emotional issues can help you stay thin and healthy.

EMOTIONAL EATING

This is probably the number one thing that makes people gain weight or go off a diet. Millions of people are compulsive eaters or binge eaters who eat food because they are happy, because they are depressed, lonely, sad, upset, or bored. People who eat when they are in an emotional state usually need some type of comfort and food provides that.

Comfort foods are called that for a reason. The chemicals in traditional comfort foods like chocolate, ice cream, potato chips or French fries; any food that is starchy, high fat, or high in sugar can trigger the brain to release serotonin, which is a calming hormone that floods the body with a feeling of well being and happiness. So if you eat certain foods like chocolate when you're upset then soon you will start to feel better.

Then you'll associate feeling better with eating chocolate, and you'll eat chocolate whenever you're upset. Keep doing that and soon you'll discover your pants don't fit anymore.

Anything can trigger emotional eating but for most people, stress and negative emotions like fear and loneliness are the strongest triggers.

If you have always been an emotional eater you might not even realize that you start reaching for the ice cream or the chips every time you have a stressful day, a long commute, or other difficult situation to deal with.

Emotional eating causes most people to cheat on their diets and stops them from losing weight.

It can be very tough to break emotional dependence on food. But controlling the urge to binge on food or to eat whenever you're upset is the only way that you can really overcome your weight problem and stay healthy and fit for life.

TRICKS TO CONTROL EMOTIONAL EATING

Using these tips and tricks can help you control your emotional eating and help you stay on your diet and lose weight.

Know if you're really hungry – Do you know the difference between being physically hungry and just eating out of emotion? If you've been an emotional eater your whole life you might not recognize the difference.

When you are really hungry your stomach will growl and you will feel a little weak and tired. That's your body's way of saying that it needs fuel. Try letting yourself get really hungry before a meal just so that you can feel what it feels like when your body is hungry.

Recognize your emotional eating triggers – Keep a little notebook and a pen with you and write down when you feel like eating and what you want to eat. Soon you'll start to notice a pattern emerging. Do you always crave fried food after a meeting with your boss? Do you want cake the minute you walk in the door after the evening commute?

Do you need a double cheeseburger at lunch just to get through the afternoon? Starting to identify the situations and the times of the day that make you crave certain foods is the key to stopping emotional eating.

If you know that you will crave something sweet when you get home to dull the stress of your commute, you can find another way to handle that stress that doesn't involve food.

Maybe you need to listen to music for 15 minutes after you get home, or have a cup of tea and read the newspaper. Or maybe a hot shower will help.

Find another way to alleviate the stress that makes you want to eat something sweet. Dealing with that stress in a healthier way will help you lose weight and manage your stress more effectively.

Don't use food as comfort – If you reach for the ice cream when you're depressed or lonely, find other ways to comfort yourself. Call a friend, take a hot bubble bath, treat yourself to a manicure and pedicure, take the dog for a walk, go for a bike ride, write in a journal to try and discover what is making you sad or lonely, meditate, or take an exercise class. There are hundreds of things that you can do to comfort yourself besides reaching for food. Learn to use other things to get you through a tough day.

Don't Buy Comfort Food – If it's not in the house, you won't eat it. It's just that simple. When you are feeling blue and you want something sweet or something fried as a comfort, if it's not in the house are you really going to take the time to drive to the store and buy some comfort food or go to the fast food restaurant to get something? Most people won't. Most of the time, if you're craving something and you don't have it in the house you'll look for a substitute rather than going out to buy whatever it is you're craving. So don't keep any junk food or comfort food in the house.

Keep Healthy Food in the House – If you have healthy snacks in the house you can use those as a substitute for comfort food when a craving hits. Instead of candy bars, keep granola bars in the cupboard. Instead of chips, keep popcorn or sliced veggies around. If you simply must have something sweet, try a fruit salad or some Jello. Making healthy substitutions for the foods you crave is a very practical way to deal with emotional eating.

After all, cravings happen. It would be nice if you could just wave a wand and not have anymore unhealthy food cravings but that's not realistic. Eating healthy snacks in place of the high fat, high calorie comfort food is a practical and responsible way to deal with food cravings when they happen. And if you replace healthy food for those high carb and high sugar foods, you will have fewer cravings.

Wait 30 minutes – When a craving does hit, wait it out. Set a timer; look at your watch, whatever you need to do. But wait a full 30

minutes before acting on that craving. If you still are craving that food after 30 minutes, allow yourself to have a half portion of it, but you'll find that usually after 30 minutes that craving will disappear.

Get exercise – Exercise isn't just good for burning calories. When you exercise, your brain releases serotonin and endorphins, which make you feel good and make you happy. 20 minutes or more of exercise can trigger the same feeling of peace and happiness and well-being that you get from food.

So the next time you reach for a pizza to feel better, instead, grab your sneakers and a coat and go for a walk, or a bike ride, or a run. Even just a quick mile walk can really change your mood. When you get back you'll feel as good as or better than you would feel if you had just eaten 4 slices of pizza.

Emotional eating isn't responsible for your entire weight gain, but it can be a factor in why it's hard for you to lose weight. Using those tips and tricks to control your emotional eating might be the way for you to start losing weight.

USING FOOD AS A REWARD

Another very common problem that stops people from losing weight is using food as a reward. For adults, almost all social activity revolves around food or drink so it's easy to associate food with celebration.

Did you win a big contract at work? The boss will probably take you out to lunch to celebrate. Have an important anniversary coming up? Your spouse will probably make reservations at a nice restaurant.

It's not surprising then that people use food to reward themselves for little things. Maybe you reward yourself for working out every day with a milkshake at the end of the week. Or you think that since you have been really good about watching what you eat all week you can have cake on Saturday. But all those extra calories and small treats add up fast, and you can sabotage your diet by using food as a reward.

There are many other ways to reward yourself...

Instead of using food to reward yourself for your accomplishments, try doing other fun things like:

- Get a manicure or pedicure
- Get a facial
- Buy yourself a new book
- Buy yourself a new CD
- Buy all the magazines you want and curl up in bed for a whole morning reading them
- Buy yourself a new piece of jewelry
- Go to a movie that you've wanted to see (but skip the popcorn!)
- Rent one of your favorite movies and watch it twice
- Go to a museum or gallery
- Spend an afternoon at the beach
- Go to the craft store and blow $20 on any craft supplies that look fun
- Buy a new lipstick or eye shadow
- Get a massage
- Buy a new pair of shoes
- Go to the travel agent and get brochures to plan a special vacation
- Treat yourself to a day at a local spa
- Take an afternoon nap
- Take an art class
- Take an extra long, hot bubble bath

DO YOU KNOW HOW TO EAT HEALTHY?

It might sound strange to ask that question, but there are lot of people that simply don't know what a healthy diet is or what foods to eat or the proper amounts to eat in order to be healthy.

In the last few decades, the Western diet has changed so much that a lot of people don't know anymore how to be healthy.

Kids who grow up in households where the parents don't know what a healthy diet is or how to provide one are more likely to grow up and be obese. Studies show that nearly 1 in 3 children are overweight or at risk of becoming overweight.

Studies also show that the eating patterns kids are taught when they are younger will stick with them throughout their lives. So if a child grows up eating fast food four or five times a week and drinking sugary sodas and energy drinks, they will continue to do that as adults just because they don't know any better.

If you are not sure what a healthy diet is or how you can start to eat healthier meals, there are some options.

You will need to learn how to eat in a healthier way so you should start to see a nutritionist who can help you figure out how to eat healthy no matter what your schedule is like.

While you work with the nutritionist to learn about healthy eating it might be a good idea to buy your meals from a service like Nutrisystem, where all the meals are cooked and frozen and then delivered to you.

The meals that you buy will be nutritionally balanced and portioned correctly. This can help you learn how to judge portion sizes and what foods to eat in order to get the vitamins and minerals that your body needs to be healthy.

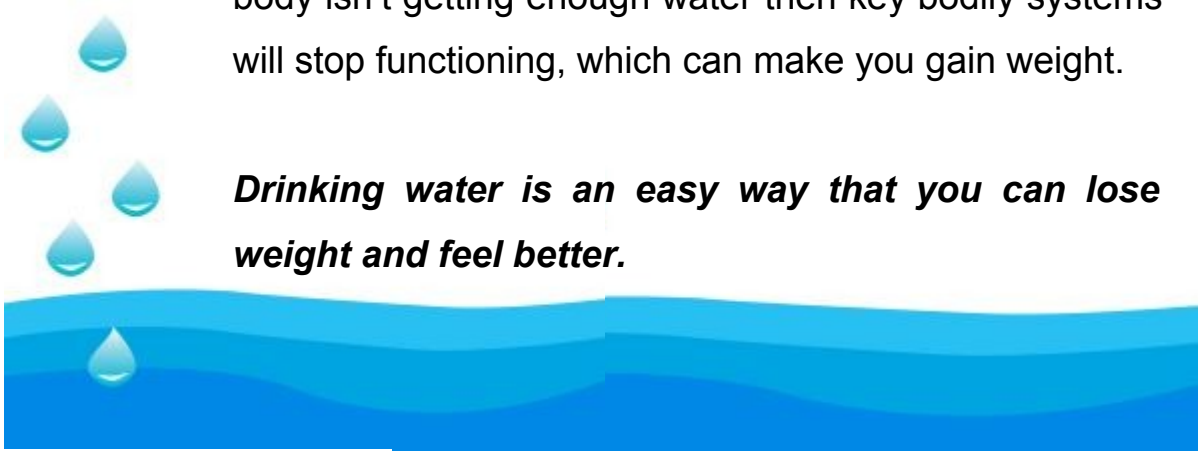
DRINK WATER TO LOSE WEIGHT

Do you drink enough water? Medical studies prove that drinking water is crucial to weight loss. You should drink at least 8-10 ounces of water 8 times a day.

Drinking more water is an effective weight loss tool for several reasons. Drinking water instead of sugary sodas or even fruit juice obviously means that you are cutting out calories and sugar, which will absolutely help you to lose weight.

Drinking more water will also help fill up your stomach so that you feel less hungry. If you have trouble losing weight because you always feel hungry, drinking more water will help you feel fuller so that you will eat less. If you drink one large glass of water before every meal you can cut the amount of calories you consume by a quarter or even by half and not feel hungry.

Your body needs water to function properly and if your body isn't getting enough water then key bodily systems will stop functioning, which can make you gain weight.



Drinking water is an easy way that you can lose weight and feel better.

THE SKINNY ON POPULAR DIETS – DO THEY WORK?

There are lots of fad diets that are very popular right now, and they can be lumped into three different types of diets. The low carb diets like the Atkins Diet and the South Beach Diet, the low-fat diets like the Eat More, Weigh Less diet, the so called "good carb" diets like the Sugarbusters and Glucose Revolution diets, and the 40/30/30 diets like The Zone diet. Do these diets really work?

LOW CARB DIETS

For a long time low carb diets were all the rage when it came to dieting trends. The Atkins diet is probably the most well known low carb diet. The Atkins diet is an extreme low carb diet because you have to severely restrict the carbs that you eat but you can eat unlimited amounts of fat and protein.

So on the Atkins diet if you wanted to have a cheeseburger you couldn't eat the bun or have any vegetables on it but you could have three hamburger patties dripping with cheese. A recommended snack on the Atkins diet is a roll of prosciutto or turkey breast wrapped around a cream cheese filling. Eggs, heavy cream, and lots of cheese are staples of the Atkins diet.

Can you lose weight on the Atkins diet? Some people initially lose a significant amount of weight. But there are serious side effects that come with depriving your body suddenly of carbs, caffeine, and other

nutrients. The four long term studies that were done on people who followed the Atkins diet showed that 50% dropped off the diet within 6 months.

The other 50% experienced weight gain even while following the diet. Plus, many of the people that stayed on the Atkins diet long term suffered from increased heart disease and increased cholesterol from all the high fat and rich foods they were eating.

The Atkins diet is not considered a good diet for long term weight loss by most diet experts. The idea of restricting carbs to lose weight is sound, but most dieticians and doctors agree that you can't cut carbs completely out of your diet and expect to be healthy.

If you want to follow a low carb diet, most doctors suggest the South Beach Diet. The South Beach Diet is similar to the Atkins diet but allows a low amount of healthy carbs and limits the fat and calorie content of other foods that are allowed on the diet. The South Beach Diet also encourages people to eat vegetables, which the Atkins diet doesn't.

If you are going to try a low carb diet, the South Beach Diet is more effective than the Atkins diet and will not put you at an increased risk of heart disease or high cholesterol.

LOW FAT DIETS

There have been hundreds of low fat diets over the years. In the 70's and 80's the idea that fat makes you fat took root in Western culture and fat became the enemy. But your body does need some fat in order to function properly.

What your body doesn't need is the wrong kinds of fats; the fats that increase your cholesterol and damage your heart. But not all fats are created equal.

Monosaturated fats like the ones found in peanut butter, nuts, avocados and olive oil are very good for the body. Polyunsaturated fats like the ones found in margarine, mayonnaise, some types of nuts, natural oils, and seeds are also good for your body.

Omega-3 fatty acids like those found in fish and other types of lean meat are essential for your brain and your body to function properly. Cutting those types of fats out of your diet can lead to serious health problems.

The bad fats or things like butter, bacon grease, lard, and trans fats are the fats that can damage your health and make you fat.

Trans fats, which were used by most restaurants to cook fried foods like French fries are now being outlawed in many states because they are so unhealthy for humans and many people eat fast food at least

three times a week. If you are eating out you should ask what kind of oil the food is cooked in to be sure it's not being cooked in oil that contains trans fats.

But most low fat diets don't see a difference between the types of fats and encourage people to stop eating all fat. Instead, the fat is replaced with chemical additives and other man made fats that are not healthy and don't function as well as real fat.

That makes the food that they are used in less tasty, less filling, and much unhealthier than just eating a small amount of food that has a natural fat in it.

Some people do have success on some low fat diets, but most of the time, people find low fat diets very hard to stick to because the food that you are allowed to eat doesn't taste very good and isn't very filling. Some people do develop health problems from the fake fats used in low fat diet foods.

If you want to try eating a low fat diet to lose weight, experts say that you should just choose foods that are rich in healthy fats and avoid foods that have bad fats in them. Fats shouldn't make up more than 20% of your daily calories, but you should still have a small amount of healthy fats every day in order to be healthy and lose weight.

GOOD CARB DIETS

The “good carb” diets like the Sugarbusters diet and any diet that follows the Glycemic Index are popular diets that really do work for many people.

Instead of banning all carbs, these good carb diets encourage people to eat fewer calories and fewer fats while eating lots of fresh fruits and vegetables and lean protein like chicken and fish.

Most of these diets operate on the principle that eating no refined sugar or less refined sugar and very few refined starches will help control the amount of glucose in the blood, which will help control weight and fight insulin resistance and diabetes.

These good carb diets are often recommended for people who are at high risk of developing diabetes or already have pre-diabetes. Following a good carb diet can be an effective way to manage Type 2 diabetes so doctors recommend these diets to diabetic patients.

There have not been many long term studies done on the effects of good carb diets but the studies that have been done indicate that a good carb diet can be an effective way to lose weight and keep it off.

40/30/30 DIETS

40/30/30 diets operate on the idea that each meal that you eat should be made up of 40% carbs, 30% protein and 30% fat. The creators of this ratio found that eating meals made of this ratio would help to control blood sugar levels and would also help the body process the nutrients in the food more efficiently, which led to weight loss.

There are several popular 40/30/30 diets. The most popular one, the Zone diet, was started by a medical doctor and is supposed to be the most effective 40/30/30 diet. Studies have shown that the Zone diet can be very good for people who have chronic conditions like arthritis, fibromyalgia, and diabetes.

Most chronic or long term conditions can be managed through diet and exercise as well as through medication. Often, doctors will recommend diets like the Zone to patients who are getting older.

The most difficult part of the 40/30/30 diets is learning how to properly balance each meal so that you get the ratio needed to make the diet effective. Since it can be hard to learn how to properly balance your meals when you first start the diet, most people buy pre-packaged foods that are already balanced until they learn how to figure out the 40/30/30 ratio for themselves.

WHY FAD DIETS CAN MAKE YOU FAT

Fad diets don't work. This is pretty commonly accepted by doctors and nutritionists and yet millions of people go on fad diets every year trying to lose weight only to fail. Why do people insist on trying fad diets knowing that the fad diets probably won't work? Because it's easier to believe that the fad diet will work than it is to make real, lasting changes in their relationship to food and nutrition. But fad diets aren't just dangerous to your self-esteem; fad diets can make you gain weight over a long period of time.

Think of each fad diet that you've ever gone on. Each one has made you radically change the way you eat. Cutting out carbs, cutting out sugar, cutting out fat; no matter what the diet is, that diet made you stop eating some type of food. Making very quick and radical changes to your eating habits will throw your body into shock. When your body is in shock it creates more Cortisol to deal with stress, and too much Cortisol will lead to weight gain.

The chemical makeup of your body also changes when you deprive it of certain elements like carbs or fats. These constant changes to the chemical structure of your body can cause your body to store fat to protect itself against starvation. You are not trying to gain weight, but your body thinks it's being starved and will automatically store fat to burn for energy during the time when the body is not getting enough calories or the right nutrition.

Most people who try fad diets end up going off the diet within a month. Constantly going from diet to diet, with periods of binge eating in between, is very hard on your body.

These constant changes can cause more weight gain than just eating a steady type of diet, even if it's unhealthy. So in reality you're better off eating an unhealthy diet regularly than you are dieting for a month, then not dieting, then trying another diet the month after that.

The only way to really lose weight and keep it off is by using a common sense approach to dieting. The basic dieting equation that fewer calories eaten and more calories burned through exercise never fails to produce results when it comes to weight loss.

If you are looking for a quick fix and a quick weight loss, you won't find it. But if you want to lose weight in a healthy, sustainable way then the only way to do that is to eat less and exercise more.

So when you are trying to find a diet that you can follow, how can you tell if a diet is really a diet that is proven to work or just a fad diet that might end up making you gain weight in the long run?

HOW TO RECOGNIZE A FAD DIET

Here are some of the ways that you can tell if a diet is a reliable, proven diet that might actually help you lose weight or if it's just a fad diet that you should probably avoid.

Keep these things in mind when you are researching a diet that you might want to try and don't try any diet that:

- Says that you can lose huge amounts of weight in weeks or months
- Says that you can lose weight while eating whatever you want
- Overly simplifies the diet and ignores complex issues surrounding weight loss
- Only has testimonials as proof of success, no recommendations from medical professionals
- Has very dramatic claims of success that have no medical proof
- Has lists of good and bad foods that you must follow
- Tries to sell its own line of products or books as part of the diet
- Has no studies proving its effectiveness that have been reviewed by medical personnel or dietary researchers
- Doesn't make allowances for people that have medical conditions, allergies, or other health concerns
- Restricts what you can eat from one of the food groups or says you can't eat anything from one particular food group.
- Doesn't offer any information about the effects of the diet over a long period of time
- Predicts huge weight gain and dire consequences if you go off the diet

COMMON WEIGHT LOSS MYTHS

When it comes to dieting, there are a lot of myths out there that get passed around as truth so often that people start to really believe that they are true. Thinking that these myths are true can set you up to fail when it comes to weight loss. Here are some of the most common myths that are told about weight loss.

Skipping Meals Will Make You Lose Weight – This is not true. Skipping meals does not make you lose weight. In fact, skipping meals can make you gain more weight. When you don't eat, your body thinks that it is being starved and it will immediately take steps to protect itself. Your metabolism will slow down and your body will start to store fat as insulation against going hungry. So you never skip meals when you are dieting.

If Something is Fat Free You Can Eat More of It – Even though it would be really great if this was true, it's not true. You need to be careful and eat only a correct portion of whatever food you are eating, even if it is fat free, if you want to lose weight. Eating fat-free foods or sugar-free foods doesn't mean that you can eat as much as you want and still lose weight.

Eating Fat Makes You Fat – Most people believe that eating fat is bad and must be avoided at all costs. That is only partly true. Your body does need some fats in order to survive. Not all fats are bad. Fats help the body process nutrients and fats will also make you feel

full longer, helping you eat less. The trick is to eat healthy fats that help your body and not the bad fats that cause heart disease, high cholesterol, and other health problems. Foods like Olive Oil and different kinds of nuts have healthy fats; a fast food cheeseburger and fries have unhealthy fats.

The Best Way to Lose Weight Is Cut Out All Carbs – While it is true that cutting back on carbohydrates can help you lose weight, you shouldn't cut all the carbs out of your diet. Just like with fats, your body needs some carbs to survive and work efficiently.

The trick is to eat healthy carbs like the carbs found in vegetables and some fruits and some grains. But you do need carbs in order to survive so cutting all carbs out of your diet will not help you lose weight and it might even cause some serious damage to your body.

Cabbage Soup, Celery, or Other Foods Will Burn Fat and Make You Lose Weight Faster – Nope, it's not true. There is no magic food that you can eat to burn fat and help you lose weight. It would sure be nice if there was, but there isn't. The Cabbage Soup diet and all the rest are more fad diets that don't really work.

There Is No Healthy Fast Food – While fast food is generally unhealthy and definitely should not make up a huge part of your diet, sometimes it's necessary to get some fast food so you don't starve. There are some relatively healthy fast food options. The key to damage control when you have to eat fast food is to keep portions

small. Order from the kid's menu or the dollar menu and skip the super size option.

Eating After 8 pm Will Make You Gain Weight – Another variation of this myth is that eating after 11 PM will make you gain weight. This myth is really common but, in fact, it is not true. It doesn't matter what time of the day or night you eat. What matters is that you eat fewer calories than you burn so that your body will burn up the fat stored in the body for energy.

You can eat whatever you want and lose weight – Sorry. As fabulous as it would be if this were true, it's definitely not true. You cannot gorge yourself on fast food or cake or other foods that are bad for you and high in calories and expect to lose weight. Any diet product or diet supplement that promises that you can eat whatever you want and lose weight is lying. If it sounds too good to be true, it usually is, remember? That is definitely the case when it comes to this myth.

Dairy Products Are Fattening – This is not true. Dairy products like milk and cheese are actually foods that you should eat while you are dieting so that you can be sure that you are getting enough Calcium and Vitamin D. Dairy foods are the best source of Calcium besides actual Calcium supplements so you should definitely drink milk while you are dieting.

In fact, some studies show that drinking milk when you are trying to lose weight can actually help you lose weight by whittling inches off your midsection. Some scientific data says that drinking 24 ounces of milk every day can help reduce your waist size by several inches. So combining milk with a sensible eating plan and lots of exercise can actually help you lose weight.

HOW TO PICK THE RIGHT DIET FOR YOU

There are a lot of diets out there. It can be overwhelming to try and juggle all the information and figure out which diet is best for you. You should eliminate the fad diets, and that will narrow down the pool a little bit. Whenever you are looking at a diet that you might want to try, ask yourself these questions:

- Has the diet been studied and proven safe by medical professionals?
- Does the diet require a lot of time, special equipment, or effort?
- Does the diet make ridiculous promises that can't possibly be true?
- Will the diet be something you can stick to for months or years?
- Will the diet help you make lifestyle changes in the way you approach food?
- Do you need special food for the diet?
- How much will the diet cost?
- Do you have to join a group or commit to a lengthy contract?
- Is the diet easy to understand and follow?
- If you are a vegetarian, does the diet have a vegetarian option?
- If you have health problems, is the diet safe for people taking the medications that you take?
- How much exercise is required on the diet?

JOINING A WEIGHT LOSS GROUP – DOES IT REALLY HELP?

Some of the most popular diets like Weight Watchers are group oriented and you pay a fee to join and then you go to weekly meetings where you will weigh in and have a chance to get support from other dieters. Are these types of meetings really effective for weight loss?

A lot of people, especially women, find these meetings to be a great way to stay motivated and to get information about health and nutrition and how to eat healthy. Some people find being weighed in every week embarrassing and don't like having to pay for the weekly meetings. It really depends on your personality.

But there is no doubt that getting support from friends and family is essential when you're trying to lose weight. If you are a person that makes friends easily and doesn't mind being out in public then a group like Weight Watchers would probably be a good thing for you to try. You could make new friends, share stories, and motivate each other to stick to the diet and lose weight.

There is plenty of evidence that the Weight Watchers plan is a very effective weight loss solution that will help you change the way you approach eating.

But if there is no Weight Watchers group near you or you just don't feel comfortable going to public meetings, you can always go online to find weight loss support groups on the Internet.

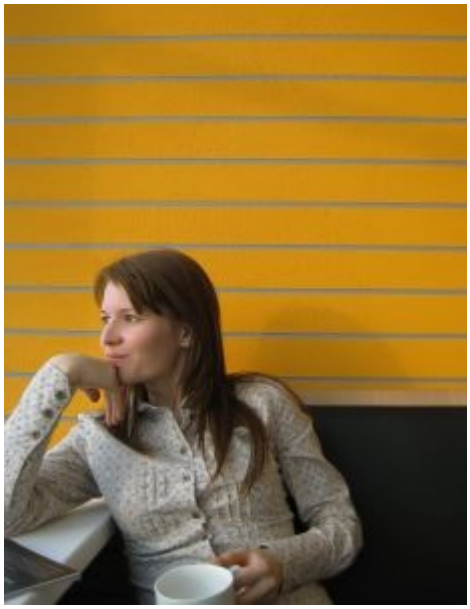
Using Internet message boards and chatting with other people who are trying to lose weight can be a wonderful way to stay motivated without the embarrassment of a public weigh-in or the cost of weekly meetings.

There are lots of weight loss support groups on the Internet. Some are for people who are following specific diets and some are just general support groups. If you don't have a lot of family and friends who are going to help you and support you while you diet, you should go online to make new friends and get the support that you will need to lose weight.

Dieting isn't easy, and it's ok to ask for help. In fact, it's essential. You need to believe in yourself. If you have a lack of faith in yourself and your ability to stick to this diet and get fit and healthy then you will need friends who will support you and motivate you to keep going when you want to give up.

Whether you choose a group like Weight Watchers or choose to join an online support group for weight loss, make it a priority to find some source of support when you start your diet.

THE COMMON SENSE DIET –
GET HEALTHY AND LOSE WEIGHT



You don't need to follow some complicated diet or eat a lot of strange foods or deny yourself good healthy food in order to lose weight. All you need to do is use a little common sense.

There is only one way to lose weight and keep it off. There is only one formula that will lead to healthy and safe weight loss every time.

Follow this formula and you will always lose weight and most of the time, you will be able to keep it off successfully for years.

All you really need to know about weight loss is in this one simple equation. Are you ready to learn the only thing you'll ever need to know about weight loss? Here it is:

EAT A SMALLER AMOUNT OF CALORIES THAN YOUR BODY USES FOR FUEL AND YOU WILL LOSE WEIGHT.

You've probably heard that before. But it's true, and it's the only way that you will ever successfully lose weight in a healthy way and keep it off.

Let's say you normally eat about 2,000 calories per day, which is the recommended amount of calories for an average weight adult. If you cut your daily calories back to 1,500 then your body needs to get that additional 500 calories of energy from somewhere. It will get that additional energy by burning energy from the fat stored in your body. That will make you lose weight.

There are roughly 3,500 calories in a pound of fat. So in order to lose five pounds, you will need to burn an additional 17,500 calories. Now do you see why it's impossible for those fad diets and trendy diet pills to work like they say they do?

No pill can ever cause your body to burn that many additional calories. Only restricting your calories and forcing your body to burn fat for energy can cause real weight loss.

Dieting is about more than just calories though. If you only eat a salad and drink diet sodas for calories, you still won't lose weight because you are not giving the body what it needs to function. Your diet shouldn't be something that you use to punish yourself or to punish your body.

Your body needs food for fuel. There is no getting around that fact. So you need to change what you give your body for fuel, and that's where the common sense part comes in.

It's common sense to know that your body needs whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and healthy fats. It's not always easy to only give your body what it needs when you're craving a juicy, cheesy, greasy burger, but if you want to be healthy, you'll choose to skip that burger.

The common sense diet isn't really a diet in the traditional sense. It's a lifestyle. It's choosing to make your health a priority. Instead of punishing your body for being overweight, you should be celebrating your body and feeding it so that your body gets strong and healthy.

A diet that is rich in whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, hormone free lean meat, and other ingredients combined with a regular exercise practice is the best way, and the only way, to get truly fit and to get your body to the ideal weight.

It can be difficult, at first, to change your thinking about dieting. If you have always been overweight, you have probably spent years dieting and hating your body.

That kind of mindset doesn't go away overnight, but you can change how you approach dieting and how you think of your body. Your body is not the enemy, and it's not out to get you. Making your body healthy and giving it what it needs will ensure that you will be healthy and happy as you get older.

When you change the way that you approach food and what you eat, you will notice that you have more energy, sleep better at night, and you will be slowly changing your metabolism to process calories more efficiently.

Exercise is also a necessary part of living a common sense diet because exercise is crucial to keeping the body strong and healthy. Building muscle will also help you burn more calories and help speed up your metabolism.

You can start the common sense diet right now, with no special meals required! Start by ordering a salad for your next lunch, or having a healthy glass of water instead of that soda. When you're at the grocery store after work, think about what is the best choice for eating healthy. Instead of reaching for a frozen pizza, reach for a bag of frozen vegetables for dinner. Cook up those vegetables with some

white rice and a chicken breast instead of making macaroni and cheese.

Portion size is also an important part of the common sense diet. Most people eat double the portion size they should have at each meal.

Your stomach is about the size of your fist.

Make a fist right now. That is about how big your stomach actually is. Now think of the last meal you ate. How much food were you putting into that little stomach?

The stomach will stretch when there is a lot of food placed in it, which is why you probably never noticed how much food you really eat. When you sit down to eat your next meal, make a fist before you lift that fork and try not to eat more food than you could fit into that fist. Eating smaller meals that are no bigger than a fist 4-5 times a day is a much better way to lose weight than eating 3 larger meals per day.

In order to really see how much food you eat in a normal day, you should start keeping a food diary.

KEEPING A FOOD DIARY

Keeping a food diary is a really good way to figure out how many calories you are consuming every day. It will also give you a good idea of what your eating patterns are so that you know what to change. But be warned – keeping a food diary can be shocking for some people. In general, people tend to think that they eat less than they actually do. Those calories can add up fast!

To start keeping a food diary, get yourself a small notebook or pad, small enough to fit in your pocket or purse. You can also use the notes feature on your planner or on your PDA, but most people find that a small notebook, the kind you can get for 99 cents at the office supply store, works really well.

Each morning, write the date at the top of the page and then for the entire day take a second to jot down what you're eating and the time you are eating it all day long.

A typical food diary entry would look like this at the end of the day:

2/4 – Tuesday

7:00 AM Breakfast – 2 pieces of toast with peanut butter
Coffee with cream and sugar

9:00 AM – Starbucks vanilla latte – grande and a white chocolate scone

11:30 AM – Cupcakes that were in the break room. 3 of them

1:00 PM Lunch – Double cheeseburger value meal with a coke from McDonald's

2:30 PM – Peanut butter cups from the vending machine, 12 oz Coke

4:30 PM – Starbucks coffee with cream and sugar

6:00 PM Dinner – 3 slices of pizza

8:30 PM – cereal bowl of ice cream

Do this every day for two weeks and you will start to see some eating patterns emerge. Do you always go for a pick me up snack around 2.30? If so, then you can start bringing some healthy low calorie snacks and water to have as a snack instead of candy bars and soda. Identifying the way you eat and how much you really eat can be a huge help when you are trying to change your eating patterns and adopt a healthy, common sense approach to weight loss.

COUNTING CALORIES AND WEIGHT LOSS

A food diary is also a great way for you to get an accurate idea of how many calories that you consume in a day.

At the end of the day, you can go back over your food diary and figure out how many calories are in each of the things that you ate that day.

There are lots of commercially available calorie counting books that give the total number of calories for a lot of common foods and even fast foods so that you can accurately count the calories in a fast food meal.

If you don't want to buy a commercially available calorie counting book, look on the Internet. There are lots of calorie counting websites that have the same information that is in the books for free.

WHY PORTION CONTROL MATTERS WHEN COUNTING CALORIES

It can be really eye opening to see the actual amount of calories in many of your favorite foods. Often, the foods don't have a high calorie count for a normal sized portion, but you need to keep in mind that most people eat twice the amount suggested, or a double portion, so the calorie count needs to be doubled.

A slice of pizza may only have 350 calories, depending on the toppings and crust, but if you have three of them for dinner then you have just eaten over 1,000 calories.

If the recommended amount of calories for an average weight adult is 2,000, then having 3 slices of pizza would make up half of your daily calories.

A typical fast food value meal that millions of people eat for lunch every day can have anywhere from around 1,300 calories to 2,100 calories.

Think about that the next time you are hungry at lunch time and want to hit the drive thru instead of having a healthier meal!

Do you want that double cheeseburger bad enough to use up half or more of your daily calories on it?

Counting calories takes some time and effort, but counting calories is the only way to safely and effectively lose weight. It's the only way you can lose weight and keep it off.

It might be hard at first, but eventually, it will get easier to keep track of the calories you are consuming each day.

There's a fine line between restricting your calories and starving yourself. Starving yourself will not result in weight loss but calorie restriction will.

So in order to figure out how you can restrict your calories to the point where your body will start to burn fat for fuel, you will need to find out what your ideal calorie intake is.

HOW MANY CALORIES SHOULD YOU EAT EACH DAY?

Are you ready to figure out how many calories that you should take in each day? There are several ways to figure out what your ideal calorie intake should be. Some are complicated and involve a lot of math, such as calculating your Base Metabolic Rate and then adding the amount of energy you normally put into physical activity and adding in how efficiently your body processes food.

If you want to use a complicated method such as that one, you are better off going to a nutritionist who has tools to measure those values and can give you a very precise figure of how many calories you should be eating each day.

But if you want a simpler formula to figure out how many calories you should be taking in each day to keep your body functioning, well, there is an easier way. First, you need to asses your activity level.

Sedentary – You should consider yourself sedentary if the only exercise you get is walking from the car to the door. If you sit at a computer all day and don't work out and don't do any physical activity beyond walking around the grocery store when you stop to pick up something for dinner, then in terms of physical activity you are sedentary.

If you are sedentary, the best way to figure out how many calories you need to take in on a daily basis is to take your weight and

multiply it by 14. So if you weigh 150 pounds, you would multiply 150 x 14 and the answer is 2100 so you need to take in 2,100 calories each day to maintain your weight. If you want to lose weight, then you need to restrict your calories.

Moderately active – If you are moderately active then you don't work out every day, but you might hit the gym for a 40 minute workout two or three times a week or take a yoga class or a swimming class or enjoy a walk or bike ride around the neighborhood at night.

If you are moderately active then to figure out how many calories you need each day, take your weight and multiply it by 17. The total will give you the number of calories you should take in to maintain your weight. If you want to lose weight, you will need to take in fewer calories.

Active – If you bike to work, hit the gym every day, or run five miles at night, you are active. In order to figure out your ideal calorie intake, multiply your weight by 20 and that's how many calories your body needs to keep working efficiently. If you want to lose weight then you need to restrict your calories.

OVERHAUL YOUR KITCHEN – GET THE JUNK OUT!

Now that you're ready to get started on a common sense diet of eating healthy foods in the proper portions, you need to get into that kitchen and get all the junk food out. If you don't want to waste all that junk food, put it in a box so that you can give it to a friend or neighbor or donate it to a local charity.

You shouldn't throw away all that food but you shouldn't eat it. And if it's in the house, you will eat it. It needs to go. All of it.

To do this in an orderly fashion, take out all the food that you have in your cupboards and get a couple large boxes and trash cans.

Also, keep a large pad and pen nearby so you can make a shopping list of healthy items to replace the junk food.

Go through each item and assess its value. When you've done all the food in the cupboards then go through the refrigerator and the freezer.

Get rid of any junk foods and outdated foods. Be ruthless because this is for your health.

While you're sorting your foods, take notice of the items that you have bought because those will give you some clues about how you like to eat. If you have five different kinds of potato chips then obviously you like crunchy snacks.

What are some healthy, crunchy snacks that you could buy to replace those chips? You could buy nuts, trail mix, pretzels, popcorn, and tortilla chips, among others.

You could bake a pita so that it gets nice and toasty and break it into small chips to eat with fresh salsa or some olive oil. An entire pita has less than 200 calories.

Add some healthy crunchy snacks to your shopping list.

If you notice a pattern of sweet junk food in the kitchen, do the same thing and try to think of healthy and low calorie alternatives to those foods to put on the shopping list. Getting rid of the junk food in your house doesn't mean that you can't ever snack again, it just means that you need to change the way that you think about snacking.

Replace all that unhealthy junk food with healthy alternatives and you can still enjoy a snack when you are watching TV or playing a game with your family. If you have kids, it might take some time for them to get used to not having any junk food in the house and they might be upset with you, but stay strong. You are helping them learn healthy eating patterns that will last a lifetime.

Getting rid of junk food in your diet can be like breaking an addiction, and you might have some withdrawal pangs. But stick with it. If there is no junk food in the house then you won't eat it, and you will lose weight and feel healthier.

LOW CALORIE FOODS TO KEEP ON HAND

Since you're ridding the kitchen of all that high fat, high calorie food, you should replace the junk food with some low calorie snacks and cooking supplies that you should always keep on hand. If you have low calorie snacks and food always in the kitchen then when you want to cook a low calorie meal or have a quick low calorie snack you will have some right there and ready to go.

Condiments – Condiments can be used to add flavor and zest to a lot of low calorie meals so keep these condiments on hand so that if your low calorie meal needs a kick, you have a low calorie way to spice things up.

- Low calorie salad dressing or oil and spices to make your own
- Low calorie mayonnaise
- Fresh Salsa
- Butter Buds
- Vinegar
- Cocktail sauce
- Reduced-sugar fruit spread or jam
- Soy sauce
- Olive oil
- Spices like Salt, Pepper, Lemon Pepper, and others that you like

Canned items – A lot of canned items can be kept for years and are always good to have around when you want to whip up a tasty, low calorie meal. Keep these canned goods stocked in your kitchen.

- Tomato paste – to make your own low calorie spaghetti sauce
- Canned beans – great to make as a side dish
- Canned vegetables – throw them into a casserole
- Canned fruit – great for desserts or over low calorie ice cream
- Soups and broth – Get organic soups when you can. Throw some soup in your bag for a quick work lunch or use soup as a base in a low calorie meal. Broth is a great base to use in a lot of low calorie cooking. Look for organic broths that are low in calories but made from the best ingredients possible
- Tuna – great for a quick protein pick me up or last minute casserole
- Hummus – this Middle Eastern dip makes a great low calorie snack
- Peanut butter – every house needs to have peanut butter

Dairy – It's a little bit trickier to keep dairy items on hand because they expire, but some staples should always be in the refrigerator.

- Butter – low calorie margarine or real butter
- Milk – 2% milk is the best to keep on hand
- Cheese – low calorie cheese can add a lot of flavor to meals
- Yogurt – Yogurts are fabulous for dieters. Individually portioned and low calorie, these great sources of calcium are the perfect size for a snack and they are sweet and usually have less than 200 calories. When the grocery store has a sale on yogurt, stock up.

Breads and Grains – You should not eat a lot of breads or grains when you are watching calories and trying to lose weight but you do need to have some in your diet. Keep these basic breads and grains around to use as snacks or for sandwiches and low calorie meals.

- Whole-grain, reduced sugar, and bran cereals – you can throw some cereal on top of your yogurt to add some fiber and crunch and make a great healthy and fast breakfast that has less than 300 calories
- Whole grain bread – You don't need to buy special low calorie bread; most whole grain bread has under 100 calories per slice; just remember that a serving is one slice, not two

- Brown rice – Brown rice is very healthy and the instant rice is easy and fast to make. Throw some frozen vegetables and brown rice into a steamer, cook some chicken breasts and 20 minutes later you have a meal.

- Whole wheat pitas – Pitas can be used with a meal, with a snack, stuff some hummus and salad in one and call it lunch, bake one and cut it into pieces for some crunchy chips; the pita possibilities are endless and pitas have less than 200 calories.

- Oatmeal – Oatmeal is a great filling food for breakfast and has lots of fiber that will help you feel full throughout the day.

- Pasta – eat pasta sparingly, and look for whole grain pasta, but keep some around for a quick dinner.

- Whole grain crackers – eat crackers and cheese as a snack instead of potato chips

- Rice cakes – rice cakes are the classic diet food. Crunchy and filling with hardly any calories, these are a diet staple. Spread a tablespoon of peanut butter on top to add some taste and protein

Frozen Foods – Frozen foods can be kept for a long time so stock up when the grocery store is having a sale.

- Frozen vegetables – you cannot have too many frozen vegetables. You should eat 6-8 servings of vegetables per day.

- Frozen fruit – Look for fruit that is frozen in its own juice with no sugar added. You can defrost the fruit and use it in smoothies, as a snack, over ice cream, or added to some yogurt.

- Frozen yogurt – frozen yogurt is a great low calorie frozen treat that can replace ice cream when you really want ice cream.

- Frozen diet dinners – Frozen diet meals are wonderful to keep at work so that you always have a fast, easy, low calorie lunch option. Most diet frozen meals have less than 300 calories and come in some very tasty varieties.

Fresh Fruits and Vegetables – Buying fresh fruits and vegetables can be expensive but you should try to have some around whenever possible. During the spring and summer, hit the local farmer's market to get great deals on fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables.

Most of the time, fresh fruits and vegetables are cheaper than frozen during the spring and summer but you might need to use frozen fruits and vegetables during the fall and winter when the farmer's markets close and fresh produce is harder to find.

EATING HEALTHY ON A BUSY SCHEDULE

How many times have you told yourself that you're just too busy to eat healthy? Probably more times than you can count. If you are trying to juggle a career, a family, and other obligations, it might seem like it's just not practical to eat healthy because you don't have a lot of time to shop and you certainly don't have time to cook a lot of fussy meals from scratch.

But it's a myth that eating healthy or eating well needs to be time consuming and difficult. There are lots of ways that you can eat healthy and stay on a healthy diet no matter how busy you are.

Use low calorie prepared foods – When time is tight it's worth the money to invest in low calorie prepared meals and snacks that have high quality ingredients. Pre-packaged meal bars and protein bars, bottles of water, nutrition shakes, and frozen dinners are all things that can help you eat healthy even when you're on the run.

Buy some pre-made salads at the deli and keep them on hand for snacks or quick meals. Soups and other easy to make items can be kept in your desk at work or kept in containers in the fridge so that the kids can heat them up after school. Yogurts and string cheese are tasty, portable, healthy snacks that are far lower in calories than chips or milkshakes.

Plan strategically – If you know that you have to race out the door after work to pick up the kids from soccer practice or piano lessons or school and that you and they will be starving on the way home, keep a bag of healthy snacks like granola bars, trail mix, nuts, or peanut butter sandwiches in the car.

If you are really organized, pack a cooler or an insulated bag with yogurt, bottled water, or real fruit juice so that you won't be tempted to stop for fast food.

Plan your lunches for work the week before and bring frozen meals or pre-packed lunches to the office so that you will never forget a lunch and be forced to go eat fast food.

On Sunday, plan out a healthy menu for the week ahead and cook as many meals as you can ahead of time. Cook up a dozen or so chicken breasts and freeze them so that you can just reheat them for an instant dinner. Make soups and casseroles and other dishes that can be kept in the fridge and reheated.

Some simple planning and changing the way you think can make it possible to eat healthy no matter what your schedule is like or how hectic your life is.

ARE THERE ANY HEALTHY FAST FOODS?

Common sense says that at some point, no matter how much planning ahead you do, you will need to or just want to have some fast food. It's a myth that all fast food is unhealthy. There are some fast foods that are healthier than others and there are some easy ways to cut calories when you have to eat fast food.

Go for the greens – Order a salad with lots of greens, dressing on the side, and a grilled chicken breast. Salads are inherently low calorie as long as they are not drenched in dressing. Adding a grilled chicken breast with no breading can make a tasty, relatively low calorie lunch or dinner option.

To further cut calories, order water or a diet soda, or even milk. Only use half of the packet of dressing that they give you.

Think small – Order from the kids menu or the dollar menu where items are usually smaller in size. Ask for all dressings or toppings on the side or skip them completely. Never order a "double," "super," or "monster" size anything! Order a side salad instead of a dinner salad. Get a small order of fries if you really want fries. You can give yourself a taste of what you crave without going overboard. That will satisfy your craving but keep you on track calorie-wise.

Skip dessert – If you are eating a heavy, greasy, fast food meal you don't need a high calorie dessert loaded with sugar on top of that. If you still want something sweet, order a fruit cup or apple slices with yogurt dip; most fast food places offer these as an alternative to fries on the kids menu.

Skip the fries – Just because they come with the meal doesn't mean you need to eat them. Skip the fries or just don't order them in the first place. If you really want a potato, order a plain baked potato with a little butter; skip the sour cream and other condiments.

Order water or milk instead of soda – Even though diet soda has no calories, it's still very unhealthy. Skip the bucket sized sodas, even the diet ones, and order a bottle of water or milk with your meal.

Choose a fast food restaurant carefully – all fast food is not created equal. Some type of ethnic fast food like Middle Eastern Falafel, Hummus, or pita sandwiches or Mexican tacos and burritos, and Indian samosas will be healthier than the traditional burger and fries. Check around to see if there are alternative types of fast food nearby.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT EXERCISE

Even though diet and calorie counting is very important when it comes to weight loss, exercise is also a very important part of weight loss. Exercise is crucial to staying healthy and fit. Exercise is the only way to really boost your metabolism and to burn fat. Cutting calories can help keep you from gaining weight, but restricting calories and exercising is the only way to get your body to start burning fat so that you will lose weight.

Exercise is what causes a lot of people to give up on trying to lose weight. Some people hate exercising, some people have physical problems that make exercising difficult, some people think that they are just too busy and don't have the time or energy to exercise.

Exercise isn't just for weight loss. Exercise is necessary to be healthy and to live a healthy lifestyle. Getting regular exercise has benefits that go far beyond weight loss like:

More energy – Who couldn't use more energy to get through the day? Your body was made to move. Exercising will get your heart pumping and all your body systems working more efficiently. Exercise also increases blood flow and circulation, which will help you concentrate and stay alert and focused throughout the day.

Stress relief – For most people, stress is a constant part of life. Stress can cause serious health problems ranging from fatigue and

depression to muscle pain and even a higher risk of having a heart attack or a stroke. Regular exercise is a wonderful way to manage stress and help you relax.

Better overall health – Exercise will increase your stamina and flexibility and will make it easier for you to get around. Older people who stay active are far more likely to be able to live without assistance than people who don't exercise. Studies have also shown that people who exercise regularly are less likely to have depression and anxiety and also have a lower risk of some types of cancer and heart disease.

Better sleep – Having trouble getting a good night's sleep? Experts recommend regular exercise a few hours before bedtime to help you get the best night's sleep possible. Exercise is the key to regulating your body's systems so that you can sleep easily and wake up refreshed and ready to face the day.

MAKING TIME TO EXERCISE

Despite what you might think, you don't need to commit yourself to taking a 2 hour exercise class every night or running five miles a day in order to get enough exercise each day. There are lots of ways that you can make time in your day to squeeze in a little extra calorie burning exercise even if you don't have the time or inclination to do a serious workout. Here are some ways that you can make time for exercise and burn extra calories throughout the day.

- **Park at the other end of the parking lot –** When you get to work, the store, the school, or anywhere else you need to go, park in the furthest spot possible so that you have to do some extra walking to get to the door.

- **Stand while you wait –** At the doctor's office, in line at the fast food restaurant or the pharmacy, waiting for a meeting to start at work, on the phone waiting for customer service, anywhere that you need to wait and would normally sit down, stand up instead. Standing burns more calories than sitting.

- **Take the stairs –** at the office or at the mall, instead of taking the elevator or the escalator, take the stairs. If you work in a multi-floor office or have to leave the office several times a day, taking the stairs can quickly add up to a decent workout.

- **Use your breaks to exercise –** don't want to give up your lunch break to work out or have other things you need to do on your hour long lunch break? Most people get at least two breaks during the day of 15 minutes to 30 minutes each. Use those breaks to go for a quick walk or go up and down the stairs a few times.

- **Multi-task during TV time –** In the evening when you are watching TV or watching a movie with your family you could be exercising. Invest in a treadmill and walk or run on the treadmill while you watch TV or just walk in place on the floor while you watch your favorite shows.

- **Delegate –** If you never have time to exercise because you need to rush home from work and cook dinner and then after dinner you need to clean up and wash the dishes, start delegating. Have the kids help prepare dinner and have your partner or the kids clear the table and wash up afterwards so you can go for a walk or a run.

WHAT IF YOU HATE TO EXERCISE?

When you hear the word “exercise,” do you immediately think of spandex, high- impact aerobics, running, or some other physically demanding and not very fun activity? Do you think of instructors yelling orders like drill sergeants and trying to follow odd physical moves that seem more like things you would do during a seizure than any type of exercise? A lot of people do.

But exercise doesn’t have to be a chore. You don’t need to spend an hour a day on the treadmill or stair machine to feel like you are exercising. Exercise really can be fun. But what exercise is fun if you don’t like or can’t do aerobics and sports, don’t care for swimming, and would rather sit in your chair than ever walk on a treadmill?

There are lots of other physical activities that you can do to stay in shape and lose weight.

Dancing – Now before you start thinking of ultra thin ballerinas and tutus, there are lots of other kinds of dancing that anyone can do. Dancing can be a really fun way to get some exercise. There’s Hip Hop dancing, Salsa dancing, Belly dancing, traditional ethnic dancing, or just plain old put some music on the radio and dance around the living room in your socks dancing. Even just a half hour of dancing can give you all the benefits of a 2 mile walk or run.

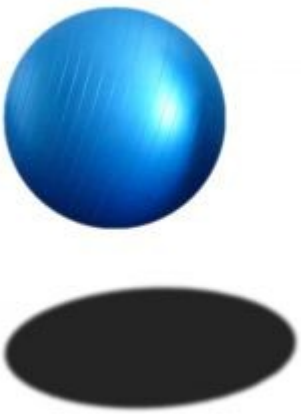
Pilates – Pilates has become really popular in the last couple of years as exercise for people who hate exercise. Pilates was originally developed as a system of rehabilitation for people who have chronic illness or serious injury. The movements are easy to do even for people who are really overweight or out of shape and the results are remarkable.

Yoga – Yoga is also a very popular exercise alternative because it focuses on the health of the whole body and the mind. Yoga is a great way to integrate meditation and exercise. Yoga burns a lot of calories while reducing stress and helping improve flexibility.

Tai Chi – Tai Chi is a more gentle type of martial art that is practiced by everyone from young children to seniors. Tai Chi is a great alternative to exercise because the flowing movements are not strenuous but the body still gets a good workout that will increase strength and burn calories.

These are just a few of the alternatives to traditional exercise that are out there. Check out your local YMCA or community center to see what types of alternative exercise classes they offer.

You might find a great hobby that will also give you some great exercise.



EXERCISE FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

If you are starting to make the change to a healthy lifestyle and you are including your family in that change, you should try to get the whole family exercising. The eating and exercise habits that kids learn will stay with them into adulthood and whether or not they grow up to be healthy and fit depends a lot on the habits you teach them.

Exercising as a family can be a great way to get some quality time with your kids and your partner as well as get some exercise that you all should have. Here are some easy and simple ways that you can get the whole family exercising together.

- Take a walk together after dinner
- Take bike rides together on Sunday morning followed by a healthy picnic breakfast
- Go to Family Swim nights at the local YMCA or community pool and swim for a few hours.
- Instead of driving the kids to and from school each day, walk with them to school and walk them home.
- Join a sport that the whole family can do like martial arts
- Buy some workout DVDs and start working at home as a family at night

- Take the whole family to the park on the weekends and play football or soccer, go for walks, or swing on the swings.
- **Get bikes for the family and start planning family bike rides.**
- Go hiking, camping, or fishing as a family.
- Plan active vacations like skiing, horseback riding, or sailing
- Join a gym and participate in family activities held at the gym

With a little creativity, you can find all kinds of ways that are inexpensive to exercise as a family. Exercising as a family will make you all more motivated to get fit.

TIPS AND TRICKS TO STAY MOTIVATED WHEN DIETING

Whenever you start a new diet, you're usually very upbeat, focused, positive, and eager to get on track, lose weight, and get fit. But as the weeks and months go by and it becomes more difficult to lose weight it can be very difficult to stay motivated to continue making healthy life choices and to continue exercising. Here are some tried and true ways that you can stay motivated to keep making healthy common sense decisions about your diet and stay on track to losing weight.

Tape old photos of yourself on the refrigerator – Find a picture of yourself that you absolutely hate; a picture taken when you were at your heaviest weight. Tape it on the refrigerator or the cupboard where you will see it every time you go looking for a snack. Every time you see the picture tell yourself that you will never look like that again. That will help motivate you to not have that extra snack.

Set goals and rewards for yourself – Write down a series of goals and rewards. Things like "When I lose five pounds I will buy that fabulous red dress" or "When I can fit back into my skinny jeans I'll treat myself to those boots that will look great with my skinny jeans" or "When I lose thirty pounds I'm going to Florida for a vacation and I'm actually going to buy a swimsuit and go in the water."

Then do them! Keep track of your progress and reward yourself well when you accomplish another goal that you have set for yourself. Setting goals and rewarding yourself is a powerful way to stay motivated to diet because you will start to really see the positive results of all of your hard work.

Start a blog – Get a little digital support. Starting a blog will do two things. It will help you stay motivated to keep going because now you are accountable to your readers to stay on your diet and keep losing weight. Having a blog will also get you a lot of support from your readers in the form of helpful comments and emails to keep you motivated to stay on track.

A picture is worth 1000 words – Go through some of your favorite clothing catalogs and cut out photos of the clothes that you want to be able to wear when you're at your ideal weight. Pin them up on your closet doors, on your mirror, anywhere where you will see them. Stay focused on how you want to look when you're at your ideal weight and visualizing that will help you make that happen.

Read – Go online or read books that detail the stories and successes of other people who have lost weight successfully. Reading about the success of others will help inspire you to keep going. After all, someday someone might be reading about your struggle with weight loss as a way to stay motivated and to stay on their diet!

Try new things – Don't get stuck in a food or exercise rut. Try new ways to exercise. Take a martial arts class. Try belly dancing. Take some friends to a roller rink or ice rink and skate for the afternoon. Go sledding or skiing. No matter what the season, there is sure to be some new outdoor or physical activity you can try to change up your routine a little.

Do the same thing with food. Try a new ethnic cuisine, or make a healthy low calorie meal you've never tried before. Take a cooking class and then try to re-work all the recipes to be low calorie. Make cooking and eating low calorie foods fun and interesting.

Use a weight loss chart – Make a simple chart documenting your weight loss progress. Also, make one for your physical fitness and the amount of exercise you get. Update the chart weekly and hang it in your bedroom or the kitchen where you can see it and be reminded of how well you are doing. Knowing that you are making progress towards hitting your ideal weight can be enough to keep you motivated to keep going.

Avoid people who are unsupportive or that sabotage you – If you have a friend that always want to eat fast food or go get ice cream and tells you that it's ok to cheat on your diet "just this once" or says other things that disparage your efforts, don't hang out with that person anymore.

Don’t expect that person to support you in your weight loss goal and find a new friend who will go work out with you, eat healthy with you, and help you stay motivated to lose weight. Losing weight can be a real struggle and it’s important to have some strong, supportive friends who will support you because they love you and want you to be healthy.

Sometimes, friends can be jealous when one friend starts to really improve their lives by getting a new job or losing weight. Unfortunately, you might have to be willing to not spend time with that person anymore in order to accomplish your goals.

If your family is not supportive of your desire to get healthy because it means they have to give up junk food or other foods, don’t let them derail you. Stand firm and tell them if they want junk food to eat it outside the house or buy their own and keep it in their rooms.

Don’t let anyone hold you back from doing what you know is best for you – making healthy choices and losing weight!

CONCLUSION

Losing weight is tough. It's even tougher when you need to sort through fad diets, myths, and half truths about dieting. If you want a simple, no-nonsense diet that is practically guaranteed to work, you need to follow the common sense diet.

Eat small amounts of healthy food. Exercise regularly. Limit your calories. That is all you need to do and you will lose weight. It's a scientific fact. In order to effectively lose weight, your body needs to burn more calories than you are eating. Healthy foods that are low in calories will help you get the nutrition you need while you are restricting calories so that you can lose weight.

If you use common sense and planning, you can find ways to eat healthy, low calorie foods no matter where you are and no matter how much time you may or may not have. Making time for exercise is important in weight loss but it's easy to work exercise into an already busy schedule without too much effort.

Making a commitment to live healthy and lose weight isn't something that will just benefit you; it will also benefit your children. Children carry the eating patterns and exercise patterns they learn as children with them to adulthood. If you want your children to be happy, fit, healthy adults then show them to be happy, healthy and fit by living a healthy lifestyle.

Good luck to you on your weight loss journey!

You Only have the right to read and enjoy this ebook for personal use only

DISCLAIMER AND/OR LEGAL NOTICES:
Espired Marketing LLC

Disclaimer: Automaticnicheprofites.com developed these e-books to provide access to valuable information. Although we make every effort to offer only accurate information, we cannot guarantee that the information we make available is always correct or current. Espired Marketing LLC does not warrant or make any representations as to the quality, content, accuracy, or completeness of the information, text, graphics, links and other items contained in these e-books. Consequently, no one should rely upon any information contained herein, nor make any decisions or take any action based on such information. Espired Marketing LLC or any subsidiaries are not responsible for any action taken in reliance on the information contained herein and for any damages incurred, whether directly or indirectly, as a result of errors, omissions or discrepancies contained herein.

.