

# 8 Key Tips For Losing Weight, Keeping It Off & Getting Healthy

## 1. Never crash diet to lose weight

When you lose weight rapidly your body is typically only losing glycogen (carbohydrate) and water weight, not fat. Your body thinks that it's starving and reduces its metabolic rate, which makes it harder for your body to burn each calorie (they burn at a slower pace than they normally would). Then when you start eating normally again, your body stores as much food as it can into your fat cells in case of another "famine."

## 2. Best weight loss plan: substitute foods instead of eliminating them

Although many people feel that "diet" or "reduced fat" foods are not as good as the original, it can be a big help to buy less fatty snack foods. Try out different reduced fat brands and items and who knows, you may find something that you like even better than the original. The key is making sustainable changes - if you can't live without tortilla chips, trying to eliminate them entirely from your diet won't work. Making the change to a lower-calorie reduced fat tortilla chip can make a noticeable change in total calories consumed over time.

## 3. What drinks for losing weight

Cutting soda out of your diet completely can save the average person 360 calories or more each day. Even diet soda, fruit juices, and whole milk can add unnecessary calories to your daily intake. Instead, drink lots of water and switch from whole to skim or even soy milk; the little things can make a big difference.

## 4. Weight loss = healthy diet and moving around

Getting up, moving around, and exercising will reduce the amount of food that you will need to cut back on. There are obviously many opportunities to be athletic and active (i.e. sports teams, the gym, going for a jog, etc.) if that interests you, but these aren't the only ways to increase your activity level. You can walk to school, bike to work, walk up and down the stairs a few times before you take a shower, take an extra lap or two around the grocery store.

The American College of Sports Medicine recommends 30-45 minutes of moderate aerobic performed 3-5 times per week in their Guidelines for Healthy Aerobic Activity, but if all you can do is walk around the block twice before you go to bed, that's a good start. Anything is better than nothing, and it's harder to be eating while you're moving around, so it may result in you eating slightly less as well as burning more calories.

The best thing about aerobic exercise is that the benefits are cumulative - you essentially gain the same health benefits from taking three ten-minute walks throughout the day as you do from taking one 30 minute walk. With this in mind, it can be much easier to break your activity goal into manageable pieces that will fit into your day.

## 5. Gradual changes are best for losing weight

Gradually ease into your diet if possible. Many diet programs allow you to do this. Remember that small changes are easier to stick with than drastic ones. Start by always leaving a little extra on your plate, or drinking water instead of soda. Smaller changes are also more likely to remain with you when the duration of your diet is complete. Aim for behavior-change goals that you know you will be able to maintain over years, not just weeks.

## 6. Don't overeat

If you're full, or even simply satisfied, stop eating. There's no need to eat until your stomach feels like it's going to explode. Also, keep in mind that it takes a while for the nutrients in your food to enter your bloodstream, and circulate to the nerve centers in your brain that regulate appetite. Eating slowly is helpful in this regard--you give your body a chance to recognize that you've had enough to eat.

## 7. Try not to banish certain foods when dieting

Don't tell yourself that you can NEVER have something again because you will immediately crave it. People need to eat fats to be healthy as well, just make sure that you're eating them in moderation, and maybe try to balance out a fatty food you ate earlier in the day by choosing celery sticks over chips for your snack. Try to get yourself to think, "I know I CAN have it, but should I have it?"

## 8. Successful weight loss: be in it for the long term

Crash diets and unsustainable exercise routines will not keep you at your desired weight for the long term. You need to focus on realistic, achievable goals - behavior modification that you can live with for years, instead of just weeks. For an example, let's say that a hypothetical person is ten pounds overweight, but at perfect energy balance - they eat exactly as many calories as they burn every day, so their weight remains constant. If that person sacrifices one small snack that they have every day, let's say a handful of chips equaling 100 calories, over the course of a year that person will lose over ten pounds! A pound of fat on your body represents 3500 stored calories. 100 calories X 365 days in a year = 36,500 calories, or over ten pounds of fat. Small changes can make a big difference in your health.