

What's the Secret to Losing Weight and Keeping It Off?

You can choose almost any plan to lose weight. Your focus should be on adopting long-term changes. You are on the right track—you exercise and eat healthful foods—so work on being patient. The weight might not come off as quickly as you'd like, but if you stick to it, you will be in better shape for the rest of your life.

Losing weight is the first part of the battle. The second part is keeping it off permanently.

Many people can knock weight off short term, then put it right back on. Many people's diets are too strict and they restrict food groups that can be eaten and this lack of choice causes them to give up. Also, many diets simply don't make you feel healthy and people give up due to lack of energy, nausea etc...

Long-lasting weight loss has two key ingredients: regular exercise and healthful eating habits. Exercise should be as much a part of your daily routine as your meals.

Here are 8 tips to help you keep on track for long term weight loss, which can be incorporated into ANY sensible diet.

1. Eat breakfast

Breakfast really is the most important meal of the day. Your body has been deprived of nourishment for up to 8 hours; at breakfast you refuel your body giving you energy that sets you up for the day and curbs hunger pangs later on. More than 80% of dieters who achieve long term weight loss eat breakfast, so this is very good advice.

2. Eat greens

Fruits and vegetables are low in calories high in water and fiber, both of which make you feel full for longer. Aim for five servings a day, this is not as difficult as it sounds, as there are plenty of foods to choose from.

3. Eat naturally

It really is common sense which foods are good and bad for you. If you eat as naturally as you can and avoid foods with lots of additives and processing you are on the right track for long term weight loss.

4. Don't be too hard on yourself!

People who keep weight off have learned to treat themselves and not be too hard on themselves. Eating a piece of pizza or burger every now and again, is not going to make you suddenly jump hugely in weight.

The reason many people give up dieting is simply it is too demanding in terms of what they can eat, but the reality is it does not have to be in the first place. ***Proper long term weight loss and maintenance is exactly that, a long term process. The occasional treat is essential, so forget about all the foods you can never eat again, you can!***

5. Have healthy convenience food

It is too easy with our hectic lifestyles to simply grab burgers, fast food, microwave meals when we're in a hurry. Make sure you have quick healthy foods in the cupboard instead. For example, tinned fish such as salmon, sardines or tuna are ideal. Simply have a baked potato with some vegetables on top, and you have a quick meal in a matter of minutes.

6. Eat 5 times a day

Eat regular and often, five times a day to prevent insulin spikes and hunger cravings. This way you will always feel full and more energetic.

7. Eat protein and carbohydrate together

Always try and eat carbohydrate and protein together at every meal. Protein stabilizes insulin levels, which leads to steady energy throughout the day. One more benefit, eating protein has been shown to reduce your appetite. Protein and carbohydrate work together so should be eaten together for long term health.

8. Drink water

Yes, you have heard it numerous times before, drink 2 liters of water per day to help with long term weight loss. Many of our hunger pangs are really thirst pangs, so reach for the water first. Also water is essential in the fat burning process, so make sure you get plenty each day.

Long term weight loss should be realistic and sensible.

The above is really common sense and allows you flexibility and choice in your eating habits. To achieve long term weight loss, incorporate the above in your diet and you will find it easier to stick with a diet as well as feeling healthy and more energetic.

The following little tricks may not seem like they have a huge effect, but when you add up these changes over a period of time, they'll translate into a leaner and stronger body.

Blot. Use a paper napkin to blot a teaspoon of fat off a pizza slice. At a slice a week, that's more than a whole cup of fat you won't eat—or wear—this year.

Drink more milk. Consuming 1,800 milligrams of calcium a day could block the absorption of about 80 calories. Fill your coffee mug with skim or 1 percent milk, drink it down to the level you want in your coffee, and then pour in your caffeine fix.

Buy cut veggies. They cost more, but they'll pay dividends later—because you're more likely to snack on them than on some other, less healthy food.

Get watered down.

A recent German study showed that drinking water burns calories. Drinking about two cups of cold water—no warmer than 72 degrees—used up roughly 25 calories. Drink a liter a day and you're talking five pounds a year.

Go smaller.

Use a salad plate instead of a dinner plate. Studies show that putting your portions on smaller dishes means you'll end up eating less at a meal.

Dilute juice.

Add water to your fruit juice to reduce calories.

Make your drinks count.

Have a V8 or tomato juice instead of a Diet Coke.

Have a power snack prepared.

Mix three different kinds of beans and sprinkle in some low-cal Italian dressing. Have it as a snack all week.

Think about eating.

Eat without doing anything else—no TV, no reading, no working.

Stop mindless snacking.

Chew a strong-flavored gum like cinnamon while you're cooking. Sneaking a taste of the food will be less appealing.

Be realistic! See the big picture! A healthful weight can help reduce your risk of many chronic conditions. Plan to lose no more than 2 pounds a week, a rate considered safe by most experts. Weight loss doesn't have to be extreme to be effective. Losing just 5 to 10 percent of your weight – that's 10 to 20 pounds for a 200-pound person – can improve blood pressure, blood cholesterol and blood sugar levels. These are big reasons to make lasting changes toward a healthier life!