

Make food work for you

Avoiding overeating and keeping calories in check can be easier said than done. What's the secret? Balancing the calories you eat with calories you burn. Try these approaches for yourself — research shows that the small changes here have been proven to help with weight loss success.

Calories in, calories out

Unused calories get converted to fat, causing weight gain.

To lose weight, you need to eat fewer calories than your body burns. To maintain your weight, the calories you eat and the calories you burn should be about equal. Aim for eating 500 fewer calories a day.

Use the calorie calculator to see how many calories you're burning.

What's on your plate?

Choosing healthy foods means you're getting great nutrition with every bite. More than counting calories, it's important to make each calorie count.



A healthy breakfast goes a long way.

Start your day with whole grains and lean protein to stay full and burn calories all day long.

Chew the "right" fat.

Some fats fight heart disease. Others can cause it. Know which fats are which.

Eat out wisely.

Make smart choices when you're away from home. Pick healthy snacks and meals on the go.

Follow good eating guidelines.

Are you eating the right kinds of food to help you reach your goals? See what's in a balanced diet.

Make room for your favorite foods.

Talk to your doctor or nutritionist about including treats once in awhile. You can also make your favorite foods healthier with simple swaps.

Pay attention to portion sizes.

How many servings are really in that package? What does a portion look like? Get quick tips to measure portion sizes.

Rethink that drink.

Choose water instead of soda, alcohol, coffee drinks, sports drinks, juice, and "health" or "vitamin" waters. See how sugar adds up in some of your favorite drinks.

Food strategies

Eating well isn't just about what you eat — it's about how you eat, too.

Avoid temptation.

Think about when you overeat. Is it at work? After grocery shopping? When you are watching TV? Learn about your triggers and make a plan for how to avoid or manage them. Keep "impulse foods" (chips, candy, ice cream, and soft drinks) out of the house. Learn the secrets of a healthy kitchen.

Control cravings.

Feel like you "need" that junk food? Get tips to stop cravings in their tracks, and break the fat, sugar, and salt habit.

Eat throughout the day.

If you skip meals you are more likely to overeat later in the day. Rather than a couple of big meals each day, eat smaller meals or snacks about every 4 to 5 hours.

Focus on your plate.

When you eat slowly and really pay attention to your food, you'll cut calories and enjoy food more. Turn off the television, put away electronics, and learn to practice mindful eating.

Separate emotions and eating.

Stress, anxiety, boredom, loneliness, depression, and tiredness all can lead to overeating. Find healthier ways to cope.

Write it down.

Keeping track of food and exercise in a notebook or [food diary \(PDF\)](#), or on your computer or mobile device can help you lose weight and keep it off.

Related links

Are you eating more calories than you think?

Control portions with the healthy plate method

20 ways to cut 100 calories a day

Reviewed by: Adam Tsai, MD, Robert Riewerts, MD and Trina Histon, PhD, March 2016
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