



10 Ways to Control Your Weight

BY ANGELA PAIK SCHAEFFER

Diet crazes and fitness trends aside, the basic formula for managing your weight hasn't changed. "I've yet to meet anyone who has managed to defy the laws of physics," says Dr. Lawrence Cheskin, director of the Johns Hopkins Weight Management Center. "You will lose weight if you eat less and exercise regularly."

Eating Healthy

Should you go high-protein and no-carbs, or count calories? When in doubt, aim for a diet low in fat, sugar and salt, and full of variety and vitamin-rich foods, including:

- **Whole grains**
- **Whole fruits and vegetables**
- **Lean protein**
- **Low-fat or fat-free dairy products**

Simple enough, but anyone who has tried knows it isn't easy. So, if you're thinking about making a change, here are some tips for success:

Get real. You say you'd like to lose 5 or 10 pounds, but do you really need to drop 20 or 30? "It's important to have a reality check," says Susan Hill, a certified fitness trainer in Sunriver, Ore. Today, two out of three Americans are overweight or obese, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Is your weight interfering with everyday life? Are you having weight-related health problems? Are the pounds sapping your energy, limiting movement? Then it's time to take action.

Set a goal. Or two. "Set goals that involve a reasonable pace of weight loss that you can achieve without too much sacrifice," Cheskin says. If you're losing weight on your own, a pound a week is a safe rate of loss. For motivation's sake, sign up for a 5K run/walk a couple of months down the road. After that, aim higher: a 10K, a mini-

triathlon, or a bike race in your community. Hill says she motivates herself by every year taking on something completely new—for the non-swimmer, that meant setting a goal to complete a triathlon. "Overcoming things that you either think you're not good at or that you fear is really, really powerful," she says. "The satisfaction is very motivating."

Be safe. Rather than risk injury or illness, check with your doctor before starting any new exercise or diet plan that's substantially different from what you're doing.

Get off the couch. Don't worry about buying a gym membership or some expensive piece of equipment for your basement just yet. Instead, re-prioritize your evenings by taking a 30-minute walk after dinner. Or grab the kids and a soccer ball and head to a field down at the local school. "It's really just about getting the heart moving and getting the body moving to make you feel good about yourself,"

Hill says. Other ideas: Bike, jump rope, play basketball or tennis.

Start slowly if you're not exercising much now. Go at a pace that makes you breathe deeply but doesn't leave you gasping for air.

Work your whole body. "It used to be all about body-part training," says Hill. These days, fitness training is all about exercises that work several muscle groups at once. The good news, Hill says: "It speeds up your metabolism even more and can get you in better shape more quickly." While you can do whole-body training in the gym, you don't need to. Try incorporating some regular push-ups, sit-ups and squats into a 30-minute walk.

Drink up. Water, that is. When you get home from work, do you head first for the pantry or refrigerator for a

snack? Hit the faucet instead. Often what you think is hunger really is thirst. But steer clear of soda: A can of regular soda may contain more sugar than a piece of cake!

Take stock. Assess both why you're eating and what you're eating, Cheskin recommends. Eat because you're hungry, not because you're stressed, bored, sad or happy. Keeping a log of your eating habits for even just a few days can help identify patterns that may sabotage your weight-control plans, whether it's a couple of beers every night or a midday meal that's three times the size it should be.

Simplify. "Most people rebel when given too much direction," says Hill. So, instead of counting calories or carbs, use your clenched fist to determine portion sizes. A healthy dinner

would consist of a fist-sized portion of protein (lean red meat, chicken or fish, for instance), another of starch (rice, potato or bread), and a third for vegetables (the more color, the better).

Think balance. The balance concept should apply to your dinner plate and your whole day. Don't let more than a few hours pass without eating, so your energy levels and metabolism will remain fairly constant. Hill recommends men eat six small meals a day; women, five.

Savor the moment. How many times have you broken your gaze at the TV to realize the bag of chips is empty? Eating slowly and mindfully—and not in front of the television—will help you enjoy your food and eat less.



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