

How to Lose Weight in a Healthy Way

December 17 2013, by Quizon Gregg

Losing weight tends to be a popular New Year's resolution or goal. But there is definitely a right way and a wrong way to go about achieving that goal. The University of Alabama's Sheena Quizon Gregg shares a few tips on how shake loose those extra pounds in a healthy way.

Avoid Skipping Meals. Avoid going longer than four hours without eating anything (ideally, you want to try to eat about every two and a half to three hours). If you're in a meeting or running errands during a [meal time](#), make sure to at least have a snack (trail mix, [peanut butter](#) crackers, pretzels, etc.) to tie you over until you can get an actual meal. If you're going out with friends for dinner or any other meal, try to avoid being ravenously hungry when you get to the restaurant. To do this, have a snack, such as a small peanut butter sandwich or an apple, about 30 minutes to an hour before going out to eat. This snack will help curb your appetite so that you're still hungry enough to enjoy your main entrée but you're not so hungry that you mindlessly eat large amounts of chips and salsa, bread and butter, or any other pre-entrée items that are usually served at restaurants.

Make Your Meals Complete. Make sure you're getting enough carbohydrate throughout the day (from whole grain starches, fruits and dairy products) so your body can use this energy to burn fat and not break down any precious protein/muscle tissue for energy. However, be sure to pair your carbohydrates with protein and fat as well since these nutrients are key in providing satiety and keeping you full for a longer amount of time. If your meal isn't well-rounded, you may find your body making you hungry sooner than later to prompt you to eat the nutrients

you were missing previously.

Take Time with Your Meals. Slow down your pace of eating so that it takes you at least 15 to 20 minutes to eat your meal. One way to accomplish this is making sure to put down the fork in between every bite of food. Sometimes we end up eating so quickly, and we end up already having the fourth bite of mashed potatoes ready to go on our fork before we've even completely swallowed our first initial bite. Other ways you can slow your pace of eating include taking a sip of [water](#) (or other low-calorie beverage) in between bites of food or even having conversation in between bites of food. Slowing down your pace of eating not only helps with getting full off of a smaller portion size, but it also allows you to take time to really enjoy and savor each bite of food.

Make Friends with Veggies. Be mindful that since vegetables do not contain many calories, they will not be very helpful in providing energy. Avoid getting so full off of vegetables that it prevents you from eating the calorie-containing foods that you do need for weight management and daily function. Make a practice of making half of your plate veggies followed by one-fourth starch and one-fourth protein when building your plate to ensure a nice balance. Great ways to sneak in vegetables throughout the day include between-meal snacks and popping frozen veggies in reusable steamer bags for a quick vegetable sidekick at dinner.

Don't Underestimate the Power of Water. Even though it may seem contradictory, drinking plenty of water throughout the day can help with reducing water retention and bloating, especially since you're getting to flush out your system. If you have trouble getting in the usual recommended eight glasses of water per day, buying a water bottle to have at work or at home can be a fun way to prompt you to drink water. Also, naturally flavoring your water with slices of fruit to steep in a pitcher of ice water can be refreshing and avoids artificial sweeteners.

Get Moving. Physical activity is a natural appetite suppressant and is a key player in increasing your metabolism and decreasing fat mass. Health professionals recommend 30 minutes each day of physical activity in the prevention of chronic disease. But, if you are trying to actively lose weight, the recommendation is closer to 60 to 90 minutes of activity most days of the week. The great thing for busy people is that the 60 to 90 minutes do not have to be accomplished all in one session. As long as you do [physical activity](#) raising your heart rate for at least a 10-minute increment, you can break up your workout as it best meets your schedule.

Provided by University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa

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