

Weighing portions adds up to weight loss

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(HealthDay)—Portion control is a must when you want to lose weight.

"Guesstimating" the size of a chicken breast at a restaurant or cheese

cubes at a party can be a recipe for disaster, leading you to underestimate your intake by hundreds of calories a day. And that can slow [weight loss](#) to a snail's pace.

The answer is to teach yourself exactly what the serving sizes of your [favorite foods](#) look like, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. All you need are some inexpensive kitchen tools.

Start with the basics: A full set of measuring spoons and cups, ranging from a fraction of a teaspoon all the way up to a 2-cup measure.

Next is a food scale, an easy way to weigh foods like meat, grains, and chunky fruits and vegetables. Choose one with a tray or cup that attaches to the base. If you want to splurge, there are also spoons and bowls embossed with standard serving sizes, but you don't need to overload on gadgets.

Now start practicing. First measure out a dry food, like nuts or cereal, to see what one ounce, one half-cup, and one cup each look like. Then pour the [food](#) into a bowl you use every day. You might realize that you've been eating a lot more than you thought. Do the same with a beverage like milk. Most [drinking glasses](#) hold much more than an 8-ounce serving.

Keep your tools front and center on your kitchen counter and use them to measure everything you eat. Practice does make perfect. You'll learn what portions sizes look like and do better at staying within your calorie maximum to lose [weight](#).

More information: The U.S. National Library of Medicine has a list of [visual cues](#) to help you better eyeball portion sizes when you're away from home.

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