

Diet tips that go beyond calorie cutting

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(HealthDay)—Calories in must be less than calories out—that's the basic rule of dieting.

But there's more to losing [weight](#) because more than hunger often motivates people to eat. So how can you find effective motivation to change your [eating habits](#) and *lose* weight?

Try these five keys to weight-loss success.

- Monitoring your diet and exercise efforts is job number one to stay the course. Choose the method you're most comfortable with, from pen and paper to an [online journal](#) or app. Be sure to include daily food intake, exercise output and your weight changes.
- Accountability is crucial. That's why regularly checking in with a weight-loss coach can keep you on track, especially if he or she provides personalized feedback. Yes, this is an expense, but one that could be offset by smaller grocery bills.
- Be part of an in-person or even an online weight-loss group for the social benefits along with the opportunity to share tips.
- A weight-loss group may also provide you with another essential—a structured plan to follow. This should include diet and [exercise](#) specifics, plus behavior modifications to help you break any specific habits that led to your [weight gain](#).
- Above all, when you're choosing a diet to follow or a program to join, make sure it's tailored to your needs, tastes and goals. If it doesn't feel right or fit into your schedule, you'll have a hard time sticking with it.

There's no single strategy for weight loss. Though cutting portions is a must, these other steps are what enable you to shift your focus away from habits that led to weight gain.

More information: To choose a safe and successful weight-loss program, visit the [U.S. National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases](#).

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