



WASHINGTON HEALTH SYSTEM
Wilfred R. Cameron Wellness Center



The Weigh to Win: Weight Loss Basics

Did you know as little as a 10% weight loss has been shown to improve your health status and management of chronic disease? Weight loss is achieved by creating a calorie deficit or increased energy expenditure or a combination of the two. Simply put you must burn more calories than you consume or consume fewer calories than you need.

There are many ways to do this but it is important that you do not create too much of a deficit because this can lead to malnutrition and poor compliance in the long-term.

The main goal is to lose weight and keep it off. This does not need to be a difficult task. Small, effective changes over time yield the best results in regards to weight loss. Choose an area of improvement and then set a realistic goal. Set weekly goals to improve your diet and lifestyle over a period of time instead of all in one day.

There are many “fad” diets and quick fix plans. They usually work in the short-term but are not effective in keeping the weight off. They can also be harmful to your health. Avoid gimmicks, magic pills and anything that sounds too good to be true. Weight loss takes dedication, hard work and time. The weight did not come on in a day and you will not lose it in a day.

8 Dietitian Approved Weight Loss Tips and Tricks

1. Remove all sugary drinks and high sugar foods from your diet. This includes artificially sweetened beverages or diet drinks. Avoid sodas, fruit juices, energy drinks, sweet teas and coffee drinks. This will help you to avoid the “empty” calories of sugar laden beverages. Diet drinks do not contain a high amount of calories but do contain high quantities of artificial sweeteners. Some research suggests these substances may increase food cravings and intake affecting weight. (1)
2. Replace sugary beverages with water and drink plenty of it. If you feel water is too bland for you try flavoring your water with a hint of natural fruit juices or infuse with natural flavors. Place cut pieces of your favorite fruits (such as pineapple, orange slices or lemon) in your water pitcher and let sit overnight. The water will pick up the subtle flavors of the fruit and is no longer just plain water.
3. Snack on vegetables in between meals. Raw or cooked vegetables make a great snack. You can add a low calorie dip or sauce to increase flavor. Vegetables have a higher water content and are very low in calories. This makes them the perfect filling food and easy on the waistline. They contain fiber and good-for-you nutrients. Strive for 3-5 servings of vegetables a day. One serving is generally ½ cup cooked vegetables or 1 cup raw.
4. Choose fruit for your sweet tooth. Enjoy the natural goodness of fruit in a variety of ways. You can enjoy it fresh, frozen or canned. If consuming canned fruits use only those that state “In own juice,” or “lite.” Frozen fruit can be incorporated into a smoothie for a tasty snack. Try cutting and coring an apple, then place in the microwave for 30-40 seconds and sprinkle with cinnamon for something different. Add canned fruit to plain oatmeal for a breakfast treat.



8 Dietitian Approved Weight Loss Tips and Tricks Continued

5. Plan your meals and snacks. Try to be as consistent as possible and avoid long breaks in-between meals. This can lead to large fluctuations in your blood sugar and over-eating during your next meal. Aim for 4-6 small meals/snacks per day to rev up your metabolism and aid in healthy weight loss or management. You may also find it helpful to set specific times for your meals and snacks each day. Creating a routine will make it easier to commit to the lifestyle change.
6. Choose whole grains versus processed, refined grains. Avoid white breads, pastas, rice and sweets. These foods contain very minimal amounts of fiber and do not aid satiety. Try a variety of whole grains such as bulgur, quinoa, millet, spelt and amaranth. Often recipes are found on the packaging. Each whole grain is going to provide a vast array of healthful nutrients. By consuming a variety of grains you will experience the benefits and eliminate meal boredom.
7. Journal your food intake. By simply writing down what you eat for each meal and snack you will become more aware of problem areas and changes that need to be made and maintained. There are many food tracking applications and websites available as well. Some examples include; www.myfitnesspal.com, www.loseit.com, www.spark.com, www.choosemyplate.gov
8. Become a day-time eater and avoid eating too much right before bed or in the later part of the evening. It is best to stop eating at least 2 hours before bed. Try to consume the bulk of your calories and meals early in your day to the middle of your day and taper down towards the end.

Qing Yang, *Gain weight by "going diet?" Artificial sweeteners and the neurobiology of sugar cravings: Neuroscience 2010*. Yale J Biol Med. 2010 June; 83(2): 101–108. Published online 2010 June.