

# Top 10 Tips for Weight Loss!

## 1. Drink Water.

Hunger is often confused with dehydration. Next time you feel like a snack, have a glass of water. Even mild dehydration can alter our body's metabolism, so aim to drink 8 glasses a day and limit soda, caffeine and alcohol. It is also agreed that drinking water before meals can help promote weight loss. One study found that participants who drank 2 glasses of water before each meal felt fuller and ate less.

## 2. Eat Carbs: Real Carbs!

Replace refined carbohydrates like white bread, pasta, bagels, cereal and pretzels with complex carbohydrates from fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds and legumes. Fruits and vegetables are high in fiber which slows digestion and promotes stable blood sugar levels. They're also packed with antioxidants which help reduce inflammation in the body. Whole grain carbohydrates should always be chosen over refined varieties. Think about eating them as you would find them in nature – breads are made from wheat that's milled, while brown rice is simply taken straight from the plant, complete with fiber and phytonutrients the way Mother Nature intended they be eaten!

## 3. Choose Healthy Fats.

A common misconception is that fats should be completely eliminated. In reality, we could not live without fat. The body utilizes dietary fat for energy, health of hair, skin and nails, vitamin absorption and normal everyday bodily functions. Good fats promote several health benefits such as protection against heart disease, cancer, Alzheimer's, and depression, as well as reduced blood pressure and lower cholesterol. Choose sources such as nuts, seeds, fish, avocados and extra virgin olive oil.

## 4. Emphasize Lean Protein.

Our bodies require protein to continuously renew and replenish our cells, stabilize our blood sugar, and give us energy. Our bodies are literally made out of the amino acids that make up protein in our food. Many foods contain protein, but the richest sources include animal products like meat, dairy, eggs and fish, as well as plant sources like beans, nuts and seeds.<sup>1,2</sup> When choosing animal protein sources, be conscious of the way the animal was raised and what it ate. Grass-fed beef and free-range chicken are healthier and more ethically sound choices than feed lot meats. Organic yogurt and cage-free eggs are great for vegetarians, while tofu, tempeh and peanut butter are good vegan protein sources.

## 5. Eat Breakfast.

By eating a hearty breakfast, you'll give your metabolism a jumpstart and be in better control of your cravings. When we miss our first fuel of the day, by mid-morning we are hungry and more likely to engage in mindless nibbling, snacking, over eating and over compensating for any calories 'saved' by skipping breakfast. Studies repeatedly show daily breakfast consumption is associated with maintaining a healthy weight<sup>3</sup>. But if you're not ready for breakfast early in the morning, listen to your body and eat when you feel it's best for you.

## 6. Eat More Frequently.

It's important to balance your food intake throughout the day to help maintain normal blood sugar and decrease the chances of binging when hunger strikes. Try to keep track of your meal choices and balance your caloric intake. Feeding your body on a regular basis lets it know food is available and it's okay to burn energy rather than conserve and store it as fat.

## 7. Exercise Your Body and Mind.

Exercise has enormous benefits for your mind and body with research boasting decreased body weight, smaller waist circumference, lower resting heart rate and blood pressure, AND it boosts your mood! Strive to be active at least 30 minutes every day to help keep your body strong and lean – remember, it doesn't have to be expensive. Try these tips for starters:

- Get off the subway or bus one stop earlier
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator
- Go on nightly jogs or walks with your dog

Even playing with your children in the park or trying a hand at gardening will keep your body active. It's also just as important to keep your mind active. Boost brainpower by spending time thinking positively, meditating or practicing activities that require deep thought like reading or playing Sudoku.

## 8. Catch Some Zzzz's.

Research shows that those who sleep 5 hours or less weigh 5 pounds *more* than those getting at least 7 hours of shut eye per night. And, over time, weight increases more rapidly in those who get 5 hours of sleep when compared to those getting 7 hours. Lack of sleep disrupts circadian rhythms and can lead to inefficient body regulation of energy balance, metabolism and appetite. Abnormal leptin and ghrelin levels – hormones that tell your body "I'm full, stop eating" – can go awry with too little sleep. Said simply – sleep more, eat and weigh less! Strive for 7-8 hours of sleep each night.

## 9. Learn to Cook.

Cooking meals at home allows you to control portion sizes, the quality of ingredients, and cuts your intake of sodium, fat and calories. Try to reduce frying foods by learning to roast or bake, and eat more raw foods to boost flavor and cut calories. Use herbs and spices to reduce salt intake.

## 10. Keep Track of What You Eat.

Be a food detective and investigate what you choose to put into your body. Check labels and avoid ingredients such as sugar, trans fats, high-fructose corn syrup or long 'chemical names' that are hard to pronounce. The healthiest foods are those found just as nature intended – whole and unprocessed. When was the last time you saw an ingredient list on a stalk of broccoli or a fresh fillet of salmon?

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<sup>1</sup> Lehrer, Jonah. "Why Sugar Makes Us Sleepy (And Protein Wakes Us Up)." *Wired*. N.p., 06 Dec 2011. Web. 8 Dec 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Leidy HJ, Camell NS, Mattes RD, Campbell WW. "Higher protein intake preserves lean mass and satiety with weight loss in pre-obese and obese women." *Obesity (Silver Spring)*. 2007 Feb;15(2):421-429.

<sup>3</sup> Veltsista, A., Laitinen, J., Sovio, U., Roma, E., Järvelin, M.R., Bakoula, C., "Relationship Between Eating Behavior, Breakfast Consumption, and Obesity Among Finnish and Greek Adolescents," *Journal of Nutrition*, 141(1), 2011, pages 163-168.