

QuickTakes



HOW TO LOSE WEIGHT

There are no miracle diets. To reach and maintain a healthy weight, you need to eat nutritious, satisfying food, stay active and control portions.

- Successful weight loss begins with a realistic goal. If you're overweight or obese, consider a goal of losing five to ten percent of your body weight over a period of up to six months.
- There's no magic plan that works for everyone. Experiment and find out what works for you.
- Weight-loss winners eat a balanced diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables. Start by eating at least five servings of fruits and vegetables every day, with an eventual goal of seven to ten, or more.
- Combine diet and exercise. Rarely do any of us lose weight and keep it off through either dietary changes or exercise alone.

The Science Behind Healthy Weight

When it comes to losing weight and keeping it off, forget the magic formulas and stick with science. Control the amount of calories you eat, and fill your plate with lean protein-rich foods, fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

Fad diets, such as those that severely restrict carbohydrates while filling you with protein and animal fats, may well work for a while, but it doesn't take much snooping to figure out why: They're low in calories. And lowering calories will lead to weight loss, no matter the quality of the diet. But is this a diet that's built to last?

The ongoing challenge is to keep calories under control while enjoying satisfying portions of healthy foods. For that, you can't get around the importance of a diet that's:

- Low in fat
- Adequate in protein
- Rich in high-fiber complex carbohydrates

We'd all love to believe that the latest fad will miraculously remove those unwanted 20 pounds for good. But we're better served by relying on proven choices. This means choosing foods that are naturally filling. This includes:

- Lean sources of protein
- Low-fat dairy or soy foods
- Whole grains
- Fruits and vegetables

These foods are low in fat and all stimulate our "satiety signals." They make you feel satisfied without adding a lot of calories.

Estimating Calorie Needs

The average, moderately active person needs about 15 calories per pound to maintain weight. For instance, to maintain a weight of 150 pounds, you need about 2,250 calories a day. However, this is just a rough estimate. Your true caloric needs are more closely linked to the amount of fat and lean tissue you carry. A well-muscled 150-pound wrestler burns more calories than a 150-pound couch potato, even on days when the athlete decides to kick back and grapple with the remote control.

Limiting Fat Intake

Try to limit your diet to no more than 30 percent of calories from fat – enough to make food taste good without empty calories. Set your daily limit of fat in grams, and track fat by reading labels. Favor monounsaturated fat, like olive oil or canola oil, and limit saturated fats found primarily in meat and high fat dairy. Trans fats (aka hydrogenated fats), which are listed on food labels, should be avoided if possible.

The Lowdown on Fat, Protein, Carbs and Water

FAT

Gram for gram, fat has more than twice the calories of protein or carbohydrates. Excess calories from fat end up as body fat far more easily than excess calories from carbohydrates or protein. Your body has to work to convert carbohydrates or protein to body fat, which takes energy — that is, it burns calories. But dietary fat turns into body fat with very little calorie loss. That's why it's important to cut calories from fat.

PROTEIN

Eating lots of protein isn't a recipe for losing more weight, though getting enough protein is important. When you cut calories to lose weight, your goal is to lose body fat, not lean body mass (muscle). Taking in enough protein helps you maintain lean body mass. Protein is also more "satiating" than fat or carbohydrates, so it helps you feel full on fewer calories.

CARBOHYDRATES

No, pasta isn't uniquely fattening. Neither are potatoes, rice or bread. It's true that many overweight people have difficulty metabolizing large amounts of carbohydrates, but that's an effect

of their physiology, not a cause. The cause of obesity is too many calories and not enough exercise. Focus on carbohydrate quality: Refined snacks and sweets made with white flour and sugar are highly caloric, while fiber-rich whole grains, fruits and vegetables are much more filling, with fewer calories.

WATER

Let the water flow freely in a weight-loss diet. Besides drinking lots of it, eat plenty of foods that are naturally rich in water, such as fruits, vegetables and low-fat milk. Pair them up with poultry, fish and beans — all low-calorie foods that provide plenty of bulk.

Keep a place in your diet for water-rich dishes like soups, stews, casseroles, pasta with plenty of vegetables, and fruit-based desserts. Water helps you control calories by diluting the calories in a portion of food. When you add water-rich blueberries to your breakfast cereal, or water-rich eggplant to your lasagna, you add food volume and weight, but hardly any calories.

Southwest Summer Stir Fry Takes under 30 minutes Serves 4

Take advantage of sweet corn when it's in season. This recipe can be easily doubled for a larger gathering.

INGREDIENTS:

2 teaspoons olive oil
1 small zucchini, diced
1 small green pepper, diced
1 small onion, diced
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 ½ cups fresh corn kernels (cut from 3 ears corn)
1 large vine-ripened tomato, peeled, seeded and diced
1 teaspoon honey
¼ teaspoon sea salt
½ teaspoon Tabasco or other hot sauce
¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro or parsley
2 tablespoons chopped dry-roasted peanuts, optional

NUTRITIONAL INFO PER SERVING

120 Calories
3.2g Fat
0.4g Saturated fat
3.0g Protein
29g Carbohydrate
3.6g Fiber
191mg Sodium

PREPARATION:

1. In a wok or large skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add zucchini, green peppers and onions and cook, stirring, until the vegetables are tender, about 5 minutes.
2. Stir in cumin. Add corn and cook until it is just tender, about 3 minutes. Stir in tomatoes, honey, salt and hot sauce and cook for 3 minutes. Remove from the heat. Stir in cilantro or parsley and sprinkle with peanuts, if using.



Source: Healthy Living Kitchens