

Lose Weight for the Last Time

Are you ready to lose weight? Most people want to lose weight, but are you ready to give up the foods and habits that are contributing to your excess fat and will you devote the time and energy you need to being active and making better food choices?

Successful weight loss really comes down to being ready to make permanent changes and being able to commit to trading in your current habits for a whole new lifestyle. It is this emotional readiness that separates those who successfully lose weight from those who do not. The power to change comes from within ourselves. Once you are honestly ready to make changes, losing weight will not be difficult.

The formula for losing weight is at its essence very simple: you have to burn more calories than you eat. The following are my recommendations for the best ways to achieve this “calorie deficit”:

✓ **Swap high-calorie foods for lower calorie foods.** Fast foods, fried foods, cheesy and creamy foods are dense calorie sources. Replace them with vegetables, fruit and lean proteins.

✓ **Limit empty calories.** Cut out caloric beverages such as soft drinks, coffee drinks, smoothies and juice. Most people consume 20% of their calories in liquid form, most of which are excess calories from sugar. Switching to water and unsweetened green tea is an easy and healthful way to cut out a good chunk of unnecessary calories.

✓ **Choose fresh, nutrient-rich foods.** Go for high-quality, minimally processed foods. These foods tend to be more nutritious and satisfying, so they allow you to eat less.



✓ **Eat a good breakfast.** Starting the day off with a well-balanced hearty meal will help you eat less later on in the day, especially if you tend to eat a lot at night. Making breakfast your highest-calorie meal instead of dinner will give you a chance to burn off those calories during the day instead of sleeping on them.

✓ **Watch your portions.** Eating smaller portions of high-calorie foods will save you tons of calories. Studies show that the more food we have in front of us, the more we will eat, and that the same portion of food will look more plentiful on a small plate and skimpy on a large plate, and the same portion of a beverage will appear larger in a tall skinny glass than in a short wide glass. Therefore, when you eat out, try to share an entrée or pack half in a “to go” box before you start

eating and, when you eat at home, use smaller plates, bowls and spoons and taller glasses.

✓ **Be mindful of “health halos.”** A “health halo” is an aura of virtue that surrounds healthful foods, which often leads people to either overindulge in unhealthy, high-calorie foods after consuming a healthful food or overeat a portion of healthful food. After eating a healthful, well-balanced meal, do not reward yourself with dessert; instead, go for a walk or do some other activity that you enjoy.

Most of us have lost weight before and, as I mentioned earlier, it’s pretty easy once you set your mind to it. The real measure of success, however, is maintaining that weight loss. Weight loss happens in two distinct



Our registered dietitian has a Masters in Public Health. However, she is not a doctor and her nutritional recommendations are not tailored to specific health problems. Consult your physician before beginning a nutritional program.

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stages: in the first stage, you lose weight. This phase typically lasts between three and six months and you can expect to lose about 10% of your body weight. The second stage is the maintenance stage, in which you learn to balance your calorie intake with your calorie output at your new weight. You should try to spend at least three months in the maintenance phase before going back to the weight loss stage if you still need to lose more weight. Otherwise, the maintenance phase should last for about three years.

After you have successfully maintained your weight loss for three years, then all of the behavioral strategies you've been working at become second nature instead of work and the weight loss is likely to be permanent. Weight maintenance is considered by many health experts to be a greater challenge than weight loss itself. It requires making a life-long commitment instead of setting short-term goals. That's the primary reason why I always emphasize making small changes that you can live with instead of making huge changes that you can't live with for more than a couple of months.

In order to halt and maintain your weight loss, you will need to balance the calories you eat with the calories you burn, which

is a little trickier than just creating the calorie deficit necessary for weight loss. Maintenance will probably be a trial and error process for you, so you'll need to experiment with adding one more daily serving of whole grains to your current eating routine, tracking your weight for two weeks, and then adding another serving or cutting back until you are not losing or gaining weight.

In addition to finding the right energy balance, there are several behavioral factors that both The Lean Habits Study (the world's largest prospective study on behavior and successful weight loss) and The National Weight Control Registry (a prospective study of adults who have successfully maintained at least a 30-pound weight loss for more than a year) have found to be associated with successful weight loss. Here are your keys to success:

1 Foster Flexibility

Being adaptable with your eating habits seems to be one of the most important factors in long-term success in weight maintenance. Planning your meals, having backup strategies and coming up with creative solutions to different eating challenges can make you more successful. Losing weight is not all about self control; it's more about adapting your new lifestyle to your current situation, whether

you are dining out with friends or eating lunch on the road. It requires that you have a good understanding of which foods are healthful and how to create satisfying, balanced meals. Adapting successfully is an indication that you've truly acquired the knowledge and skills necessary to make healthy food choices in all situations. A rigid all-or-nothing approach is a recipe for disaster and a major reason why strict diets only work for the short term. Identify your weaknesses and your failures and come up with plans that will help you overcome those challenges in the future. Creating a healthy lifestyle and focusing on health, rather than weight and calories, is a good way to foster flexibility in adjusting your eating as the situation requires.

2 Eat Consistently

Eating regular meals is important for controlling your blood sugar and, therefore, your appetite and your weight. Some people think skipping meals is a good way to cut calories, but it actually encourages you to overeat at your next meal. Breakfast is often overlooked, but it's the most important meal of the day and is the secret of thin people everywhere. Eating breakfast boosts your metabolism and your energy level. It also prevents your body from going into starvation mode where it uses your muscle for fuel and stores the food you eat at your next meal as fat. Eat snacks between breakfast and lunch and between lunch and dinner if you are hungry, but do not eat snacks after dinner. If you find that you are hungry after dinner, then you should reassess what you are eating for breakfast—perhaps you need to have a larger, more satisfying meal at that time. Additionally, try to limit your snacks to about 100–150 calories. Whenever possible, create a pleasant, mindful eating environment at meal and snack times. Turn off the TV and radio, put away the newspaper, and place your napkin on your lap and your food on a plate to help carve out a special time to focus on yourself and your healthy diet.

3 Choose Healthy Foods

Healthy foods naturally contain nutrients and are minimally processed, which means that specially packaged diet foods, bars and meal replacement shakes are not really healthy foods. Instead, vegetables, fruits, lean proteins, intact whole

grains and healthful fats should form the basis of your diet. For balanced nutrition at lunch and dinner, your plate should be mostly vegetables and fruit. Fill half of your plate with produce, a quarter with intact whole grains or starchy vegetables and the remaining quarter with protein. Since certain healthful fats have been shown to aid in weight control, cook with extra virgin olive oil, add some nuts or avocado to low-fat meals and enjoy fish at least twice a week. Eat most of your daily carbohydrates (intact whole grains like oatmeal or sprouted flourless whole-grain bread) at breakfast and complement your carbs with some protein and good fat (like nuts). Choose healthy foods most of the time, but allow yourself to eat your favorite foods like chocolate or pizza once a week—they're good for your mental health!

4 Step on the Scale

Frequent weigh-ins can help you stay motivated and focused on your target weight. If it's appropriate for you and you don't have a history of eating disorders, weigh yourself almost daily, since frequent check-ins seem to help you keep your weight in line more tightly than weekly weigh-ins do. Don't become obsessed with your weight, but consider charting your weight so you can follow the trend. Use the same scale each time and weigh yourself first thing in the morning right after you have used the restroom. Expect daily variations, since salty foods and hormonal cycles can affect water retention.

5 Exercise Regularly

While all of the behaviors discussed here should ideally be incorporated from the start, exercise is really the only way to burn calories and improve your metabolism for the long term. It is essential to maintaining your weight loss. Moderate aerobic activity burns a lot of calories, especially if it is a weight-bearing activity like walking, jogging, skiing or tennis. One hour of brisk walking daily is the form of exercise most commonly employed by people who successfully maintain their weight loss. However, it's not about what form of exercise you choose or how long you do it for; it's about doing what you enjoy and finding an activity you will do consistently.

6 Eliminate Emotional Eating

Eating is not an effective way to deal with anger, stress, boredom, disappointment, or anxiety. Food is not a reward or a band-aid, but many people over-eat for these reasons. If you often eat for emotional rather than physiological reasons, identify your emotional eating triggers and learn to redistribute your negative emotions towards more productive and healthful activities. Direct that energy instead towards breath work, meditation, visualization, physical activity or yoga. This strategy can help curb emotional eating and bring your focus back to your health goals.

7 Keep a Food Journal

People who use food journals are more successful at losing weight and keeping it off than people who don't record every bite of food they put in their mouths. Journaling forces you to "own" your eating behavior and your food choices. It can also help you identify unhealthy patterns in your eating habits. Some people use a food journal to

plan their meals ahead of time; they record what and how much they will eat and find it easier to stick to their plan once it is on paper.

Successful weight loss does not happen by accident. I've discussed several of the behavioral factors that are associated with both weight loss and maintenance. Prepare yourself for the long haul and keep in mind that three years should be your time frame for permanent and successful weight loss. Additionally, try to implement as many of the behavioral changes covered here as you can, since the more strategies you use, the more successful your long-term weight reduction will be. I hope that you are ready to take a sensible approach to losing weight so that this will be the last time that you ever have to do so. You don't need to become an exercise fanatic or a health nut, just take a moderate, steady approach to improving and maintaining your health... this time, for good!



Green Your Lungs

Everyone knows that smoking is a major risk factor for lung cancer, but it is now becoming clear that diet can impact lung cancer risk, as well. Researchers in Spain have found that **eating just one serving of a leafy green vegetable per day can cut your risk of lung cancer by 50%** when compared to eating leafy greens less than five times a week. The study, published in the journal *Nutrition*, found this inverse association between vegetable intake and lung cancer to be true regardless of age, sex or smoking status.

These protective effects are thought to come from the high concentration of vitamin A (in the form of carotenes), vitamin C and flavonoids that are found in green vegetables. Spinach, broccoli, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, turnip greens, kale, chard and dark green lettuces are all good examples of leafy

green vegetables. Tomatoes and green beans were found to be less protective than the greens but were still beneficial.

A serving of leafy greens is considered to be one cup of raw lettuce, kale or spinach leaves; a half cup of cooked spinach, turnip greens, kale or chard; and a half cup of cut raw or cooked broccoli, cabbage or Brussels sprouts. Try to eat a variety of these healthful vegetables every day and don't be afraid of eating more than one serving a day. Leafy green vegetables not only guard against this most widespread type of cancer, but they also protect against skin cancer and help build bone strength. The best way to lower lung cancer risk, of course, is to quit smoking and avoid second-hand smoke. Second to that, though, eating your veggies daily offers significant protection, too.

Food of the Month: Strawberries



Strawberries are the most popular berries in the United States. They not only offer incredible flavor, they are also bursting with nutrients.

Strawberries, like all berries, are very high in antioxidants. Aside from the antioxidant vitamin C, strawberries also contain a phytonutrient called ellagic acid. Ellagic acid may help lower cholesterol levels and, in turn, help prevent heart disease, and is believed to help fight off carcinogens in the body, which may help reduce the risk of certain cancers, especially those that are estrogen-related. Strawberries also contain anthocyanins, the deep red-purple pigments that give berries their color. Anthocyanins act as potent antioxidants to inhibit LDL cholesterol oxidation, which in turn helps to prevent heart attacks and strokes.

Quercetin, another antioxidant found in strawberries, may reduce the growth and proliferation of cancer cells. It also appears that the quercetin in strawberries helps protect against Alzheimer's disease. Both anthocyanins and quercetin have anti-inflammatory properties that help reduce inflammation in the joints of arthritis sufferers, in the mucous membranes of allergy sufferers, and inside arteries. These ruby berries also contain folate, which may help reduce the risks of birth defects and cardiovascular disease. Strawberries are an

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excellent fruit for diabetics since they seem to help regulate blood sugar levels, especially when they are eaten after a meal that contains starchy carbohydrates.

A half-cup serving of about 5 medium berries contains just 25 calories, 2 grams of fiber and about 80% of your daily value of vitamin C.

Strawberries taste the best when they are locally grown and in season. In California, the season starts in late winter and lasts until late summer. Check the produce tag to see where your strawberries are grown and then look for plump, bright red berries. Use your nose to sniff out their sweet fragrance—the best test for finding tasty strawberries. Make sure there are no crushed or moldy berries lurking at the bottom of the package, too. Once you get them home, do not wash them until just before you eat them, since the water will draw the moisture out of the fruit and cause them to spoil quickly. Pick out any soft or bruised fruit for immediate consumption and blot the rest dry with a paper towel. You

can return them to their original packaging with a fresh paper towel on the bottom, or spread them in a shallow dish, cover them with paper towels, and wrap the whole thing in plastic wrap. Store them in the refrigerator.

To prepare strawberries, first rinse the fruit under cold running water. Use the tip of a paring knife to hull them by cutting around the green caps, called the calyx, and dig out the white core attached to the leaves. Always wash before hulling to prevent excess water absorption. Strawberries can be eaten raw, tossed in salads, blended in beverages, and cooked in sauces and soups. Pair them with milk, yogurt, cottage cheese, chocolate, mint, red wine, other berries and oranges. This month, try my recipes for Summer Berry Delight and Mahi Mahi with Strawberry & Avocado Salsa.

Jessica's Store Appearances Body Fat Testing*

Jessica will be offering complimentary body fat testing and answering your questions about weight loss, food and nutrition.

Tarzana
Monday, July 21, 12:00pm

Sherman Oaks
Monday, July 21, 4:00pm

Encino
Thursday, July 24, 12:00pm

Valley Village
Thursday, July 24, 4:00pm

Century City
Friday, July 25, 12:00pm

Pasadena
Monday, July 28, 12:00pm

Silver Lake/Los Feliz
Monday, July 28, 4:00pm

Pacific Palisades
Tuesday, July 29, 4:00pm

West Hollywood
Thursday, July 31, 12:00pm

* Testing method is Bioelectrical Impedance and is not appropriate for people with pacemakers or osteoporosis, pregnant women or children. Be well-hydrated for most accurate results.

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If you have any questions, please feel free to call Jessica at 1-800-GELSONS (435-7667) or visit our website www.gelsons.com for more nutrition information and store locations.