



# 15 Ways to Maintain a Healthy Weight

## Using the Body's Natural Weight Control Mechanisms

### 1. Eat foods high in dietary fiber.

The body was made to eat high-fiber foods. Researchers found those who gained the least weight over the 10-year study ate a lot of high-fiber foods.

- ✓ Examples include salads, soups, fresh fruit, vegetables, and whole-grain breads and cereals.



### 2. Choose low-glycemic meals.

People who eat low-glycemic meals don't get as hungry so soon and eat less throughout the day.

- ✓ Examples of low-glycemic foods include legumes, soy, veggies, most fresh fruit, healthy proteins, and whole grains not finely ground (such as steel-cut oats vs. instant oats).
- ✗ Limit refined foods, white breads, white rice, potatoes, soda pop, candy, baked goods, sugar, and sweets.

### 3. Eat low-calorie density foods.

Research shows that people naturally eat fewer calories when they are served lower-calorie density foods (foods high in volume, water, and weight, but low in calories).

- ✓ Examples of low-calorie density foods include apples, oranges, fresh or steamed veggies, soup, skim milk, low-fat cottage cheese, and egg replacer.
- ✗ Limit meats, cheese, butter, cream, ice cream, margarine, soft drinks, sweets, desserts, snack foods such as chips, cookies, pastry, and fried foods.



### 4. Eat low-calorie foods first.

Eat fresh fruit, salad, or soup at the beginning of a meal to reduce appetite. Research shows that doing this naturally results in eating fewer calories for the whole meal – without trying.

### 5. Don't eat and watch TV at the same time.

People quickly learn to associate eating in front of the TV with food. Then whenever they watch TV they want to eat. The same principle applies to snacks at movies.

### 6. Eat a good breakfast daily.

People who skip breakfast weigh more than those who don't. A good breakfast doesn't have to be a large meal. Here's a formula for a healthy breakfast: fresh fruit (orange), whole grain (oats or whole-wheat toast), milk or soymilk, healthy fat (almonds), healthy protein (tofu or scrambled Egg Beaters).

### 7. Replace poor habits with positive habits:

- ✓ Eat regular, well-balanced meals at regular times – don't snack between meals. Skipping meals leads to overeating later.
- ✓ Eat primarily the whole food rather than juice – eat an orange in place of orange juice. Avoid sugary drinks and limit fruit drinks.
- ✓ Eat warm, satisfying meals before 7 p.m., brush your teeth, and eat no more till morning.
- ✓ Learn new rewards. Rather than over-indulging on "comfort foods" when you feel upset or sad, take a walk, visit with a friend, or soak in a hot tub..
- ✓ When you start to feel full, stop eating. It's OK to leave food on your plate. It's better for food to go to waste than to your waist!



### 8. Eat more slowly.

Give your body time to send signals to the brain (hormones produced by the gut) that you've eaten enough.

Visit with your family. Make mealtime an enjoyable, social event, not just a time to eat as much as you can as quickly as you can.



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## 9. Limit portion sizes.

Food portion sizes are getting bigger and so are people. Measure portions to get a better idea of standard serving sizes:

- **Fruit** – 1 small orange, apple, peach, banana, 1 C fresh fruit, ½ C cooked, 6 oz. juice
  - **Vegetables** – 1 C raw, ½ C cooked, 6 oz. juice
  - **Grains** – 1 small slice bread, 1 small pancake, 2" muffin, ½ C cooked cereal, ⅔ C ready-to-eat cereal, ½ C rice, pasta, or cooked cereal
  - **Dairy** – 1 C low-fat milk or yogurt, ½ C cottage cheese, 1 slice (oz.) of low-fat cheese
  - **Healthy Fats** – 1 t. soft tub margarine, 1 T. low-fat salad dressing, 1 t. oil, 5 olives, ¼ avocado
  - **Plant Proteins** – ½ C cooked beans, 1 veggie burger, ½ C tofu, 1 oz. nuts, 1½ T. nut butter
  - **Meats** – 2 oz. red meats, fish, poultry
- ✓ Try using smaller plates – it helps the portion sizes look bigger. Be careful of seconds. Ask yourself if you are really hungry and need more or if it is a habit to take more.



## 10. Eat most meals at home.

The more you eat out, the more weight you are likely to gain. Limit eating out, especially at “All you can eat buffets” and at fast food restaurants. When you do eat out, share an entrée or take half of it home for another meal.



## 12. Be physically active daily.

Inactivity is one of the primary causes of obesity. Regular activity – especially 60-90 minutes daily – is one of the best predictors of who will maintain weight loss. Exercise helps maintain weight by burning up excess calories, improving mood, and mobilizing fat stores (after 30 minutes of exercise).

Do weight training 3 times a week. Your lean weight increases the number of calories you burn all day, even at night when you sleep. The chart at the right shows how exercise increases metabolism and calories burned.

\*MET stands for multiples of resting metabolism. For example, walking 4 mph burns 4.3 times as many calories per minute as sitting watching TV or playing a video game.

## 11. Get adequate sleep daily.

People who cut sleep short are more likely to gain weight than people who get at least 7-8 hours of sleep most nights. Staying up late invites snacking and people often eat to help them stay awake.

## 13. Weigh yourself daily.

Research shows that people who weigh daily are less likely to gain weight over the next 10 years compared to people who seldom weigh. Write your weight on your calendar. Weighing and recording your weight helps focus on small changes and taking action when needed.

## 14. Join a formal weight-loss plan.

If you are trying to lose weight, you will be more successful if you follow a credible plan, learn to eat more healthfully, be more active, and are accountable to someone for your behavior. Join a support group.

- ✓ Follow an eating plan based on calories, servings, or points per day to monitor your intake. Writing down what you eat and tracking points helps you naturally eat less.
- ✓ Set a realistic goal of ½ to 1 pound of weight loss per week.
- ✓ Your goal is not to “diet” but to develop a healthy living approach you can maintain the rest of your life.



## 15. Maintain peace of mind and heart.

High stress levels, worry, and discouragement, often contribute to weight gain. Balance stress with relaxation, recreation, and rest. Plan quiet times daily to renew mind and spirit – meditate, pray, bask in nature’s beauty, and contemplate inspirational quotes and writings. ■

Sitting quietly	1 MET*
Canoeing, kayaking	3+ METs
Dancing to music	3+ METs
Active table tennis	4+ METs
Tennis	4-7+ METs
Walking 4 mph (15 min./mile)	4.3 METs
Swimming laps	4-8 METs
Skating, roller, in-line, ice	5+ METs
Backpacking in mountains	5-11 METs
Cross country skiing	6-12 METs
Bicycling 10+ mph	7+ METs
Running 10 min./mile	10.2 METs



Sources: NIH. *The Practical Guide: Identification, Evaluation, and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in Adults*. NIH website. 2006.; American College of Sports Medicine. *Guidelines for Exercise Testing and Prescription*, 7th edition. 2006.; Wellsource. *Lifelong Weight Management Instructor’s Guide*. 2005.