

15 Sensible Diet Tips for Maximum Weight Loss



***Set Yourself Up for Success By Implementing
These Simple Diet Tips to Help You Shed Pounds
and Develop Good Habits!***

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15 Sensible Tips For Maximum Weight Loss

1. Start Right This Second – Don't Make a Start Date

In reality, dieting shouldn't be an event that takes place in your life temporarily. It should be a change of habits that naturally allows your body to shed pounds and keep them off long-term. Most dieters go on a yo-yo routine where they set up a start date and a goal to reach (usually one that's completely unrealistic, too).

Instead of intimidating yourself with a dreaded start date, how about you just make a firm decision right now to change your bad habits in for some better ones? If it's not as daunting, you'll have a better chance for success.

Giving yourself a start date can often mean you gain a lot shortly before you begin your diet journey. Why? You start stocking up on calories. You indulge and sometimes even gorge on foods you know will soon be forbidden to you.

You may become depressed about your diet and instead of it becoming a normal part of your life (to prevent weight gain in the future after you reach your goals, it sets you up for failure.

The start date is the same problem dieters have when they fall "off the wagon." If they mess up one day, they set a new start date instead of just going forward from that moment on. What this does is add more time to your life where you're not eating healthy. It's like a hall pass to practice poor habits.

2. Listen to What Your Body Says It Wants When It Wants It

Part of what results in diet failure is our inability to be flexible with ourselves. We're so strict, adhering to a cemented guideline that tells us what we can eat, when we have to eat it, and how much we ought to eat if we want to lose weight.

Our bodies originally developed with fine tuned systems that weren't so stupid. We cried when we were hungry, acted content when we'd had enough. As babies, your system knows what it likes, knows when it feels like eating more, and knows exactly how much to consume.

You need to go back to that early development mindset and really listen to your body. If you wake up one morning craving something sweet, then you're going to feel like you've been denied unless you indulge a bit in it.

If you follow the rule of moderation, then it won't be the end of the world if you have a cookie in the morning or if it's right after dinner. The caloric intake will be the same at the end of the day, won't it?

Denying yourself only makes you think about it all day long, often causing you to binge and feel like a failure. If you enjoyed the treat without guilt, then you'll be much more inclined to eat properly the rest of the day because the urge has passed – you satisfied it.

3. Leave Less Space for Junk Food Using Water as Your Weapon

Dieting is easy when your stomach has no more room to add junk food. Water is the weapon you need to fight mindless eating habits. Instead of sugary sodas, which increase your sweet tooth cravings, opt for water, which will simply create a full feeling and help you avoid snacking or overeating.

Traditionally, experts have advised that adults drink approximately 8 ounces of water, eight times a day. But in this busy and rushed world, it's often hard to find time to think about getting your daily water intake needs met.

And if you're not thirsty, it's even harder to swallow. You have to train your body to crave water and make it a habit that helps you prevent weight gain. You may need tips that will help you achieve your water goals for the day.

- Become a connoisseur of water. Not everyone knows how they like their water because they rarely drink water by itself. They have sodas or flavored waters or even milk instead. Do a taste test. Find out if you like your water at room temperature or ice cold. Do you have a preference for tap water or spring water or something filtered to the extreme?
- Find a water container that meets your needs – not what everyone else advises. Some people wouldn't mind drinking water continually if they could down a small glass at a time, more frequently throughout the day. Others need the reminder to drink water by carrying around a large water jug with them everywhere they go. You might drink more if you have an aesthetically pleasing water bottle rather than the store-brand plastic model. They have everything you can imagine – even personalized ones!
- Make sure water follows you everywhere. You want to constantly be sipping on it during the day. Whether you have a water bottle in each room or you carry one with you, it helps to have it staring you down at every turn.
- Always have a water appetizer before each meal. Water can be dolled up any way you want it – with a few mint leaves, or a splash of lemon. Make sure you sip a glass of water before breakfast, lunch or dinner to help your stomach understand that it's already partially full and won't have room to gorge.

Enjoy the additional perks you'll get when you drink plenty of water. It's not just meant to help you lose weight. Water hydrates your skin and helps stave off the aging process. It wards off headaches – which are usually the result of dehydration.

It also helps with the digestion process. If you suffer from constipation, then your water intake will alleviate that issue. And if you're implementing a fitness routine, then water will protect your joints and muscles to some degree.

4. Keep Your Diet Quest to Yourself

With dieting and smoking and other habit reformation, you often hear the advice to make an announcement so that you're held accountable. In some cases, this may be what you need. But it can also have a negative effect on you.

It all depends on the people you surround yourself with. The best thing about a sensible diet is that it doesn't become "an event." It's simply improvements in the way you live life. So when you go and announce on your Facebook wall that you've started a diet, you're inviting criticism and intrusions that aren't so helpful.

Most people won't understand moderation dieting. They have been raised where you give up "bad foods" and if you do indulge, then you've broken the diet plan. You don't want this type of pressure.

Some well-meaning (or just nosy) friends and family will shake their heads if you order something not typical of a diet menu. They'll tell you all about how wrong the plan is that you're on, because their aunt Sally's best friend's mother's cousin just lost 80 pounds on a different program you should go on.

It's better to keep it to yourself and just not have to explain why you got a to go box for the second half of your restaurant portion, or why you've decided to carry a water bottle around with you.

If they inquire about your new habits, just answer about that particular one. Such as, "water just quenches my thirst better." Don't declare, "I'm trying to lose weight and I have to drink eight, 8-ounce glasses a day,"

because then they'll push you from that point on, and the last thing you want when dieting is more pressure.

5. Get Stress Under Control So Your Eating Will Be, Too

Are you a stress eater? Some people are – they binge on comfort foods whenever stress gets out of control. Others have a loss of appetite altogether, and find themselves extremely hungry once the stressful situation resolves itself.

You need to have your stress under control so that your diet isn't affected in any way – either by eating too much or too little. To function properly and lose weight in a healthy manner, you need the right amount of fuel for your body.

First, address where the stress is coming from. Job? Money? Relationships? It could be something as common as poor time management, a long and harrowing commute to work, or an illness that's taking its toll.

If you can find a way to rid excess stress sin your life, do that first. Then work on applying techniques to help you manage the stress that's left – because no one enjoys a completely stress-free life.

When it comes to food, try to make sure you eat enough nutrition to support you through the hard times. If overeating is your concern, then there are ways to manage that as well. Food is going to have a direct effect on your stress levels.

Have you ever heard of serotonin? It's a hormone that alters your moods and helps you handle stress more effectively. Low serotonin levels leave you unable to cope with stress. A healthy diet for those who are plagued with stress includes:

- Potassium to relax your muscles.
- Protein to help your mind function properly.

- Complex carbs in moderation to rev up serotonin levels.
- Vegetables to help your body's immune system, which weakens under stress and worsens the problem.

You can find other stress-relief techniques to implement along with your stress-free diet plan. Look at things like meditation, yoga, hypnosis, and aromatherapy to help you get through the tough times.

6. Don't Let Diet Drinks Trick You Into Ignoring Water

If you listen to the news, you may have already found out that the poor people who have made the difficult switch to diet sodas may be doing more harm than good to their body and its weight loss efforts.

Diet drinks provide no caloric intake, so your body doesn't get the calories it initially believes it's ingesting. This can actually cause you to crave more food – especially sweets. It kind of negates the benefit you thought you were giving your body by making the swap in the first place!

Diet drinks taste decent because of the artificial ingredients they make them with. But those ingredients aren't always beneficial to the rest of your body. You want to achieve optimal health – and chemicals aren't going to help with that.

Some of these chemicals may even contribute to the development of cancer – not something you signed up for when you thought you were making an improvement to your health! Other ingredients have a bad effect on your blood sugar, even though there isn't any actual sugar in these drinks!

If you drink the diet drinks so that you can have your daily dose of caffeine, then you might switch to coffee and tea – which can both deliver some powerful health benefits that fight, not cause, cancer.

7. Add a Rainbow of Fruits and Vegetables to Your Daily Menu

Do you get enough vegetables in your diet? Vegetables are low in calories, full of health benefits, and you can often pile your plate high with them at minimal caloric impact. They help fill you up without weighing you down (literally).

How do you do with fruits? Do you eat enough of them – and more importantly, do you sample some fruits from each color of the rainbow to get the maximum health benefits available to you? Many people find fruit easier to add into their diet because it's sweet, compared to vegetables.

Unfortunately, the better way to do it is to flip that equation – and eat more vegetables and fewer fruits. Just make sure you get the proper amount of both. The great thing about fruits and vegetables is that you can pick and choose which form you prefer.

Frozen, canned and fresh fruits and vegetables all have a positive impact on your diet efforts. But of course you have to use common sense, like avoiding fruit pieces that are drowning in heavy (sugary) syrup.

You need to make a list of the rainbow fruits and vegetables and make it a point to try at least one new item per week. Take the color red, for example. You might list the following and then make it a point to incorporate them each week:

- Apples
- Strawberries
- Watermelon
- Grapefruit
- Cherries
- Cranberries
- Grapes
- Pomegranates
- Raspberries
- Tomatoes

- Beets
- Cabbage
- Radishes
- Rhubarb
- Red Potatoes
- Peppers

Do the same for each color of the rainbow. Look up recipes for it online and then see how creative you can get. Take turnips for instance – some people eat them raw, others boil them, and some mash them up.

Another common sense rule is to try to avoid frying your vegetables – because when you're trying to shed pounds, the added oil makes it that much harder to achieve your goals. If you really like fried vegetables, rather than raw or boiled, then try roasting them in the oven with a dash of olive oil, so it's healthier for you.

Some people complain about the cost of fruits and vegetables – and it can get pricey if you aren't planning for it. Look for sales that are going on and check circulars in your area to see which store has the best deals.

Say Goodbye to Mindless Munching

How many times have you grabbed a bag of chips (or cookies or anything else that's a favorite of yours) and sat there eating it while watching TV – and later realized you went a tad overboard? You weren't even really hungry – you just needed to cater to that hand to mouth habit of shoving food in your mouth (and of course, nobody chooses healthy options like grapes or raw veggies).

You need to start checking your hunger cues as a habit each time you go for food. Give yourself a scale of 1 to 10. One means you're so full that if you even LOOKED at another piece of food, you would pop.

A 10 would mean you're so hungry you would eat almost anything put in front of you. You shouldn't even think about eating until you're at least a

five. Anything below a five means you could occupy that time with something else – like a hobby.

You will be surprised when you start watching your hunger cues, because most people eat before they truly get hungry at all. They just know it's lunch or dinner – and time to eat. They mindlessly fill their plate with a pile of food and eat it all.

Once you pay attention to your hunger levels, you'll see a big difference in the way that you eat. You'll be listening to your body – and it will respond by alerting you when it's time to stop eating.

You've probably stopped eating when you were full in the past. That's going about it all wrong. When you're full, it means you've eaten way too much! Instead, stop eating when you're no longer hungry. When you go from a 7 to a 5 – you're stable.

Your body is content. This is difficult to do at first – it takes about 3-4 weeks to start feeling comfortable with it. You'll probably still pile your plate high, and find it such a “waste” to throw out all that food you didn't eat once you reached the “not hungry” point.

However, over the weeks you'll start putting less on your plate, knowing you have permission to go back for more if you are still hungry. A lot of the reason why people are overweight is because of all the restrictions put on us when it comes to eating – and you have to relax those and tune into your body's needs.

It's really hard to follow this step at a restaurant – you're used to enjoying every last bite of the meal. After all, you're paying more for it! But don't be afraid to ask for a to go box for whatever is left after you reach the not hungry stage. It'll be there for you later and your body will reward you with more pounds shed.

8. Use Meat and Fattening Foods Sparingly

We're so used to making meat the center attraction in our meals, but it's not the healthiest move when it comes to your diet efforts. Instead of taking up half of your plate with a piece of roast, cut a 3 or 4-ounce piece and use the rest of the room on your plate to pile on the vegetables and healthy side items.

You might save your meat as the encore item – the treat you indulge in after you consume all of your healthy vegetables. Start your meal out with a nice salad or even a vegetable-based soup. Cut the meat that you do put on your plate into small pieces and savor each bite and its flavors.

If you want to, you can even buy one of those plates that allocate enough room for each serving. It's a good way to start learning about appropriate meal portions. It's not a necessity, though. A good size of meat is about as big as a deck of playing cards.

Don't forbid yourself to have something. That's never healthy for your diet mentality. And quit using food as a reward, because it causes some people to binge or sneak foods they can't have access to at all times.

Once you remove the guilt associated with "bad" foods and realize that all food has some sort of nutritional value or purpose, you won't feel as if you have to gorge on it because you've been denying yourself for too long.

9. Be Careful of Who You Buddy Up With

Is it true that friends can make you fat? Maybe not literally, but hanging around people who are always discussing their diet (or lack thereof) can have a positive or negative impact on your own success.

You want to be mindful of who you pair up with if you're using some sort of buddy system to help you lose weight. Here are some things to keep in

mind before saying “yes” to a partner who wants to share your weight loss journey with you:

- Choose someone who isn't an Eeyore when it comes to life. In the Winnie the Pooh story, there's an old donkey who always thinks the worst of every situation. The last thing you want bringing you down is a diet partner who complains constantly about what they can't have or what they have to do to lose weight.
- Pick a partner who has similar weight loss goals. It's harder to share your journey if you need to lose 100 pounds and you're partnered up with someone who is trying to shed those last 5 pounds on her tummy (that you can't even see). And it's also harder to stay motivated if you need to lose 50 pounds and it comes off slower than your friend who needs to lose 200 pounds – because they may drop their weight faster before they plateau.
- Choose a partner that can inspire and motivate you. There are some people who you just know will achieve their goals once they set their minds to something. You want to be connected to this type of diet partner – especially if you struggle with being a quitter yourself.
- Don't pick someone who's too stringent. You may not both be following the same plan. For instance, if you're on a healthy diet but she's on a high protein diet, she might nitpick every bite you put in your mouth that isn't in line with what she's doing.
- Figure out what you want in a diet partner. Do you want someone to literally walk with you or workout with you every day? Is it enough to check in once a week or once a month? Everyone is different and you need to have the same idea of what the accountability measures should be.

If you don't know of anyone in your life that you'd want to partner with – or don't like your options – consider going online to find a diet buddy. There are many sites like SparkPeople.com that can help you connect to

someone in the same boat. And if you have a diet partner you dislike, speak up and let them know you need to break away from the situation.

10. Pack Your Lunch So There Are No Excuses

If you work outside of the home, then you know the temptations and appeal of dining out at lunchtime. It gives you a break from the office, and it tastes great. Even people on a budget often keep room in their finances for restaurant lunches – and that can be a bad decision for a dieter.

Many restaurants give portions that are two to three sizes bigger than what you should be eating. And they sneak fat and calories into meals that sound healthy, but really don't do any favors for your diet.

Planning ahead and packing your lunch is usually better for you when you want to lose weight. And don't think you have to be relegated to brown paper bag PB&J meals, either! There are many lunch box containers like Bento Boxes that help you create fantastic meals that can be warmed up in the office microwave.

Stores now have insulated containers so that your meal can stay hot or cold for you. This is more advanced than the traditional thermos that used to come in children's lunchboxes over the decades.

Make sure you pack some healthy snack options. Instead of grazing at your cubicle mate's candy container, you'll be able to pull out a baggie of fresh fruit or vegetables to help you get a quick pick me up in the meal department.

You can still get a break from the office with a lunch that you pack from home. You can go out in your car and listen to a book on CD, go to a park for a relaxing picnic while you read a book, and just take your meal outside on the company property and find a good spot to enjoy your meal.

11. Be a Picky Restaurant Customer

Many people feel too shy to customize their order in a restaurant. But being picky can shave many calories off of your meal and still allow you to enjoy delicious food that's prepared for you in a nice atmosphere.

The first thing you want to do is check the restaurant's online menu before you head out the door. Know ahead of time whether or not they have healthy fare to choose from. Some places, like Chili's, have this already built into their menu.

You can order from their Lighter Choices menu, where each meal is guaranteed to have no more than 750 calories, 25 grams fat and 8 grams saturated fat. Of course that still doesn't mean you should clean your plate – 750 calories for one meal is a lot, so consider splitting it up with a to go box.

What if the restaurant doesn't have a diet menu section? Just go to the online menu area that lists nutritional information. At a quick glance on a site like OliveGarden.com, you can see that the Mussels di Napoli would be a better option at 180 calories than the Lasagna Fritta, which packs over 1,080 calories.

If you don't see what you want, then ask the waiter or waitress if the chef can lighten up your favorite dish. They may be able to grill, instead of fry your chicken, or leave the sauces on the side if they're laden with calories.

Some of the choices you'll have to make on your own. For instance, instead of getting a twice-baked potato, you might get steamed broccoli for the better health option that will contribute to your weight loss.

12. Don't Be the Type of Dieter Who Sets Themselves Up for Failure

Goals are a great thing to have – but they can destroy your sense of confidence when it comes to losing weight if you set your goals so high that they're impossible to achieve. Who wants to see that they've failed day after day?

You don't want to set unhealthy weight loss goals, either. Part of the benefit of losing weight is that you improve your health. But if you lose too much weight too fast, by doing things like starving yourself, you can damage your health instead.

A healthy way to lose weight is to set a goal of 1-2 pounds per week. That can be disappointing to people who are in a hurry to shed pounds, but people who do lose weight slowly usually keep it off longer than those who yo-yo quickly up and down with their weight.

You don't have to go by pounds alone. You can set all sorts of goals, such as

- Reducing your soda intake by 1 per day.
- Losing one-half inch from your waist (or thigh or arms, etc.) each week.
- Cutting out 500 calories from your usual intake for 30 days in a row.
- Not eating out for a whole month.
- Drinking 8 glasses of water each day for a week.

There are many ways to celebrate your successes. Choose several goals in the near future so that you can constantly be patting yourself on the back instead of whining about how you failed to reach yet another goal for the week.

13. Celebrate the Health Benefits Your Weight Loss Is Delivering

You should always have a check up with your doctor before you begin any weight loss regimen. But there's another reason you want to have this appointment under your belt beforehand. It's to get a readout of all of

your current health stats so that you can enjoy the change you're getting as you say goodbye to unwanted pounds.

Ask your doctor to run a blood panel on you so that you can find out the numbers for things such as:

- Blood sugar
- Blood pressure
- HDL (good) cholesterol
- LDL (bad) cholesterol
- Triglycerides

In most cases, these numbers will improve when you lose weight and get more active. That will be another indicator to you that what you're doing is working and shouldn't be altered back to your bad habits.

Whenever you're on a diet, you can go back to your doctor for another blood panel without having to make a full checkup appointment. They'll mail you your results and then you can compare and proudly look at the difference in your numbers.

14. Find Non Food Rewards to Give Yourself

You can set goals – both long-term and short-term, and with those goals, you need to have a non-food reward to give yourself. If money isn't an issue, then feel free to pamper yourself with life's luxuries (such as a mani/pedi or body massage).

If you're on a budget, then find ways to say you're proud of yourself that don't dig into the pocket book. You might give yourself a day to relax instead of doing chores around the house. Sit down and read a good book and enjoy a relaxing bath instead.

Plan a day out that doesn't cost an arm and a leg – like a movie date! Or just go enjoy a museum or spend the day at the park with your kids. Some

people find a simple reward in heading to a store and just trying on clothes in their new smaller size – even if they aren't going to be spending any money that day.

Rewards that are non-food can be small, too. A new eye shadow or lipstick costs under \$10 but can be a nice reward for all of your hard work. One woman had a great idea to celebrate her weight loss “wins:”

She would buy a \$1 scratch off lottery ticket for each small goal she met. If she won money, she would splurge on herself. If she didn't, she kept the ticket as a reminder of all of her “wins” that she's had in her battle of the bulge.

Another idea is to sock away \$1 to \$5 for every goal that you meet. The money will add up until you have plenty to do something nice for yourself. Regardless of whether you use monetary rewards or not, you need to celebrate your milestones as you reach each one during your weight loss journey.

15. Create a Schedule to Implement These 15 Tips

Don't try to do everything at once or else you'll become overwhelmed with it all. Instead, just pick one new tip to implement each week. That way it will easily become a routine habit for you without causing you extra pressure and stress.

Developing good dietary habits means making lifetime changes. No one wants to be shocked into a total diet makeover in one day. It's a recipe for disaster if you make it impossible to achieve.



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