

Weight Loss Guidelines

Maybe you've finally decided to lose some weight. After years of feeling poorly and/or getting medical checkups that continue to bring more bad news about the quality of your health, you're tired of it. You are going to get rid of the extra 30 pounds that your doctor keeps nagging you about. Or, maybe you only need to lose 5 pounds to look your best for a special occasion. In any case, it's important to get off to a good start. In this article, we will give you the guidelines (and a few helpful hints) that can help you lose weight and keep it off.

Write It Down

Keep a log of everything you eat. Yes, everything! This includes those 2 bites of your friend's banana bread or those 3 french fries from your child's plate. These "insignificant" calories really add up!

By writing down everything you eat, you're able to see specific areas that need improvement. This log should include the grams of fat, carbs, protein, fiber and calories for every food you eat. Look at it each night; you might be surprised by what you find.

Don't Skip Meals

When you try to lose weight by skipping meals, your body thinks it's starving and your metabolism slows down. This actually causes your body to conserve fuel and not to lose weight. Therefore, don't miss a meal! Better yet, eat 4-5 small meals per day rather than 3 big meals. If you are positively a breakfast-lunch-dinner person, try reducing the size of your meals and inserting a healthy snack at mid-morning and mid-afternoon.

Eat More Fiber

Research has shown that meals with lots of fiber can block digestion of up to 150 calories of fat and protein. Try to increase your fiber to 35 grams per day.

Drink Green Tea

A recent study has shown that green tea helps burn fat. In this study, people who drank green tea at every meal increased their metabolism by an average of 4 percent. Although this may not sound like much, the average person, who consumes about 2,000 calories per day, could burn close to 500 extra calories per week. This is just from adding green tea to their meals!

Don't Eat at Night

Research has also shown that your metabolic rate slows after evening meals, which it doesn't do with meals eaten earlier in the day. For this reason, try to eat dinner before 6 p.m., and then close the kitchen.

Exception: If you exercise in the evening, consider having a small snack within the first hour after your workout while your metabolism is still high. This snack should be something that's mostly protein, like a turkey breast sandwich.

Increase your Exercise

It's important to remember that exercise is a vital component of any weight loss plan. It speeds up your body's metabolism, causing calories to be burned up quicker.

Caution: If you haven't exercised in a long time, consult with your doctor before beginning any exercise program. In addition to this, start with walking, or some other moderate exercise. Then, work your way up to an intensity level that is right for you. This will protect you from injury and keep you from becoming discouraged with a routine that is too difficult.

Summary

Losing weight and keeping it off are never easy. By incorporating these guidelines into your lifestyle, however, you can jump-start your efforts. Once you've reached your goal, you have a better chance of keeping the weight off.

