

10 Secrets to Lose 25 Pounds Now

Follow these 10 steps and weight loss won't seem impossible.

By

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Want to lose 25 pounds now? Sure, it's a tall order. But if you follow these 10 steps, it doesn't have to feel like a mission impossible.

You can shed weight quickly, depending on how much you have to lose and how focused you remain. Oftentimes, simple, easy changes can help you see results right away. That said, patience is an important part of the successful weight-loss formula. The pounds didn't get packed on overnight; it's going to take some time to establish healthy eating and exercise habits, and shed the not-so-healthy ones.

1. Do some detective work. Take some time to identify the most likely culprits of the unwanted weight. Are fried or sugary foods too tough to resist? Is it hard to avoid noshing whenever free food is within arm's reach? Are you too tired and busy to shop and cook healthy meals? Or do emotions—like boredom, anxiety, nervousness, depression, and joy—send you straight to the fridge? For most people, a wide variety of factors lead them to pack on unwanted pounds. The answers can lead you to your best first steps. If intense emotions are driving you to eat, identify alternate routes that will offer relief without derailing your weight-loss goals. You might reach out to a friend, get more sleep, sink into the distraction of a good book or movie.

2. Get moving. It's difficult to lose weight by just cutting calories. Research shows that reducing calorie intake through diet *and* exercise is the most effective way to shed unwanted pounds and keep them off. It's ideal to develop a regular exercise routine of three to four times a week (Our [Start Walking](#) plan can help you get into the habit of regular exercise with four days of walking and stick with it.) But also try to incorporate more activity whenever you can. Take the long way to the restroom, take the stairs rather than the elevator, park your car as far as you can from the front door. Set a timer to chime every hour so that you get up from your seat. Even standing rather than sitting at your desk will help. Studies have shown that standing at your desk during an eight-hour workday will burn 163 more calories than if you were sitting.

3. Plan Ahead. Everyone has their weak moments—situations where they find it tough to make healthy choices. Make a list of those occasions and settings where your diet tends to take a detour. No healthy lunch options at work? Pack your own. Devour everything in the fridge in the 10 anxious minutes after you walk in from work? Snack on the way home, and have a pre-cooked dinner that you can reheat right when you get home. If you go off the rails late at night, once the kids are in bed and you have a chance to decompress, think of another activity far from the kitchen that helps you relax. Try a book, a shower, a call to a friend, a hot bath, a fun movie. Hate to cook or don't have time for it? Get a book or order premade foods or convenient healthy foods.

4. Fill up on fruits and veggies. You *can* eat large portions without loading up on calories—as long as you're eating fruits and vegetables. Compared with other foods, produce is low in calories and high on nutrients, fiber, and water, all of which will help

you lose weight without being hungry. Fill half your plate at every meal with fruits and vegetables. Fill the other half with whole grains and lean protein—lean cuts of meat, beans, tofu, or low-fat dairy—to keep you feeling fuller for longer.

5. Don't drink your calories. Stick to calorie-free beverages like water or hot tea. A 20-ounce soda can pack 240 calories and 65 grams of sugar. Even a grande hot chocolate with fat-free milk has 360 calories. Add whipped cream, and you have an entire meal's worth of calories before you've taken your first bite. If you love specialty drinks, choose a smaller size with fat-free or low-fat milk and skip the whipped cream and syrups.

6. Don't do anything drastic. It's hard to feel bad about your body or have a burning desire to be thinner. Everyone wants to get thin now. But crash diets that promise to help you do that—by limiting you to a small group of foods, drastically reducing your calorie intake, or requiring you to buy certain engineered foods, won't work. Even if you lose weight fast, you'll likely regain the weight and then some. If you want the weight loss to last for life, you need to make changes that you can sustain for life.

7. Set smart calorie targets. Eating three meals each day keeps your metabolism revved, keeps you burning calories, and prevents you from getting so ravenously hungry that you eventually eat everything that's not tied down. If you restrict your meals to less than three per day, you'll be more likely to go overboard as soon as anything edible is within arm's reach.

- Women: Aim for 300 to 500 calories a meal.
- Men: Aim for 400 to 600 calories a meal.
- Women and men: Aim for a 100- to 200-calorie snack

8. Keep track. Studies show that people who track the calories they consume lose weight and keep it off more than those who don't. And there's good reason. When you have to track your calories, you see the sources of empty calories that are low on nutrients. In order to accurately track calories, you have to measure out portions—another practice that's proven to aid weight loss. Read this article on how to keep a food diary.

9. Do not make weight the only measure of success. Even as you get fitter, you may not see results on the scale. Keep in mind: muscle weighs more than fat, and hydration, hormones, time of day, and other factors can all have an impact on the numbers on the scale. Don't measure success with the scale alone. Are your pants getting looser? Are you getting more compliments? Do you have more energy? What about your blood pressure, cholesterol, and other markers of chronic disease: Which way are they moving? [Learn more about methods](#)—beyond the bathroom scale—to measure your success.

10. Just practice; don't try to be perfect. Realize that it's okay to indulge on occasion; one extra treat will not doom your dieting efforts. Everyone goes overboard from time to time. When you do, try not to wallow in guilt or anxiety about it. You can't control the past, all you can control is the choice you can make right now. Work in enough foods that feel like rewards on a regular basis so that you don't feel deprived and primed to binge on a regular basis. Remember, it takes time, effort, and practice to form new healthy eating habits.