

Tips for a healthy weight loss

Here is a compilation of my best tips for a healthy sustainable weight loss.

Reduce calories

Before you do anything keep a food diary of what you are eating at the moment. What could you cut back on or change without feeling that you're on a diet and that you're severely restricting yourself? Make small changes. Instead of having biscuits and a banana for a snack you could cut out the biscuits. Give yourself slightly smaller portions at meal-times, perhaps even use a smaller plate. There is a product called the diet plate which might help you control your portions. See www.thedietplate.com

The plate is marked into measured sections for starchy carbohydrates and proteins. Serve up your every day meals, just stick to the boundaries.



Increase your activity level

If you start to exercise regularly not only will you lose weight, but you will tone your body and reap so many health benefits. You'll also raise your metabolic rate and burn fat.

Start small, try to walk more instead of relying on the car, use the stairs instead of lifts, walk the dog more.....

Susan Powter, author of "Stop the Insanity" was an obese woman who wanted to change her life. One of the ways she did this was to simply start pushing her baby in the pushchair round the block, then she'd go a bit faster or further, eventually she could run it. She didn't push herself into running it straight away. If you're not used to exercising don't do an exercise DVD all the way through, tomorrow you'll hurt and probably the next day too! Small baby steps are the key.

Eat quality nutritious food.

Eat a healthy balanced diet. You've probably seen a food pyramid diagram. The food pyramid was devised by The United States Department of Agriculture to give people an outline of what their daily diet should consist of. If you go to <http://www.mypyramid.gov/mypyramid/index.aspx> you can give your age, gender, weight, height and level of physical activity and it will tell you what amount from each food group your body needs a day.

Are you getting enough from each food group? Eat 5 a day from the Fruit and Vegetable group. This is easier than you think.

Breakfast – supplement your usual cereal breakfast with a banana and an orange juice – that's 2

servings.

Snack – an Apple. 1 serving

Lunch – Add berries to your yogurt or have vegetable crudites with a dip. 1+ servings

Dinner – vegetables with your evening meal e.g. Peas and carrots with a chicken breast. 2 servings.

There, that's 6 servings!

Think about what you are putting into your body. We put the right kind of petrol/diesel into our cars, your body is like a car, it needs fuel to run and it needs the right fuel.

Eat low GL foods

Incorporate low GL foods into your diet, they will help fill you up and help you to lose weight. Patrick Holford and his Institute for Optimum Nutrition realized that people who balance their blood sugar find it easier to lose weight and keep it off and are more healthy as opposed to those people following low fat diets or calorie controlled diets. The way to balance our bodies' blood sugar levels is to eat low GL foods, foods which have a low glycaemic load. Low GL foods have a glycaemic load of less than 10.

For more information about low GL foods read "The Holford Diet" by Patrick Holford or visit <http://www.mendosa.com/gilists.htm>

Eat regularly.

Some diets tell you not to snack between meals. How silly! I've just had a mid morning snack because there's no way I can wait until lunch. If you get up at 6.30 am, eat breakfast at 7 there is no way you're going to last until your 1 o'clock lunch break! Try and eat something every three hours. Your body needs fuel regularly to function. Eating regularly stops your body from thinking it's starving, balances your blood sugar and also stops you from getting so desperately hungry that you eat a whole packet of biscuits!

PS. Eat healthy snacks!

Drink

General advice is to drink 6-8 glasses of water a day or approx 1.2 litres. This does not have to be water although water is best. I like diluted juices, they are more refreshing than juice alone, and also I like the flavoured mineral water that you can buy. Drinking can fill you up and stop you feeling hungry. It is said that people quite often confuse thirst with hunger. Next time you're hungry have a glass of water. Try it.

Make changes that can be sustained

Don't ban certain foods, don't be restrictive. Find a good time to exercise. I exercise after I've dropped the kids off at school. I do it at the same time every day, it's a habit just like having my daily shower. When's a good time for you?

Eating healthily and exercising is what every one of us should be doing anyway, it's not a short term solution for losing weight. You're not dieting, you are changing your life for the better. When you've reached your goal weight don't go back to the old you. Exercise should have become a habit, a good habit, keep it up. Keep eating healthily. You will find a level of eating that will allow you to maintain your weight rather than lose weight but you will never be able to go back to your old life - old you, old weight!

Set realistic goals

Set yourself short term and long term goals and make them achievable goals. I'm not going to look like Kate Moss by the summer! Reward yourself when you attain one of your goals. You could treat yourself to a new item of clothing to fit your slimmer body.

Don't feel guilty

So what if your hubby takes you out for an Indian meal or someone buys you a sticky cake or a box of chocolates for a treat. If you are eating healthily the majority of the time and exercising regularly then you can enjoy these things. You might want to "compensate" for the takeaway/cake by working out harder/for longer the next day or so or you might be more "careful" with what you eat over the next couple of days. It's all about balance.

Enjoy life

Count your blessings. Make the most of your life. Don't wait until you've lost weight to enjoy life, start now!