HABITS FOR WEIGHT LOSS

Research shows new behavior can become a "habit", or an automatic behavior, in as early as 3 weeks! Choose 1 item from the list below to "make a habit" starting today and continue diligently over the next 3 weeks. Add 1 additional item every 3 weeks and you'll be on your way to a happier, healthy lifestyle!

1. **Eat a high-protein breakfast / first meal of the day.** Eating a high-protein breakfast or first meal of the day has been shown to reduce cravings and calorie intake throughout the day.
2. **Avoid sugary drinks and fruit juice**. Cutting out surgery drinks can drastically reduce your caloric intake and help you lose weight! Start by avoiding any sugary drink throughout the week, reserving them for weekends only, until eliminated or drastically reduced!
3. **Avoid simple carbs**. Avoid eating any bread, pasta, rice, crackers and potatoes (including fries and chips) Monday through Friday each week. Avoiding simple carbs will help decrease your food cravings throughout the week!
4. **Drink water a half hour before meals.** One study showed that drinking water a half hour before meals increased weight loss by 44% over 3 months.
5. **Make 2 out of 3 of your daily meals with only whole, unprocessed foods.** Whole, or unprocessed foods include fresh fruits, vegetables, and meat. Whole foods are healthier, more filling, and much less likely to cause overeating.
6. **Lift weights 3 x per week.** Studies show that people who lift weights can lose fat while putting on some muscle. Lifting weights helps increase your metabolism and helps you burn more calories throughout the day at rest!
7. **Weigh yourself every day.** Studies show that people who weigh themselves every day are much more likely to lose weight and keep it off for a long time.
8. **Get a good night's sleep, every night.** Poor sleep is a strong risk factor for weight gain and overeating. Aim for 7-9 hours of sleep each night. Getting on a "sleep schedule" is the easiest way to make this a habit! Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time every day. You will start to become "regulated" and will naturally feel tired at bedtime and more awake in the mornings!
9. **Try intermittent fasting.** Intermittent fasting is linked to weight loss, improved health, and may even increase life longevity! Try fasting (not eating anything with calories) for a period of 14 - 16 hours every day. This requires eating 2-3 meals per day in an 8 - 10-hour window. For most people, this is most easily done by not eating anything after 8:00 pm the night before and then eating your first meal at noon (12:00 pm) the next day. You may drink black coffee and water during your fast, but do not eat or drink anything with calories.
10. **Eat your food slowly.** Fast eaters gain more weight over time. Eating slowly makes you feel fuller and boosts weight-reducing hormones.

Other Optional Tips:
1. **Try a new App, Fitness Program, or Calorie Tracker.** Consider downloading a fitness app to be a part of an online fitness community, join a new gym or fitness program, or track your calories throughout the day. Stick to your chosen program without fail every week. Tracking calories is a great way to increase understanding of daily food intake and nutrition. My Fitness Pal App is a free app that makes tracking calories and exercise easy.
2. **Try the Mediterranean Diet.** Eat mostly vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and healthy fats. Enjoy weekly intakes of fish, poultry, beans and eggs. Eat moderate portions of daily products and limit intake of red meat.
3. **Try the Keto Diet.** The Keto Diet is a very low carbohydrate, high fat diet. This trains your body to rely on fat as a source of energy. Research shows this diet improves weight loss and leaves people feeling fuller or more satisfied after eating compared to low-fat diets. Organize your meals each day to be 75% fat, 20% protein and only 5% carbs.

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