

# 25 Little Tips for Big Weight Loss

Don't give up dips and other easy weight-loss hints to get you back on track.

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Feel like you need a boost? Perhaps you've hit a plateau? Now is the perfect time to take stock of your life and to make some long-overdue changes. But adjusting eating and exercise habits can seem so daunting, it's no wonder that some of us never make it beyond the first day! So what's the best way to get started?

The surest way to succeed is making small changes. Think in terms of manageable baby steps, like swapping the half-and-half in your morning coffee for fat-free or low-fat milk. There are lots of little changes you can make — in your food plan and daily routine — that will add up to a lot of weight loss over the long haul.

Take a look at our 25 tips below for eating healthfully, fitting exercise into your busy day and revamping your daily routine. Start by picking five changes that you're sure you can tackle and practice them this week. Then try another five next week (click the 'print' link above to print this out for easy reference).

Not every idea is right for everyone, so experiment and see what works for you. Lots of little changes can yield big weight-loss results — and a healthier new you!

## 1. Good things come in small packages

Here's a trick for staying satisfied without consuming large portions: Chop high-calorie foods like cheese and chocolate into smaller pieces. It will seem like you're getting more than you actually are.

## 2. Get "water-wise"

Make a habit of reaching for a glass of water instead of a high-fat snack. It will help your overall health as well as your waistline. So drink up! Add some zest to your six to eight glasses a day with a twist of lemon or lime.

## 3. Herb it up

Stock up your spice rack, and start growing a small herb garden in your kitchen window. Spices and herbs add

fantastic flavor to foods without adding fat or calories.

#### **4. Slim down your soup**

Make a big batch of soup and refrigerate it before you eat it. As it cools, the fat will rise to the top and can be skimmed off the surface.

#### **5. Doggie-bag that dinner**

At restaurants that you know serve large portions, ask the waiter to put half of your main course in a take-home box before bringing it to your table. Putting the food away before you start your meal will help you practice portion control.

#### **6. Listen to your cravings**

If you're craving something sweet, eat something sweet — just opt for a healthier nosh (like fruit) instead of a high-calorie one like ice cream. The same goes for crunchy cravings — for example, try air-popped popcorn instead of high-fat chips. It's just smart substitution!

#### **7. Ease your way into produce**

If you're new to eating lots of fruits and vegetables, start slowly. Just add them to the foods you already enjoy. Pile salad veggies into your sandwiches, or add fruit to your cereal.

#### **8. Look for high-fat hints**

Want an easy way to identify high-calorie meals? Keep an eye out for these words: au gratin, parmigiana, tempura, alfredo, creamy and carbonara, and enjoy them in moderation.

#### **9. Don't multi-task while you eat**

If you're working, reading or watching TV while you eat, you won't be paying attention to what's going into your mouth — and you won't be enjoying every bite. Today, every time you have a meal, sit down. Chew slowly and pay attention to flavors and textures. You'll enjoy your food more and eat less.

#### **10. Taste something new**

Broaden your food repertoire — you may find you like more healthy foods than you knew. Try a new fruit or vegetable (ever had plantain, bak choy, starfruit or papaya?).

#### **11. Leave something on your plate at every meal**

One bite of bagel, half your sandwich, the bun from your burger. See if you still feel satisfied eating just a bit less.

#### **12. Get to know your portion sizes**

It's easy to underestimate how much you're eating. Today, don't just estimate things — make sure. Ask how much is in a serving, read the fine print on labels, measure your food. And learn portion equivalents: One serving of pasta,

for instance, should be around the size of a tennis ball.

### **13. Don't give up dips**

If you love creamy dips and sauces, don't cut them out of your food plan completely. Just use low-fat soft cheese and mayo instead of the full fat stuff.

### **14. Make a healthy substitution**

Learn to swap healthier foods for their less-healthy counterparts. Today, find a substitution that works for you: Use skim or low-fat milk instead of whole milk; try whole-wheat bread instead of white.

### **15. Bring lunch to work tomorrow**

Packing lunch will help you control your portion sizes. It also provides a good alternative to restaurants and takeaways, where making healthy choices every day can be challenging (not to mention expensive).

### **16. Have some dessert**

You don't have to deny yourself all the time. Have a treat that brings you pleasure, but this time enjoy it guilt-free — sure you're practicing portion control, and compensate for your indulgence by exercising a little more or by skipping your afternoon snack.

### **17. Ask for what you need**

Tell your mother-in-law you don't want seconds. Ask your other half to stop bringing you chocolates. Speak up for the place with great salads when your co-workers are picking a restaurant for lunch. Whatever you need to do to succeed at weight loss, ask for it — make yourself a priority and assert yourself.

### **18. Improve your treadmill technique**

When walking on a treadmill, don't grip the rails. It's fine to touch them for balance, but you shouldn't have to hold on. If you do, that might be a signal you should lower the intensity level.

### **19. Simon says... get fit**

Here's an easy way to fit in exercise with your kids: Buy a set of 1 lb weights and play a round of Simon Says — you do it with the weights, they do it without. They'll love it!

### **20. Make the most of your walks**

If your walking routine has become too easy, increase your effort by finding hills. Just be sure to tackle them at the beginning of your walk, when you have energy to spare.

### **21. Shop 'til you drop...pounds!**

Add a workout to your shopping sessions by walking around the mall before you start spending. And try walking up the escalator — getting to your destination faster will be an added bonus.

## **22. Walk an extra 100 steps at work**

Adding even a little extra exercise to your daily routine can boost your weight loss. Today, take the stairs instead of the elevator, or stroll down the hall to talk to a co-worker instead of sending an email or calling.

## **23. Brush your teeth after every meal and snack**

This will be a signal to your mouth — and your mind — that it's time to stop eating. Brushing will also give your mouth a nice fresh taste that you'll be disinclined to ruin with a random chip. At work, keep a toothbrush with a cover and toothpaste in your desk drawer.

## **24. Clean your closet**

First, it's great exercise. Second, it's an important step in changing your attitude. Get rid of all the clothes that make you look or feel bad. Throw out anything that's too big — don't give yourself the option of ever fitting into those clothes again. Move the smaller clothes up to the front to help motivate you. Soon, you'll be fitting into those too-tight jeans you couldn't bear to part with.

## **25. Take your measurements**

You might not like your stats now, but you'll be glad you wrote them down when you see how many inches you've lost. It's also another way to measure your success, instead of just looking at the scale. Sometimes even when the numbers on the scale aren't going down, the measurements on your body are.