

Losing Weight Without Dieting

There are many simple lifestyle habits that can help you lose weight, some of which have nothing to do with conventional diet or exercise plans. You can use smaller plates, eat more slowly, drink water and avoid eating in front of the TV or computer. Prioritizing foods rich in protein and viscous fiber may also help.

Losing extra weight may help you look better, but more importantly; it can take pressure off painful joints and improve overall health. Research shows overweight people with arthritis who lose 10% of their weight have better mobility and 50% less pain. Try these simple small steps to drop excess pounds and get big health results.

Time Your Meals

Set a timer for 20 minutes and reinvent yourself as a slow eater. This is one of the top habits for slimming down without a complicated diet plan. Savor each bite and make them last until the bell chimes. Paced meals offer great pleasure from smaller portions and trigger the body's fullness hormones. When you wolf your food down in a hurry, your stomach doesn't have time to tell your brain it's full. That leads to overeating.



Sleep More, Weigh Less

Sleeping an extra hour a night could help a person drop 14 pounds in a year. Research indicates that when sleep replaces idle activities -- and the usual mindless snacking -- you can effortlessly cut calories by 6%. Results would vary for each person, but sleep may help in another way, too. There's evidence that getting less than 7 hours of sleep revs up your appetite, making you uncommonly hungry.

When Soup's On, Weight Comes Off

Add a broth-based soup to your day and you'll fill up on fewer calories. Think minestrone, tortilla soup, or Chinese won-ton. Soup's especially handy at the beginning of a meal because it slows you're eating and curbs your appetite. Start with a low-sodium broth or canned soup, add fresh or frozen vegetables and simmer. Beware of creamy soups, which can be high in fat and calories.

Serve More, Eat More Veggies

Serve three vegetables with dinner tonight, instead of just one, and you'll eat more without really trying. Greater variety tricks people into eating more food -- and eating more fruits and vegetables is a great way to lose weight. The high fiber and water content fills you up with fewer calories. Cook them without added fat. And season with lemon juice and herbs rather than drowning their goodness in high-fat sauces or dressings.



Go for Whole Grains

Whole grains such as brown rice, barley, oats, buckwheat, and whole wheat also belong in your stealthy weight loss strategy. They help fill you up with fewer calories and may improve your cholesterol, too. Whole grains are now in many products including waffles, pizza crust, English muffins, pasta, and soft "white" whole-wheat bread.

Eyeball Your Skinny Clothes

Hang an old favorite dress, skirt, or a smokin' pair of jeans where you'll see them every day. This keeps your eyes on the prize. Choose an item that's just a little too snug, so you reach this reward in a relatively short time. Then pull out last year's cocktail dress for your next small, attainable goal.



Skip the Bacon

Pass on those two strips of bacon at breakfast or in your sandwich at lunch time. This simple move saves about 100 calories, which can add up to a 10 pound weight loss over a year. Other sandwich fixings can replace the flavor with fewer calories. Think about tomato slices, banana peppers, roasted red bell peppers, grainy mustard, or a light spread of herbed goat cheese.

Sip Smart: Cut Back on Sugar

Replace one sugary drink like regular soda with water or a zero-calorie seltzer and you'll avoid about 10 teaspoons of sugar. Add lemon, mint or frozen strawberries for flavor and fun. The liquid sugar in soda appears to bypass the body's normal fullness cues. One study compared an extra 450 calories per day from jelly beans vs. soda. The candy eaters unconsciously ate fewer calories overall, but not so for the soda drinkers. They gained 2.5 pounds in four weeks.

Sip Smart: Use a Tall, Thin Glass

Use a tall, skinny glass instead of a short, wide tumbler to cut liquid calories -- and your weight -- without dieting. You'll drink 25%-30% less juice, soda, wine, or any other beverage.



How can this work? Visual cues can trick us into consuming more or less. Research concludes that people poured more into a short, wide glass -- even experienced bartenders.

Sip Smart: Limit Alcohol

When an occasion includes alcohol, follow the first drink with a nonalcoholic, low-calorie beverage like sparkling water instead of moving directly to another cocktail, beer, or glass of wine. Alcohol has more calories per gram (7) than carbohydrates (4) or protein (4). It can also loosen your resolve, leading you to mindlessly inhale chips, nuts, and other foods you'd normally limit.

Sip Smart: Go for Green Tea

Drinking green tea may also be a good weight loss strategy. Some studies suggest that it can rev up the body's calorie-burning engine temporarily, possibly through the action of phytochemicals called catechins. At the very least, you'll get a refreshing drink without tons of calories.

Slip Into a Yoga State of Mind

Women who do yoga tend to weigh less than others, according to a study in the Journal of the American Dietetic Association. What's the connection? The yoga regulars reported a more "mindful" approach to eating. For example, they tend to notice the large portions in restaurants but eat only enough to feel full. Researchers think the calm self-awareness developed through yoga may help people resist overeating.

Eat at Home

Eat home-cooked meals at least five days a week. A Consumer Reports survey found this was a top habit of "successful losers." Sound daunting? Cooking may be easier than you think. Shortcut foods can make for quick meals, such as pre-chopped lean beef for fajitas, washed lettuce, pre-cut veggies, canned beans, cooked chicken strips, or grilled deli salmon.

Chew Strong Mint Gum

Chew sugarless gum with a strong flavor when you're at risk for a snack attack. Making dinner after work, socializing at a party, watching TV, or surfing the Internet are a few dangerous scenarios for mindless snacking. Gum with a big flavor punch overpowers other foods so they don't taste good.



Shrink Your Dishes

Choose a 10-inch lunch plate instead of a 12-inch dinner plate to automatically eat less. Research has found in test after test that people serve more and eat more food with larger dishes. Shrink your plate or bowl to cut out 100-200 calories a day -- and 10-20 pounds in a year. Tests also found that no one felt hungry or even noticed when tricks of the eye shaved 200 calories off their daily intake.

Get Food Portions Right

The top habit of slim people is to stick with modest food portions at every meal, five days a week or more. "Always slim" people do it and successful losers do it, too, according to a Consumer Reports survey. After measuring portions a few times, it can become automatic. Make it easier with small "snack" packs and by keeping serving dishes off the table at meal time.

Try the 80-20 Rule

Americans are conditioned to keep eating until they're stuffed, but residents of Okinawa eat until they're 80% full. They even have a name for this naturally slimming habit: hara hachi bu. We can adopt this healthy habit by dishing out 20% less food.



Eat Out Your Way

Restaurant meals are notoriously fattening, so consider these special orders that keep portions under control:

- Split an entrée with a friend.
- Order an appetizer as a meal.
- Choose the child's plate.
- Get half the meal in a doggie bag before it's brought to the table.

Complement a smaller entrée with extra salad for the right balance: half the plate filled with veggies.

Burn 100 Calories More

Lose 10 pounds in a year without dieting by burning an extra 100 calories every day. Try one of these activities:

- Walk 1 mile, about 20 minutes.
- Pull weeds or plant flowers for 20 minutes.
- Mow the lawn for 20 minutes.
- Clean house for 30 minutes.
- Jog for 10 minutes.



Celebrate

When you've kicked the soda habit or simply made it through the day without overeating, pat yourself on the back. You've moved closer to a slimming lifestyle that helps people lose weight without crazy or complicated diet plans. Phone a friend, get a pedicure, buy new clothes -- or on occasion, indulge in a small slice of cheesecake.

