

B M F L

Body & Mind For Life



The 15 principles of weight loss

1. Create an action plan

- Research shows that those who write down their goals in a meaningful way increase their chances of accomplishing them by 30%.
- What's more, it's been shown that if you keep track and measure the progress towards your goals, your success ratio increases by a massive 60%.
- Goal setting as a "journal" can significantly boost your personal motivation.
- Regular journaling is known to reduce anxiety, improve self-care and boost your rate of achievement.
- In addition, revisiting your goals regularly allows you to not only appreciate your progress, but also to revisit (and reconsider) your priorities.

2. Keep a food journal

- Writing down your daily food and drink intake is the best way to evaluate your eating behaviours throughout the programme and to find out exactly what, why and when you are consuming. It lets you take a careful look at your meal patterns, your shopping habits and food preparation (e.g. fried vs. oven cooked).

3. Trim the fat

- Choose leaner meats, skinless poultry and fish instead of fatty meats and use less oil in cooking
- Foods containing saturated and hydrogenated fats, such as margarine, fried foods, fatty meats, burgers, sausages, party foods, pastry dishes, cakes, biscuits, puddings, ice cream and confectionary products should be avoided.
- **Food fat is immediately converted into body fat.** This isn't the case with protein or carbs, which are first allocated to instant fuel provision, glycogen storage and tissue repair. Only when you eat more protein or carbs than your body needs, are these converted into body fat. In contrast, saturated fat is directly stored as body fat.
- **Do not cut fat out of your diet completely, in particular the healthy unsaturated fats.**
- We need essential fatty acids that the body can't produce, in particular Omega 3 and Omega 6. These healthy fats aid hormone production, constitute our cell membranes, absorb and transport fat-soluble vitamins and keep our skin looking healthy.
- Studies indicate that Omega 3 supplementation may help with fat loss. Experts believe that Omega 3 helps to transport oxygen to the body's tissues, thus assisting with fat oxidation (burning).

4. Avoid added sugar

- Before sugar enters the bloodstream from the digestive tract, it is broken down into two simple sugars... glucose and fructose.
- **Glucose** is the energy of life. If we don't get it from the diet, our bodies produce it.
- **Fructose** is different. Our bodies do not produce it in any significant amount and there is no physiological need for it. It can only be metabolized by the liver in any significant amounts. This is not a problem if we eat a little bit (such as from fruit) or we just completed a marathon. In this case, the fructose will be turned into glycogen and stored in the liver until we need it. However, if the liver is full of glycogen (which is the case for the majority of people), eating a lot of fructose overloads the liver, forcing it to turn the fructose into fat. Keep in mind that all of this does NOT apply to fruit.
- The WHO recommends to limit our intake of sugar to no more than 25 grams (6 teaspoons) a day.
- Many processed and packaged foods & drinks contain a lot of hidden added sugar!

5. Opt for slow carbs

- Slow carbs (i.e. low GI foods) are perfect for weight loss.
- Low GI eating increases your feelings of fullness, helps to normalise your appetite, prevents unnecessary cravings, and delays hunger between meals so you can last longer without having to resort to snacking.
- You can also lower the GI of a meal by adding soluble fibre (i.e. the fleshy part of fruits and vegetables), protein or fat. This decreases the speed of absorption and creates a lower (and slower) blood sugar and insulin rise.
- For example, when you plan to eat carbs (such as potatoes or white rice), you can combine them with a high-protein source (such as fish or chicken) and add plenty of non-starchy veggies.
- Another option is to go for low GI carbs that always contain protein, such as lentils and beans

6. Bulk up

- The most filling foods are those that have a higher water content, a heavier weight and a larger volume.
- Water and fibre have zero calories, add bulk and help you feel fuller. Fruits and vegetables are naturally high in these two components and pulses (beans, lentils) and wholegrains (quinoa, barley, oats) are water-absorbing and also high in fibre, helping you to fill up with less calories.
- Low-energy-density eating improves the enjoyment of a weight loss diet as it allows you to eat large quantities of food without adding many calories.
- To bulk up your meals, you can, for instance, replace half of your usual portion of pasta, rice or potatoes with vegetables. This way you'll eat more food but fewer calories.

7. Increase the fibre

- Fibre adds volume to food and binds with water in your gastrointestinal system – helping you to reduce hunger, promoting a sense of fullness, slowing down the emptying of food from your stomach and acting as a laxative agent.
- An increased fibre intake is associated with a natural reduction in the chances of overeating other calorific foods. Fibre also improves your meal satisfaction and gives food more texture.
- Because fibre slows down the absorption of carbohydrates and fats, the result is a more gradual and steady energy uptake and stable insulin levels. Through preventing a fast blood glucose and insulin spike, foods are used for energy rather than for storage as body fat. In turn, lower insulin levels help to better regulate hunger and satisfy your appetite.

8. Start with salad, fruit or soup

- Consuming low-energy-dense foods as a first course reduces energy intake of the main course and of the entire meal. Serving large portions of chunky vegetable soup at the start of a meal has been shown to increase satiety and reduce the total amount of calories you eat in your main meal by about 20%. Having salads or whole fruits (in particular apples and pears) before a meal reduces the number of calories you eat in your main meal by around 15%.
- Researchers have shown that these high-fibre, high-water foods reduce your appetite and cause you to eat smaller amounts of the higher calorie foods.
- This strategy will help you to feel full with fewer calories. A large bowl of boiled spinach contains just 50 calories, about the same as a nibble (one square) of cheese.

9. Plan ahead

- Irregular meal rhythms and snacking have been shown to stimulate weight gain.
- You can deal with these issues by taking control of your food environment and establishing new routines. This means that you need to plan ahead!
- Planning ahead includes thinking about your work and social schedule for the whole week, writing a grocery list before you go shopping so you're more likely to stick to it, preparing meals in advance and freezing them, packing and bringing your own lunch from home and stocking your fridge with tons of fruits, vegetables, salads and soups, so when you get home drained and ravenous you don't have to apply self-control in order to stick to healthier choices.

10. No snacking

- Grazing and snacking have been shown to lead to weight gain, especially in those sensitive to food rewards.
- For individuals that can't manage eating frequent small meals (e.g. they start small but end up eating big), or with a tendency of overeating, it's best to plan eating 3 or less meals a day. This strategy decreases their opportunities for overconsumption, increases their food enjoyment (even from less palatable foods) and allows them to eat until complete satiation or a full stomach.
- The no-snacking rule may not apply to athletes or those that perform multiple workouts in a single day, where eating 4-6 small meals a day is especially beneficial for efficient glycogen replenishment between workouts.
- Note: Pregnant/lactating women, diabetics and insulin-resistant people aren't advised to skip meals.

11. Slow down

- It's been indicated that we eat about 15 % fewer calories when we sit down and take our time to enjoy food, as opposed to eating on the go. Researchers explain that when you rush a meal or eat whilst distracted, the parts of your brain that sense feelings of fullness don't register a strong satiation signal, which may cause you to disregard that you have already eaten or to feel hungrier sooner.
- There are a few ways to strengthen the satiation signal as well as your meal enjoyment, such as:
 - Smelling the food on your plate before eating it
 - Chewing each bite thoroughly
 - Keeping the food in your mouth for longer
 - Putting the fork down between mouthfuls
 - Taking a deep breath before reaching for the next bite
 - Savouring the meal texture and flavours more mindfully

12. Drink up

- Water suppresses your appetite and naturally helps your body metabolise stored fat.
- Drinking adequate water is, ironically, the best treatment for getting rid of retained excess water!
- Water is also necessary to maximise muscle function and this raises your metabolism.
- Overweight and obese people need more water than normal weight individuals. This is mainly because larger people have larger metabolic loads. Since water is the key to fat metabolism, the overweight and the obese need more of it.
- On average, we require 2 litres (8 glasses) of water a day. The overweight person needs one additional glass for every 20 pounds (ca. 10 kg) of excess weight.

13. Indulge every now and then

- Research shows that banning your favourite treats or comfort foods entirely causes "guilt eating", which can lead to more bingeing and weight gain.
- Enjoyment of food is essential to weight loss. When you plan for the occasional indulgence, for instance by buying and consuming a certain treat just once a week, you can satisfy your cravings without feeling guilty and this can help you stay well-motivated and stick to your programme week after week.
- When you know in advance that you can enjoy your favourite food once a week, you'll stop thinking of it as a forbidden item but rather as a "celebration" and you'll be less likely to overeat on it. This strategy, scientifically known as "flexible control", has been shown to increase long-term weight loss success.

14. Drink wisely

- Not surprisingly, alcohol can be a diet disaster for many individuals. The calories in alcoholic drinks (7 per gram) can account for a significant proportion of a person's calorie consumption while providing little, if any, nutritional benefit.
- A bottle of wine has around 500 calories, so you can undo a whole day's good behaviour in just one social gathering.
- Alcohol promotes fat storage, primarily abdominally, which puts you at an increased risk for type 2 diabetes, elevated blood lipids, hypertension and heart disease.
- Studies have shown that in the short term, alcohol stimulates food intake and can increase feelings of hunger. Having your judgment impaired and stimulating your appetite aren't the best combination in a weight loss plan!

15. Exercise

- You can speed up weight loss by increasing your physical activities.
- Regular exercise also improves your mood, boosts your energy and combats health conditions and diseases (such as heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, stroke, certain types of cancers, depression, arthritis etc.).
- Anyone on a calorie-reduced program will lose both muscle and fat. However, by combining cardio with muscle strengthening exercises you will preserve more muscle and a greater proportion of weight loss is actual body fat.
- The more muscle you have, the more calories you burn, therefore increasing your metabolic rate and speeding up fat loss.
- By incorporating muscle strengthening exercises your musculoskeletal system will get stronger and as a result muscle power and bone density increases. Resistance exercises help to prevent brittle bones as we age.
- The Department of Health recommends that adults should undertake a **minimum** of 150 minutes moderate or 75 minutes vigorous physical activity a week.