

Lose Weight This Month



CHALLENGE

Start a weight loss program and lose 2-5 pounds this month.

Requirements to Complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Keep a written record of your weight each week.
2. Read "Burn more, eat less" and "Weight management principles."
3. You do not need to lose weight if you already have a healthy weight. To complete the Challenge, lose at least 2 pounds during the month.
4. Keep records of your completed Challenge in case your organization requires documentation.

Burn more, eat less

Nobody wants to be overweight, but as many as 2 of 3 adult Americans have a BMI (body mass index) higher than 25, meaning they are overweight or obese. Being overweight contributes to our nation's most serious health problems, including diabetes and heart disease.

The first step to weight loss is setting a realistic goal. For most people, this would be just 10% of your weight, or 10-15 pounds. Once you've achieved this goal and kept the weight off, set a new goal – another 10-15 pounds – if you need to lose more.

Weight management principles

You are more likely to be successful in permanent weight management when you follow these key weight-loss guidelines:

1. **Enjoy more low-calorie, high-fiber foods, like fruits and vegetables.** Aim for 5-9 servings per day. Fruits and vegetables are free of cholesterol, low in saturated fats and calories, contain the essential fats required for good health, and are high in fiber and nutrients. For optimal health, eat a large variety of fruits and vegetables, including dark leafy greens, yellow

and red peppers, dark berries, and other fruits and vegetables that are bright and colorful. Start your meal with an apple or a bowl of salad so you fill up on these rather than higher calorie foods.

2. **Choose whole-grain breads and cereals – 3-4 servings daily.** Whole grains help you feel full sooner and longer. Research shows that people who eat whole grains are less likely to put on extra weight. Whole grains are wheat, oats, corn, and rice in their natural state. Read labels when you buy breads and cereals. Make sure the first ingredient is "whole wheat" or another whole grain. Read the label when buying packaged cereal. Choose ones that have at least 5 grams of fiber a serving. When doing your own baking, use at least half whole-wheat flour (you can also buy whole-wheat pastry flour) and add oatmeal, bran, flax meal, or wheat germ to improve the nutritional value.

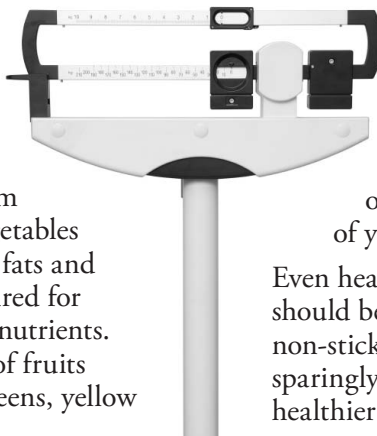
3. **Watch portion sizes.** Marketplace portions (TV dinners, restaurant meals, and prepackaged foods such as candy bars and muffins) have increased significantly since the 1970s. Even cookbooks have reduced the number of servings per recipe. These bigger portions encourage overeating.

Be aware of the size of a food serving. Use this guide to help you plan meals within your calorie range: www.wellspring.com/info/wn/servingsize.pdf. When dining out, split a meal with a friend – or ask your waitperson to put half of it in a take-home carton before you even touch it.

4. **Choose foods that are low in animal fats.** Saturated fats (the fats that are linked to obesity and heart disease) come primarily from animal sources.

These are good calories to eliminate or cut back on. Avoid high-fat dairy, shortening, and fatty processed meats. Substitute low-fat or nonfat foods (for example, nonfat yogurt or low-fat cottage cheese) for full-fat foods. If you eat meat, choose a skinless chicken breast or portion of fish about the size of the palm of your hand.

Even healthy fats, such as avocado or vegetable oils should be used sparingly. When cooking, use a non-stick spray rather than oil. Use salad dressing sparingly. Replace butter and margarine with healthier alternatives.



5. Limit desserts, snacks, and foods high in sugar.

These foods increase your calorie intake but don't give you many nutrients. They also leave you wanting to eat again after just a couple of hours. The American Heart Association recommends women consume no more than 100 calories (about 6 teaspoons) of added sugars per day. Men should consume no more than 150 calories (about 9 teaspoons) daily. Read labels when you shop. One teaspoon of sugar is about 4.5 grams.

Eat healthier desserts, such as baked fruit rather than a slice of chocolate cream pie. Drink water, unsweetened tea, or 100%-fruit juice instead of a soft drink. If you get hungry and feel you need to eat between meals, choose healthy snacks (fresh fruit, raw vegetables, or low-fat yogurt).



Beware of hidden calories in soft drinks or coffee drinks.

6. Don't skip meals. It can lead to binge eating later on. While you need to watch what you eat, this does not mean you skip meals or go on a liquid diet. If you skip meals, you are more likely to snack. Most snack foods are high in calories, fat, sugar, and salt, and low in nutrients. Eat regular meals that are low-calorie and good for you.



Keep fresh veggies on hand for a quick snack.

7. Eat a good breakfast and a moderate dinner, and avoid late night snacks. Eating regular meals – especially breakfast – every day is a good health habit. Morning meals satisfy hunger better and seem to reduce overindulgence throughout the whole day. Start each day off right with a good breakfast (for example, whole-grain cereal and/or toast, low-fat milk or yogurt, fruit, and nuts or peanut butter on the toast). And try to not eat any food after 7 p.m. Studies have shown that late-night dining contributes to weight gain.

8. Be physically active – 30-90 minutes daily. You've heard it before...physical movement is key to weight loss and fitness. Exercise for at least 30 minutes daily; or 45-90 minutes daily for better results. If you're not used to exercising, start out with 10 minutes of any type of physical activity:

- Walk up and down the stairs 5-10 times a day.
- Bike to the store when you can.
- Vacuum or mop vigorously.



Strength training can help you look more toned.

- Work in a garden, mow the lawn, and rake leaves.
- Walk after work before coming home (maybe the traffic will be better after your walk).
 - If you are in a wheelchair, wheel yourself for part of every day.
 - Work toward an intensity in your exercise that is "fairly easy" to "somewhat hard." Your exercise should make you breathe deeply but not be out of breath. If you are not able to carry on a conversation while exercising, decrease your intensity a little. As you get used to physical activity, gradually increase your time up to 30-90 minutes daily. Strength training (lifting small weights) and stretching exercises are also beneficial and can help you look more toned. Do strengthening and stretching 2-3 times per week.

9. Get adequate rest, and keep stress manageable. Working toward weight loss can be very stressful. One way to keep stress manageable is to take time to relax for a few minutes daily. Another is to get 7-9 hours of sleep each day. Sleep restores the body's physical and mental energy reserves. Exercise also relieves stress. When you feel your muscles tense up, go for a walk around the block.

10. Enlist the help of family, friends, and a support group. Your choice to change your lifestyle will have a significant impact on your family and friends. In most cases, they will support you. A few may feel threatened by your weight loss plans. Don't preach, brag, or criticize them. Be as patient and caring with them as you would like them to be with you.

11. Avoid crash diets. Aim to lose no more than 1 pound per week. Experts agree that even a modest weight loss of 5-10% of body weight over a period of 6 months or more can greatly improve the health of an adult who is overweight or obese. Instead of dieting, think like a thin person. Ask yourself, "What would a person who is good at managing weight do in this situation?" Watch your skinny friends. See how much food they put on their plate (portion control), what kind of desserts they eat (if any), and how active they are.



By incorporating these weight-loss principles consistently into your life, you should find that you will lose weight. If you aren't losing weight (or are losing a minimal amount) you might want to follow a calorie-controlled eating plan. First, you'll need to find out how many calories you currently consume in a day. Use the food journal provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/tnrockyrun/whatyou.htm>.

Then find out how many calories you really need. You can do that here: http://www.cancer.org/docroot/ped/content/ped_6_1x_calorie_calculator.asp

Knowing your body's daily calorie needs can be an important first step in adopting a realistic diet and physical activity plan that can help you attain and maintain a healthy weight. Twenty to 50% of your daily calorie needs are determined by how much daily physical activity you get. The rest of the calories you eat are either burned through basic body functions, such as breathing, circulating blood, and keeping cells functioning, or they're stored as fat.

The basic idea of a weight-loss plan is to burn more calories than you eat. Eating fewer calories or increasing the calories used by at least 500 calories a day will result in a weekly weight loss of 1 pound.



It's easier to get the willpower to turn down a 900-calorie double-burger with cheese and sauce and opt for a 400-calorie chicken sandwich or salad when you know your entire daily needs are about 1,600 calories.

—Joan Carter
Dietitian and instructor of pediatrics
Baylor College of Medicine, Houston.

Learn more
about healthy ways
to lose weight:

win.niddk.nih.gov/index.htm
www.smallstep.gov/index.html

Get sample
menus for your
calorie plan, created by the
National Institutes of Health:
[www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/
public/heart/obesity/lose_wt/
sampmenu.htm](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose_wt/sampmenu.htm)

**Here are some daily calorie goals
to consider for losing weight:**

- 1,200 Calories – Inactive Women
- 1,600 Calories – Inactive Men
- 1,600 Calories – Active Women
- 2,000 Calories – Active Men

If you find you are very hungry
on your reduced calorie plan, add
100-200 calories back into your daily
intake and walk a few extra steps.

Sources:

1. *Nutrition.gov*. 2009.
2. *SmallStep.gov*. 2009.
3. *Weight-Control Information Network (WIN)*. 2009.
4. *American Heart Association*. 2009.
5. *Health and Ways of Living, The Alameda County Study*. Oxford University Press: 1983.
6. *Journal of Nutrition*. 2004 Jan;134:104-111.





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 Start a weight loss program and lose 2-5 pounds this month.

Instructions

1. Post this record sheet where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.).
2. Keep track of your weight each week.
3. If you are overweight, you must lose at least 2 pounds during the month to complete this Challenge. (You do not need to lose weight if you already have a healthy weight.) Follow the weight management principles in this Challenge for a lifetime of best health!
4. Keep this record for evidence of completion.

MONTH:

HC = Health Challenge™ • ex. min. = exercise minutes

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary
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_____ Number of days this month I followed weight management principles

_____ Number of days I was physically active for at least 30 minutes

Other wellness projects completed this month:

Signature _____ Date _____

