



Healthy Eating* for Life

(*and other supportive healthy lifestyle practices)

You've heard it before, diets don't work! Well, it's true. Yes, people lose weight on diets; however, the statistics aren't good when it comes to long-term sustainable weight loss when the approach is to "go on" a diet. Why, you ask? What happens when the weight loss goal has been reached and the person "goes off" the diet? You can guess the answer. Unless healthy eating and lifestyle habits have become an integral part of a person's way of living, long-term sustainable weight management will be very difficult to achieve and will be fraught with frustration and a yo-yo pattern of weight loss and weight gain.

In this article I have summarized the most effective habits that will allow for long-term sustainable weight management when they become an integral part of your healthy lifestyle. The side benefits are that you'll feel great and you may even affect the lives of others as you and your way of living change and the positive impact is noticed by those around you.

- ☞ Compose the perfect meal or snack - the type of food matters just as much as the amount of food
 - ✓ Eat whole, unprocessed, unrefined, nutrient-dense, *real* foods: if it has a label or comes in a cellophane wrapper, don't eat it!
 - ✓ Include a balance of healthy carbohydrates, proteins and fats in every meal and snack. Protein satiates hunger. Protein and fat slow the absorption of carbohydrates, stabilizing blood sugar.
 - ✓ Eat more fibre.
 - ✓ Avoid sugar and trans fats.

- ☞ Eat early and often
 - ✓ Eat a balanced breakfast every day.
 - ✓ Allow 2 to 3 hours after your evening meal before going to bed. Try to go for a 20 minute walk after dinner.
 - ✓ Eat 3 healthy, balanced meals and 2 small, healthy, balanced snacks every day. Eat every 3 to 4 hours.

- ☞ Eat consciously and enjoy your food
 - ✓ Eat when you are hungry: learn to recognize true hunger signals as opposed to eating from boredom, habit, stress, or emotional upset.
 - ✓ Relax briefly before eating: take a few moments to breathe deeply and eliminate any tension you may be feeling.
 - ✓ Eat while sitting, in a calm, pleasant environment. Don't do other things while you are eating like driving, watching TV, working, talking on the phone, reading or web surfing.
 - ✓ Pay attention to, and enjoy, your food: notice the taste, texture and aroma. Chew your food purposefully to get the most satisfaction from every bite.
 - ✓ Stop eating when you are full: learn to recognize when you have eaten enough to satisfy true hunger, and stop eating.

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☞ Don't starve yourself

- ✓ Eating less than it takes to keep your body functioning - your heart and lungs pumping - will slow your metabolism and make weight management difficult. In calories, this equates to roughly 10 x your weight in pounds: e.g., if you weight 150lbs, don't eat fewer than 1500 calories in a day.

☞ Exercise - the benefits go far beyond weight management and include disease and stress prevention

- ✓ If exercise is foreign to you, begin by moving your body around more *every day*: e.g., playing with the kids, walking the dog, gardening and yard work, dancing, stretching or doing sit-ups while watching TV, taking a walk at lunch time, taking the stairs at work, etc.
- ✓ Different people benefit from different types of activities. Select exercises that are fun for you - not a daily punishment for poor eating habits. Accountability and support are keys to getting started. Preferences and variety are keys to staying interested.
- ✓ Begin by working up to a brisk 30 minute walk *every day*. Three, 10 minutes walks per day count.
- ✓ Include stretching or other flexibility exercises *every day*.
- ✓ Add strength building exercises 2 to 4 times per week. Muscles burn more calories than fat. The more muscle tissue you have, the more calories you burn each day, even when you are sleeping.
- ✓ Gradually work in some interval training to increase the cardiovascular benefits of your exercise.

☞ Manage stress in supportive ways

- ✓ Identify and reduce the causes of stress.
- ✓ Practice relaxation techniques like deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, meditation, guided imagery or yoga.
- ✓ Eat stress reducing foods: whole, unprocessed, nutrient-dense foods. And avoid stress causing foods: refined, processed foods with additives that disrupt hormone balances.

☞ Some other habits that contribute to long-term sustainable weight and healthy lifestyle management

- ✓ Drink 6 to 8 cups of water a day.
- ✓ Avoid excess alcohol: not more than 5oz of wine, 12oz of beer or 1 oz of liquor per day.
- ✓ Substitute green tea for coffee.
- ✓ Avoid foods that cause you an allergic reaction. Common food allergens are: wheat, dairy, eggs, corn, soy and peanuts.
- ✓ Plan your meals when eating in or eating out.
- ✓ Take a multi-vitamin/mineral daily.
- ✓ Get 7 - 9 hours of sleep every night.
- ✓ Minimize your exposure to toxins like tobacco smoke.
- ✓ Don't overeat: it causes physiological and psychological stress.
- ✓ For chocolate lovers: an ounce of pure chocolate with 70% or more cocoa is full of antioxidants.

Healthy Eating for Life

THE WHOLE FOOD GUIDE

HIGH-FIBRE FOODS – stabilize blood sugar by slowing the absorption of carbohydrates

- Beans
 - Black beans, chick peas, white beans, kidney beans, navy beans, split peas, pinto beans, lima beans, lentils, etc.
- Whole grains
 - Brown rice, wild rice, amaranth, buckwheat groats, quinoa, steel cut oats, multi-grain cereal, wheat germ, barley, corn tortillas (sprouted grain), dense whole rye or flax bread, etc.
- Vegetables
 - Fresh, whole, unprocessed, un-canned vegetables: experiment with new things
 - Substitute sweet potatoes for white potatoes
- Fruits
 - Fresh whole, unprocessed, un-canned fruits: frozen, with no added sugar, is ok
 - Berries are the best
- Nuts
 - Raw, unsalted, un-roasted
 - Almonds, walnuts, brazil nuts, hazelnuts, cashews, pistachios, pecans
- Seeds
 - Raw, unsalted, un-roasted
 - Sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, flaxseeds, sesame seeds

QUALITY PROTEINS

- Beans
- Nuts
- Eggs: use Omega-3 eggs
- Fish: wild salmon, herring, sable, halibut, sardines, fresh anchovies, light tuna, shell fish
- Lean poultry, lamb, pork, or beef (preferably organic, grass or range fed)

HEALTHY FATS

- Extra virgin olive oil
- Fish oil
- Avocados
- Olives
- Nuts & seeds (especially flaxseeds & flax oil); and nut & seed butter (without additives)

HEALTHY CARBOHYDRATES (see high-fibre foods)

- Vegetables and fruits
- Beans
- Whole grains

References: *Ultra-metabolism: the Simple Plan for Automatic Weight Loss*, by Mark Hyman, M.D.
The Real Age Workout: Maximum Health, Minimum Work, by Michael F. Roizen, M.D. & Tracey Hafen