

Healthy Weight Loss Success

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This Mama Cooks! On a Diet

www.thismamacooks.com

Introduction

Every year millions of us decide that it is time to lose some weight. Definitely a good decision, if you consider all the negative effects being overweight can have on your body and your overall health. Excess weight has been linked to diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease, not to mention a diminished quality of life.

We would like to give you a hand in your weight loss journey and provide you with some of the best tips and info out there when it comes to losing weight. We approach weight loss in a very down-to-earth and no-nonsense way. Sorry if we disappoint you, but there is no magic pill or juice you can take and wake up skinny the next morning. You also can't join a gym, or buy an exercise tape and expect it to work its magic on its own.

We are here to help you along your journey to a skinnier you, but let's be realistic. You have to eat better, get at least a little exercise and stick with it. If you can commit to that, there's no stopping you.

Here's to your success and a healthier, leaner you!

Christine Steendahl

[Menu Planning Central](#) – Let us show you how easy Eating Healthy can be.

Let's Begin

Let's start by taking a look at where you are at today. After all, you can't measure what progress you are making if you don't know where you started. Go ahead, muster some courage and step on that scale. Take out a notebook and write down your start weight.

From there, you can chart your progress as you go along. Simply weighing yourself and writing down the weight changes can be a big motivator to keep you going.

You may also want to take out a tape measure and measure around your waist, your hips, your upper arms and your thighs. You'll be amazed at how quickly you will start losing inches once you incorporate healthy eating and a little bit of exercise into your daily life.

Lastly, you may want to consider keeping a food journal for a few days before you start making changes. Writing down everything you eat and drink for a week will give you a pretty clear picture about what you need to change.

You may find out that you tend to eat a lot more throughout the day if you skip breakfast, or that your snacking gets out of control at night when you flop down in front of the TV with a bag of cookies or popcorn. Once you see where your weaknesses are when it comes to food, you can take steps to change your habits. Which brings us to our next section...

Start With Small Changes

How many times have you decided to lose weight and then drastically changed what you ate and drank? Maybe you even started to work out an hour or two a day. How long did it last? After a few days or weeks you start to get burned out and get tired of this completely different lifestyle. That's exactly why so many of us fail in our weight loss efforts. The key is to make small, gradual changes instead. Don't turn your entire life around. Instead, start going for a walk after work or on your lunch break three times a week. Start drinking an extra glass of water a day, or distract yourself when you want to eat out of boredom. Small changes like this will add up in the long run. As you get used to some of these changes, add something else to make your lifestyle healthier. Next you may want to start packing a healthy lunch, or preparing some veggies or a salad as a side dish for dinner.

Don't completely cut out every food you love, instead allow yourself that piece of chocolate, or indulge in a few bites of cake. You can get away with just about

anything in moderation. Eat a little bit of your favorite foods after filling up on some healthier fare, and then walk away.
Before you know it all these small changes you are making will become habits.

Develop Healthy Habits

As mentioned above, a healthy lifestyle is all about making small changes and turning them into habits. Pick one or two small changes that you can stick with and incorporate them into your daily life. It may be a little hard at first to remember to do things differently (for example, to remember to eat breakfast every morning), but after about 30 days, the change should become a healthy habit.

Then it's time to move on and develop the next good and healthy habit. To read more about forming healthy eating habits, take a moment to read this article.

<http://www.menuplanningcentral.com/articles/healthy-eating-habit.html>

Why Eating Healthy Is Important

By now, you may be asking yourself, why you should even bother making those changes and forming those healthy habits. Losing weight is of course a great reason, but it is by no means the only one to eat healthy.

When you eat foods that are actually good for you your body gets all the nutrition it needs to function properly. As a result, you will get sick less often and feel better overall. You will have more energy, because you avoid those sugar rushes (and the crash in blood sugar that follows), if you skip on that doughnut for breakfast or the candy bar for snack.

Healthy food is just plain good for you and we'll show you that it can taste delicious too. In the end you will find it much more satisfying than any fast food, fatty microwave meal or snack foods that can be found in a vending machine...and your body will thank you for it.

A Healthy Breakfast Is A Great Start Of The Day

Eating a healthy breakfast gets you off to a great nutritional start to your day. Studies have shown that women who eat breakfast consume an average of 100 calories less than those who skip this first meal. Over time, this one little change can make quite a difference. Not only will you start losing weight, you will have

more energy throughout the day and feel better by giving your body the nutrients it needs after 8 plus hours without any food.

Of course with our hectic lives, it isn't always easy to find time to sit down to a breakfast meal, let alone cook it in the first place. Don't let that discourage you though. If you are in a rush, grab a bowl of whole-wheat cereal topped with some fresh fruit and a little low-fat milk. Or prepare some boiled eggs ahead of time. In the morning, just slice one of them and put it on a bagel for a quick and easy bagel breakfast sandwich.

Our personal favorite is breakfast smoothies. Its quick and easy to put them together, the kids love them and if you pour them into a travel mug you have breakfast to go. Give it a try – here's a free mini-ebook full of all kinds of breakfast smoothie recipes that are good for you.

<http://www.menuplanningcentral.com/breakfast-smoothies.pdf>

Print then recipes and keep them next to your blender on the kitchen counter. Try some of the recipes that sound yummy to you and before you know it, drinking your breakfast every morning will become a healthy habit for you and everyone in your family.

Lunch That Will Keep You Going Throughout The Rest Of Your Day

Do you feel like you need a nap sometime in the afternoon, or do you get home so starved that you head straight over to the junk food cabinet for some snacking before you get dinner ready? Both of these situations could be caused by the lunch you do or don't eat.

So, what should your healthy lunch look like? You don't want to eat anything too heavy or it will make you sleepy. If you eat something with a lot of meat, fat and lots of carbs, your body will be busy digesting, and you'll feel like taking a nap. The extreme of this happens on Thanksgiving, but even regular restaurant food can cause this afternoon sleepiness. Also keep in mind that most restaurant meals are actually up to 3 servings of food – making it much too easy to overeat.

At the same time, you don't want to skip lunch. You need some food in the middle of the day to keep up your energy and keep you going the rest of the day. This also keeps you from being completely starved when late afternoon rolls around.

So what should you eat for lunch? A light meal that includes some fresh produce and lean protein. One of our favorite lunch meals is a salad. You can order a small order of a grilled chicken salad at your favorite lunch restaurant. (Tip –

order a low calorie dressing on the side). Or you can make your own salad and bring it to work with you. If you do not work outside of the home, keep your refrigerator stocked with fresh salad ingredients, so you can quickly pull together an easy meal.

Here's a small report we created with some delicious and very healthy salad recipes. As with the healthy breakfast smoothie ebook you are welcome to print it and pass it along to family and friends.

<http://www.menuplanningcentral.com/healthy-salad-recipes.pdf>

Planning Healthy Dinners

Does this sound like you? You do great all day with your new healthy eating habits. Then you get home, tired from a long day at work and just grab a bag of chips or order a pizza. The idea of running to the store to grab some fish or chicken and then cooking a healthy meal just sounds like too much work.

How can you get around that – and make it easy to prepare a healthy dinner at the end of the day? Plan your dinners ahead of time. If you have everything you need to cook in your fridge and pantry, and a recipe handy, fixing a healthy dinner will take less time than picking up a pizza and it will be much healthier (and cheaper) as well.

Take a little time each week to plan your dinners for the following week. Keep the recipes you need handy and make your grocery list. You can get most of the groceries at once and will have everything ready to cook when you get home.

If you want this to be even easier, you can subscribe to a menu planning service like the Menu Planning Central and get all your recipes along with a grocery list emailed to you each week.

<http://www.menuplanningcentral.com>

Avoid Sugar Substitutes

What's one of the first things you do when you decide it's time to lose some weight? You switch from regular soda to diet and substitute the sugar in your coffee with an artificial sweetener. Unfortunately this can backfire on you.

Did you know that artificial sweeteners can actually cause sugar cravings? You can learn more at www.CravingSecrets.com

A natural sweetener called stevia is growing in popularity. It allows you to sweeten your food and beverages without extra calories and without the sugar cravings.

Are You Drinking Enough Water?

Did you know that we often feel hungry when we are actually thirsty? The two sensations (hunger and thirst) come from two areas in the brain that lay right next to each other, making it easy for us to confuse one with the other. Often times when you think you are hungry, what you actually need is a big glass of water.

It is recommended to drink at least eight glasses of water per day, but hardly any of us drink that much. Instead we quench our thirst on sugary sodas or coffee.

Here's a great article on the health benefits of drinking enough water. It's a real eye-opener to see just how important water is for our body to function properly. You may even recognize some of the early signs of dehydration mentioned as symptoms you often experience without realizing you could easily cure them just by drinking more water.

<http://www.menuplanningcentral.com/articles/drinking-enough-water.html>

Dealing With and Avoiding Cravings

One of the biggest tripping stones when it comes to weight loss, are food cravings. It's hard to resist that urge when you feel like you just have to have that piece of chocolate. There's a lot more to cravings than just wanting to eat a particular food. Real food cravings can be caused by anything from habit to nutritional deficiencies that need to be addressed. Thankfully there are quite a few ways to successfully deal with food cravings. They allow you to control your cravings instead of the other way around.

Our good friend Diana Walker – The Craving Coach – has put together an excellent e-book on the topic. Learn more about her and what she has to say about food cravings on her website at www.cravingsecrets.com

Vitamins and Why They Are Important

We've already mentioned that nutritional deficiencies can cause cravings of foods that aren't exactly good for us. One way to make sure you get most of the vitamins and minerals your body needs is to take a daily multi-vitamin.

If you find yourself craving a particular food (like chocolate or red meat), you may be lacking a particular nutrient. In that case you may want to substitute with an additional supplement. Check with your physician if you feel like you need some additional supplements.

For more information about vitamins visit the site below:

<http://www.vitaminknowhow.com/>

Incorporating Exercise In Your Weight Loss Plan

Ok, we've spent a fair amount of time talking about what and how you should eat when you are trying to lose weight in a natural and healthy manner. The other part to this equation is – you guessed it – exercise.

On a very basic level weight loss comes down to consuming less calories than you burn. We can either eat less calories than our body needs for what we already do every day, or we can exercise to burn more calories than we consume. But the best approach will be to combine the two.

Eat healthy foods, without too many calories + Burn a few extra calories by exercising about 30 minutes a day.

Using this combined approach, you will lose weight much faster and the exercise will also help you feel better and make sure your body stays in shape.

What To Look For In A Gym

If you are serious about the amount and type of exercise you are getting, you may want to join a gym. A gym will have plenty of workout equipment for you to try, and many of them also offer fun classes on anything from Pilates to Kickboxing. Paying that membership every month can also be a motivator to get you to go in and work out.

Unfortunately not all gyms are created equal. Some of them are great, others...well, let's just say we wouldn't feel comfortable in there. Here are some great tips on what to look for in a gym before you join.

<http://www.walkingofftheweight.com/articles/joining-a-gym.html>

Exercising At Home

Of course you don't have to join a gym to get a good workout. There are many things you can do right at home to keep you in great shape. There's plenty of workout equipment available for you to use at home, but you don't even have to go that far.

Get some fun exercise DVDs, or just do some stretches, pushups and squats. Here's where we shop: www.FunExerciseVideos.com

Walking – A Low Impact Workout

If you are looking for a low impact workout, walking is a great way for just about anyone to start working out. A brisk walk is the perfect way to get you back in shape and can do quite a bit to help you lose weight and tone your midsection.

What we like about walking is that the only piece of equipment that you really need is a pair of comfortable shoes. Then just hit the pavement and go for a walk every day.

<http://www.walkingofftheweight.com>

Take a moment to join the free walking for weight loss tips newsletter for some great ideas on how to keep your walking workouts interesting and effective.

A Few More Tips To Help You Succeed

Last, but not least, we wanted to share a few more quick tips with you to help you on your journey to healthy weight loss. Here we go:

Only Weigh In Once A Week

When you start to diet, or change your eating habits in general to lose weight, you can't wait to see results. This makes it tempting to hop on the scale every morning. Do yourself a favor and limit weigh-ins to once weekly. Our body weight can fluctuate a good 3 pounds throughout the day, giving you inaccurate results. Plus you really don't want to obsess about how much you weigh. Weighing yourself once a week will show you your progress and confirm you are on track to a slimmer, lighter you.

Keep An Exercise Log

Exercising every day can be a bit of a challenge. Keep an exercise log or journal to chart your progress. It's a great way to see how much you are accomplishing and just having that little bit of accountability of having to write down what you did can be a great motivator to keep going.

<http://www.homebasedworkouts.com/exercise-log-or-journal.html>

Get A Weight Loss Buddy Or Accountability Partner

Do you have a friend who is also working on losing weight? Get together every once in awhile and report each other's progress. Having a weight loss buddy is a great way to get the support you need and have someone check up on you. If you don't have anyone you would like to buddy up with, ask your spouse or a close friend to be your accountability partner. Report on your progress to them and ask them to help you stay motivated in your weight loss efforts.

Grocery Shopping Tips

Grocery shopping isn't exactly one of our favorite activities. That's why we've come up with some tips on how to make it easier and faster. There are also some great tips here on how to make sure what you buy is healthy.

<http://www.menuplanningcentral.com/articles/grocery-shopping-tips.html>

Getting Back On Track

Oops, you tripped and have filled up on junk food, or went to a dinner party and indulged in way too much food (and dessert on top of it). Now what? Don't worry, we all slip in our good eating habits every once in a while. Don't beat yourself up over it or get depressed, instead get back on track with a few healthy meals the next day. The important thing is that you don't give up!

Healthy Eating Made Simple – Menu Planning Central

This report is sponsored by [Menu Planning Central](http://www.MenuPlanningCentral.com) - the **Healthy Eating Experts**. Enjoy Healthy Eating Quickly and Easily with Weekly Menus Along with Family Friendly and Vegetarian Menus along with plenty of other cooking resources.

Along with your weekly dinner menu, you will also receive access to monthly resources and culinary reports, our team of experts who write monthly columns on their topic of expertise, as well as additional help and support in the exclusive members-only forum.

You even get access to our custom-built meal planning software that makes creating personalized meal plans that fit your taste and dietary requirements a breeze.

Start by grabbing your free meal planning basics report and worksheets today at

www.MenuPlanningCentral.com