



# Want to Lose Weight and keep it off...?



## First of all...

Write down your reasons for wanting to lose weight decide if this is the best time to make changes to your eating and activity - do you feel ready?

## If now is the right time, before you start it really helps to:

- ◆ Learn more about your eating and activity habits. For about a week keep a record of everything you eat and drink as well as any activity you do. This helps you to identify problem areas, or feelings or situations that trigger overeating, and what you most want to change.
- ◆ Choose 2 or 3 small changes you can start with. Write yourself an action plan to follow with clear targets. For example; I will be more active and do this by doing a 10 minute walk three times each week. When successful you can move on to more changes or build on the ones you have already established.
- ◆ Make a list of things that will distract you from eating to use when you feel a bout of the munchies coming along.
- ◆ Enlist support. It not only keeps you inspired but helps you through tough times. It could be a friend, partner, health professional, group or website.

## Set yourself realistic goals:

- ◆ Realistic goals are achievable, and success boosts confidence in your ability to lose weight.
- ◆ Losing just 5-10% of your weight over a 3-6 month period has massive health benefits.
- ◆ A weight loss of between 0.5-2lb a week is a safe and achievable target.
- ◆ It's not just about your weight on the scales. Losing inches from your waist really helps to lower the risk of conditions like type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure.
- ◆ Don't forget activity. Doing more every day not only helps you burn more calories but can boost mood and improve long term success.



Did you know? One pound of fat contains 3,500 calories, so to lose 1lb a week you need a deficit of 500 calories a day.

## Follow a healthy eating plan:

- ◆ Plan ahead to help ensure you have the right foods to hand, at the right times.
- ◆ Start the day with a healthy breakfast. People who do find it easier to control their weight.
- ◆ Eat regular, balanced meals. Try to have meals and snacks at planned times during the day.
- ◆ Aim to include at least five portions of fruit and vegetables each day - have some at every meal.
- ◆ Half fill your plate with veg/salad and divide the other half between meat, fish, egg or beans and carbs like potatoes, rice, pasta or bread.
- ◆ Choose foods and drinks that are low in fat and sugar and limit sweet and salty snacks.
- ◆ If you drink, moderate alcohol intake. It's high in calories and dissolves good intentions.
- ◆ Watch your portion sizes, especially when eating out.
- ◆ Avoid eating at the same time as doing something else, for example, when working, reading or watching TV.
- ◆ Eat slowly, concentrate on and really taste what you are putting in your mouth.
- ◆ Finally, it takes time for your brain to know your stomach is full so wait at least 5 -10 minutes before deciding if you need more.



## Be more active:

- Moving your body around means using up more calories than if you are sitting down - every little helps...
- ◆ Look for easy ways to fit more movement into your day-to-day routine. For example, stand up when on the phone, use a toilet further away, park a bit further away from your destination or get off the bus a stop earlier.
  - ◆ Plan a walk into your day, perhaps ask someone in your

family or a friend to walk with you. Gradually increase the length of time and the speed of your walks to burn more calories.

- ♦ Try using a step counter or pedometer to see what you currently manage then gradually add to the number of steps you do - build up to 10,000 a day - or more.
- ♦ Slowly build on the amount of activity that you do so that it becomes part of your daily routine, not just a passing phase that you find too difficult to keep up. People who do are far more successful with long term weight control.
- ♦ Plan your activities into your diary each week. Tick it off and be proud when you have done it.



Follow an eating and activity plan that is tailored to you as an individual and to your lifestyle - you are much more likely to stick to it.

## While you are on your weight loss journey:

- ♦ Accept that the occasional lapse is normal and get straight back on track. Don't let it make you lose sight of your overall goals and the progress you have made. Instead learn from it to help you in the future.

- ♦ Keep some form of food diary. People who do, lose more weight. It not only helps you to stay aware of what you are doing, and deal with any problems like comfort eating, but helps you feel in control of your eating.
- ♦ Track your progress; you might want to do this by weighing yourself (at least 1-2 times a week), measuring your waist, reviewing your food diary or seeing what goals you have achieved at the end of each week.
- ♦ Plan for events like eating out and parties. Decide what your plan of action will be and stick to it so that you can enjoy your night out. For example, when eating out decide to have two courses instead of three or share a pudding that you would normally eat to yourself.
- ♦ Making changes to your lifestyle is hard work. When you achieve a goal reward your success with something you value (e.g. magazine, CD, trip to the cinema).
- ♦ Keep in touch with your supporters - it makes all the difference. Decide who can help you and tell them the best way they can do it (e.g. ask a friend to go to an exercise class with you, ask your partner to not buy you food as a gift).



Remember there is no quick fix. People who successfully lose weight and keep it off stay realistic and develop the skills to make their new eating and activity habits an enjoyable way of life.

Check out other Fact Sheets for information on Fad Diets and Detox Diets:



Why not have a look at our websites [www.bdaweightwise.com](http://www.bdaweightwise.com) and [www.teenweightwise.com](http://www.teenweightwise.com) which are packed full of trustworthy information, further advice and support for anyone wanting to lose weight.

This Food Fact sheet is a public service of The British Dietetic Association intended for information only. It is not a substitute for proper medical diagnosis or dietary advice given by a dietitian. To check that your dietitian is registered check [www.hpc-uk.org](http://www.hpc-uk.org). Other Food Fact sheets are available from [www.bda.uk.com](http://www.bda.uk.com)  
© BDA February 2008, Written by Hannah Fishlock with DOM UK, Dietitian

Trust a dietitian  
to know about nutrition