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5 Ways to Reach a Healthy Weight

5 Ways to Reach (and Maintain!) a Healthy Weight

Diets aren't the way to go when it comes to losing weight. That's because they create temporary eating patterns — and, therefore, temporary results. Most dieters gain back any lost weight when they go back to their old eating habits.

So what's the best way to drop excess weight? Create a new normal!

Weight loss is most likely to be successful when people change their habits, replacing old, unhealthy ones with new, healthy behaviors. Here are 5 ways to make that happen:

1. **Exercise.** Regular physical activity burns calories and builds muscle — both of which help you look and feel good and keep weight off. Walking the family dog, cycling to school, and doing other things that increase your daily level of activity can all make a difference. If you want to burn more calories, increase the intensity of your workout and add some strength exercises to build muscle. The more muscle you have, the more calories you burn, even when you aren't exercising.
2. **Reduce screen time.** People who spend a lot of time in front of screens are more likely to be overweight. Set reasonable limits on the amount of time you spend watching TV, playing video games, and using computers, phones, and tablets not related to school work. Be sure to set aside enough time to exercise every day and get enough sleep.
3. **Watch out for portion distortion.** Big portions pile on extra calories that cause weight gain. Sugary beverages, such as sodas, juice drinks, and sports drinks, are empty calories that also contribute to obesity. So choose smaller portions (or share restaurant portions) and go for water or low-fat milk instead of soda.
4. **Eat 5 servings of fruits and veggies a day.** Fruits and veggies are about more than just vitamins and minerals. They're also packed with fiber, which means they fill you up. And when you fill up on fruits and veggies, you're less likely to overeat.
5. **Don't skip breakfast.** Breakfast kickstarts your metabolism, burning calories from the get-go and giving you energy to do more during the day. People who skip breakfast often feel so hungry that they eat more later on. So they get more calories than they would have if they ate breakfast. In fact, people who skip breakfast tend to have higher BMIs than people who eat breakfast.

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