



Weight Management Coaching

Healthy Nutrition & Fitness for Life



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The information presented here is not a substitute for professional medical advice. Please ask your health care provider how your own medical conditions and history may affect your weight management.

You will see links or references to resources on the LifeWorks platform (accessible by Web app at login.lifeworks.com or by mobile app) throughout this booklet. To access these resources, you will need to log in to the LifeWorks platform with your access credentials. If you do not know your credentials, ask your health coach or your HR representative.

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Healthy weight is in your hands

Many aspects of our lives are beyond our control. There isn't much we can do about our genetic makeup, the weather, or the fact that our children grow into teenagers. But achieving a healthy weight, which can have a powerful influence on our health and outlook, is something we can control. This workbook provides tools that will help you achieve a healthy weight and maintain that weight. It will help you change what you eat, when you eat, and how much you move every day.

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You'll learn how to:

- Identify and understand unhealthy eating habits
- Create a personal plan for eating right
- Be more active every day

Most important, you'll learn how to turn healthy eating and increased activity into habits that will stay with you for the rest of your life.



Chapter 1

Getting started

It probably took you some time to gain the weight you want to lose. Achieving your goal of a healthy weight—just like so many other important things in life—will take time, too. That’s why it’s important to focus on taking one step at a time. Every pound lost is a successful step toward your long-term goal.

Reality check

This self-assessment will help you think about your eating and exercise habits. It will help you gauge your readiness to start your weight-loss program. It will also help as you create your own strategy for success.

Choose the answer that is closest to yours. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers.

1. Which statement best describes your experience with losing weight?

- a. I have trouble losing weight.
- b. I can lose weight but I have trouble keeping the weight off.
- c. I have lost weight and maintained my weight, but I’d like new ideas to help me stay motivated.

2. Which answer best describes your experience with physical activity?

- a. I have never exercised much.
- b. I’d like to start exercising more, but I struggle with being consistent.
- c. I’ve been exercising consistently for more than six months.

3. Which answer best describes how you think about losing weight?

- a. I’ll do anything to lose weight right now.
- b. I want to start losing weight immediately, but I’m willing to look at a plan that might take more time.
- c. I’m looking for a long-term plan that will help me make changes that will last a lifetime.

4. How many servings of fruits and vegetables (combined) do you usually eat, on average, every day?

- a. One serving or less per day
- b. Two to four servings per day
- c. Five or more servings per day

5. How often do you choose whole-grain foods (for example, whole-grain bread, brown rice, and whole-wheat pasta), instead of refined-grain foods (for example, white bread, white rice, and white pasta)?

- a. Seldom
- b. Sometimes
- c. Usually

6. When you eat, drink, or cook with dairy products (for example, milk, cheese, yogurt, sour cream), do you . . .

- a. Usually use whole-fat products?
- b. Sometimes use whole-fat products?
- c. Usually use light, low-fat, or nonfat products?
- d. Seldom consume dairy products or you are vegan or vegetarian?

7. When you eat meat or poultry, do you . . .

- a. Usually eat meat with visible fat or poultry with skin?
- b. Sometimes eat meat with visible fat or poultry with skin?
- c. Usually eat lean meats like roast beef, turkey or chicken breast without skin, or lean ham?
- d. Seldom eat meat or you are vegan or vegetarian?

8. Do you . . .

- a. Usually put butter or margarine on bread, potatoes, or vegetables?
- b. Sometimes put butter or margarine on bread, potatoes, or vegetables?
- c. Seldom or never put butter or margarine on bread, potatoes, or vegetables or use a healthier spread such as a trans fat-free canola oil spread?

9. How often do you eat fried foods (such as French fries, fried chicken, chips, or egg rolls)?

- a. Often
- b. Sometimes
- c. Seldom

10. When you eat desserts and sweets, do you . . .

- a. Usually eat donuts, cookies, cake, pie, and full-fat ice cream?
- b. Sometimes eat donuts, cookies, cake, pie, and whole-fat ice cream?

c. Usually choose fruit, low-fat yogurt, or low-fat frozen yogurt or ice cream?

11. How often do you choose soda or other sweetened drinks, such as sweet iced tea, for your beverage?

- a. Often
- b. Sometimes
- c. Seldom

12. If you're a woman, how often do you drink more than one alcoholic drink (beer, wine, or liquor) a day or, if you're a man, how often do you drink more than two alcoholic drinks a day?

- a. Often
- b. Sometimes
- c. Seldom

13. How many meals and snacks do you eat during the day?

- a. One to two larger meals
- b. Three to four meals or snacks
- c. Five to six smaller meals and snacks

15. How often do you read food labels for nutrition information?

- a. Seldom
- b. Sometimes
- c. Often

16. When you eat in a restaurant or fast-food place or order in, do you . . .

- a. Usually order whatever you want regardless of its nutritional content?
- b. Sometimes order whatever you want regardless of its nutritional content?
- c. Usually try to eat as healthfully as possible?

17. How often do you eat because you're bored, stressed, angry, or sad, or for other emotional reasons?

- a. Often
- b. Sometimes
- c. Seldom or never

18. When you eat meals and snacks, how often do you pay attention to the taste, texture, or smell of the food you're eating?

- a. Seldom
- b. Sometimes
- c. Often

Your score:

Calculate your score by counting the number of A answers, B answers, and C or D answers. How many of each did you get?

..... A's B's C's or D's

Now multiply the number of C or D answers by 2. Then add the number of B answers.

What is your total number?

.....

What does your score mean?

0 to 12. There are many small changes you can gradually make that will help you feel significantly better and reduce your health risks. This program will provide you with an awareness of your habits and patterns and the steps you can take to achieve your goals, one step at a time.

13 to 29. You're already on your way to weight loss and a healthier life, but maintaining motivation may be a struggle for you. You may also have tried a number of diets, but the weight didn't come off or didn't stay off.

30 to 36. You know a lot about health and nutrition and have incorporated many healthy habits into your life. You may do well most of the time, but you want to increase your knowledge and make some lifestyle changes that will help you feel even better.

Why so many diets don't work

For many of us, the word "diet" conjures up a world of extremes. There's the grapefruit diet, the all-protein diet, the low-carbohydrate diet, the cabbage soup diet, and on and on. Dieting can seem like an all-or-nothing world of extreme eating or not eating.

A diet, however, isn't something you adopt for the short term—it's what and how you eat every day. You have a diet now. The question is: Is your diet a good one for you?

If you're carrying more weight than your body needs, you can lose the weight. Not by deprivation dieting and not overnight. Before you can make a change, you need to let go of old habits and learn some new ways of living.

What does work

The secret to long-term weight loss isn't trendy-sounding, but it works. Weight control requires:

- Fewer calories
- Healthy eating habits
- Regular physical activity

Where to start?

Begin by empowering yourself. By learning about your own triggers for eating and about the principles of healthy eating and exercise, you'll start to feel more confident that you're making the right weight-loss decisions. And you can make those good decisions whether you're traveling, eating out, going to a party, or just choosing what to have for dinner.

Your healthy weight

What is your healthy weight? Identifying your healthy weight depends on a number of factors, including how much of your weight is fat and where your fat is located. Determining your body mass index and your waist measurement can help you determine your healthy weight.

Body Mass Index

Body mass index (BMI) is a measure of an adult's body fat based on height and weight.

Visit www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/lose_wt/BMI/bmicalc.htm and select BMI Calculator.

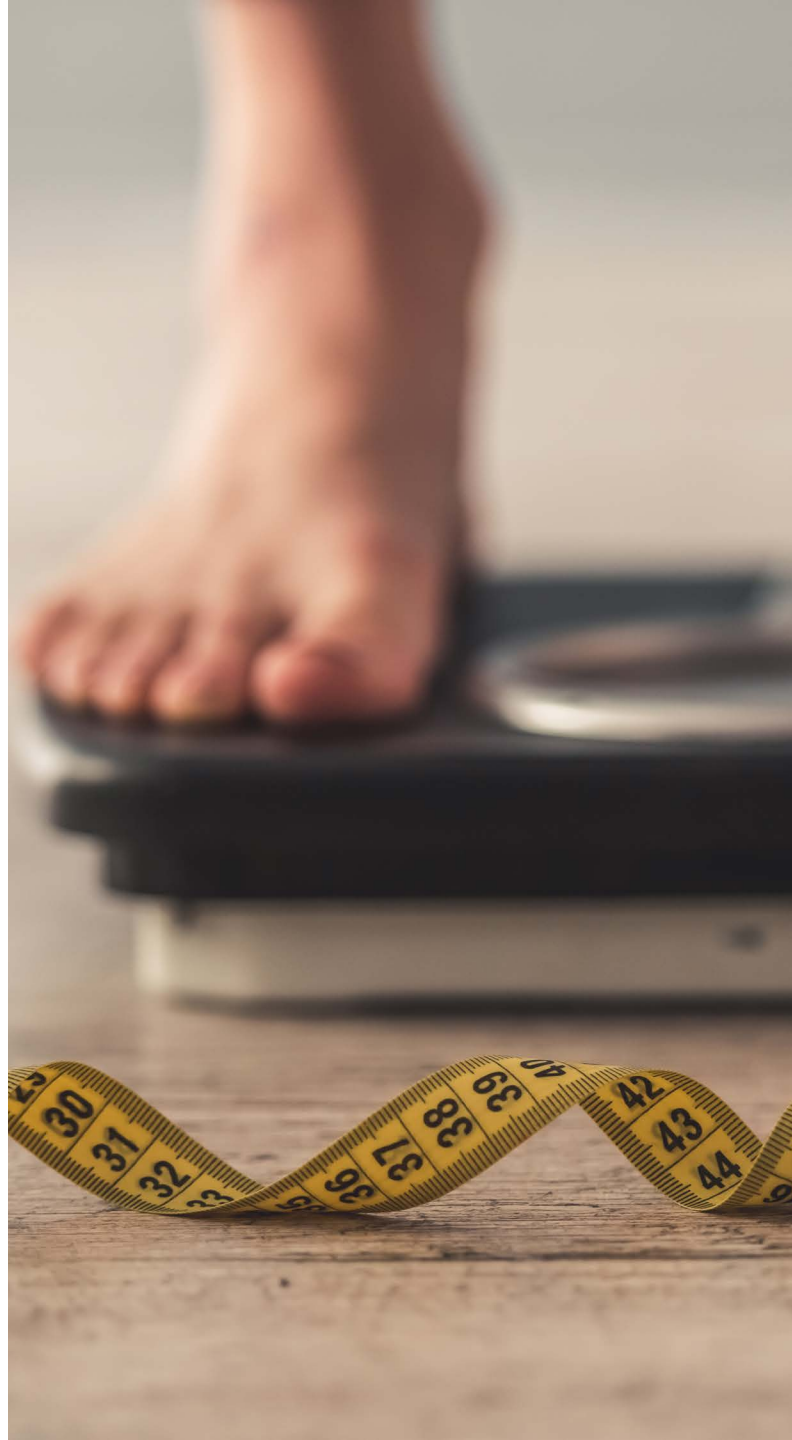
A person's BMI corresponds to these categories of weight:

<18.5 underweight

18.5 to 24.9 — healthy

25 to 29.9 — overweight

30 or above — obese



Waist measurement

Waist measurement can help screen for possible health risks that are associated with being overweight. If most of your fat is around your waist instead of at your hips, you are at higher risk for heart disease and Type 2 diabetes.

Generally, the risk goes up for women if their waist size is larger than 35 inches. For men, the risk increases if their waist size is larger than 40 inches.

To measure your waist, stand and place a tape measure around your middle, just above your hipbones, where the sides of your waist are narrowest. Take the measurement just after you breathe out.

Waist-to-Hip Ratio

Waist-to-hip ratio is the ratio of your waist circumference to your hip circumference and is a better predictor of weight-related health risks than body weight by itself.

For most people, carrying extra weight around their middle increases weight-related health risks more than carrying extra weight around their hips and thighs.

To calculate your waist-to-hip ratio, take your waist measurement with a measuring tape at the smallest circumference. Then divide that number by your widest hip measurement.

Waist measurement:

Hip measurement:

Your ratio:

A ratio above 0.95 for men and 0.85 for women significantly increases the risk for disease, particularly heart disease and diabetes.

Chapter 2

What are you eating and why?

We eat for all kinds of reasons, including reasons that have nothing to do with hunger. Understanding why you might eat when you're not hungry is key to lifelong weight management.

Fortunately, it's possible to identify behavior that can get in the way of losing weight and keeping it off. And it's possible to respond to that behavior in healthy ways that don't involve eating.

Why, where, what, when, and with whom?

Many of us eat when we're bored, tired, angry, lonely, irritated, anxious, or stressed. Some of us eat in certain ways just out of habit: always ordering buttered popcorn (size huge) at the movies or settling in with pizza, chips, and beer on Friday night just because it's Friday night.

Ask yourself honestly, "Why do I overeat?" and you may find some surprising answers. If you determine that emotions cause you to overeat, you've identified emotions as a food trigger for you.

Another good question to ask yourself is, "Where am I when I overeat?" Maybe you eat much more than you usually do if you're at your favorite restaurant.

Also ask yourself:

"What foods do I tend to overeat?"

"When do I overeat? Are there certain times of day or certain days of the week when I'm likely to overeat?"

"Do I eat more when I'm with certain people?"

Be honest. This isn't an exercise to punish you, but to help you build the strength to develop new, healthy behaviors.

Once you've identified your food triggers, you'll be more aware of your behavior and in a better position to take control.

Using a food diary

Using a food diary can also help you be more aware of your eating patterns. In fact, keeping a [food diary](#) is one of the best things you can do to stay on track while you improve your eating habits.

Use the food diary at the end of this booklet for three days to identify what food you eat, when you eat it, and why you eat it. When you catch yourself eating for reasons other than hunger, take a minute to think of a different way to handle the situation.

Emotional eating

In your food diary, do you notice that you often eat for reasons other than feeling hungry? If your answer is "yes," then you may be an emotional eater.

Any time you reach for food when you're not physically hungry or actually need nutrition, you're eating emotionally. Emotional eaters tend to eat—and often to overeat—to distract themselves from uncomfortable feelings, such as boredom, stress, sadness, pain, or anger. This kind of eating can become a habit that prevents us from learning how to deal with emotions in more constructive ways.

Emotional eating can have other consequences, too. Because emotional eaters tend to reach for high-fat, high-calorie foods, they often put on weight and may develop weight-related health problems.

People who engage in emotional eating often follow it with something called “negative self-talk.” When we use food to soothe ourselves, the guilt, shame, and self-berating that may follow create their own damage, possibly leading to more eating and sometimes to eating disorders or depression. Emotional eating can become a vicious cycle of avoiding uncomfortable feelings, eating, and then having more negative emotions.

Identifying food triggers

Fortunately, it's possible to conquer emotional eating. It's possible to identify your triggers for overeating and create strategies that help you respond to those triggers without eating.

First, it's important to identify emotional-eating triggers. Checkmark any feelings or situations on this list that apply to you:

Boredom

Do you ever raid the refrigerator or go out for food because you can't think of anything else to do?

Stress

Do you reach for a cookie or French fries because you feel stressed out?

Sadness

Do you reach for comfort foods when you're feeling low?

Anger

Do you “eat” your anger instead of letting it out?

Social events

Parties, birthdays, and other social events often revolve around food, causing us to eat when we're not hungry. Do you often eat a lot without thinking about it when you're at a social event?

As part of a routine

Do you automatically reach for potato chips when you turn on the TV? Do you always buy popcorn and candy at the movies? Do you usually grab a donut on the way to work?

Dealing with food triggers

Once you've identified your food triggers, you can plan the steps to take when you're faced with those triggers.

Here are some ideas to get you started. You can write down a plan that is appropriate for you.

.....

.....

Boredom

Call a friend. Read a book. Play a game on your cell phone. Go for a quick walk.

If I'm bored, here's what I'll do instead of eating:

.....

.....

Stress

Make a plan for dealing with your stress and write it down, even if it just takes the form of a "to-do" list. Take a shower. Walk. Work out. Put on some favorite music and dance.

If I'm stressed, here's what I'll do instead of eating:

.....

.....

Sadness or loneliness

There's no quick fix for deeply rooted emotional pain. If you recognize that you eat as a source of comfort, you may have opened the door to important issues in your life.

Talk with a trusted friend, family member, religious adviser, health care professional, or counselor. An advisor at LifeWorks, your confidential employee assistance program (EAP), can provide expert guidance or a referral to a counselor.

Here's how I'll start to address my sadness:

.....

.....

Anger

Many parents tell children that expressing anger is bad. These children may grow to be adults who eat when they're angry or irritated. If you do this, it's important to learn to talk about your feelings. It's also important to plan what you can do instead of eating when you're angry.

Many of the strategies that work for stress-triggered eating can work for anger, too. Going for a walk or run, writing in a journal, or talking with a friend or professional counselor can help.

If I'm angry, here's what I'll do instead of eating:

.....

.....

Social events

Eat something filling but healthy, like a small handful of nuts, before you go. Resolve to locate yourself far from the food table. Plan an "if . . . then . . ." response. For example, "If someone orders a plate of nachos for the table, I'll eat a couple and then I'll sit where I can't reach them easily."

At a party, here's what I'll do to keep myself from overeating

.....

.....

As part of a routine

Try to eat consciously. Before diving into your usual bag of chips or buttery popcorn at a movie, assess your hunger. Are you physically in need of food? Are chips really what your body wants and needs?

Here are some ways I'll avoid eating out of habit:

.....

.....



The connection between weight and depression

Anyone can suffer from depression, but people with weight problems may be at greater risk. Fortunately, depression is highly treatable. And treatment for depression can help with both conditions—the excess weight and the depression—greatly improving a person's quality of life.

There are many possible reasons that excess weight and depression are connected. Overweight people sometimes receive negative responses from others and feel rejected and undesirable. Often, they receive messages from others that heaviness has to do with laziness and lack of will power.

Symptoms of depression

According to the National Institutes of Health, symptoms of depression include:

- Persistent sad, anxious, "empty" mood
- Feelings of hopelessness, pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities
- Decreased energy, fatigue, being "slowed down"
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, making decisions
- Insomnia, early-morning awakening, oversleeping
- Appetite and/or weight changes
- Restlessness, irritability
- Thoughts of death or suicide

Not everyone who is depressed experiences every symptom, and the severity of symptoms can vary over time.

If you are experiencing several of these symptoms over time, be sure to talk with your health care professional. If you are having thoughts of death or suicide, get help right away by calling 911 or the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255**.

Chapter 3

Healthy eating to lose weight

To lose weight, you need to consume fewer calories than you use. You do this by becoming more active or by eating less. You lose even more weight by doing both.

Calories

A pound of fat is equivalent to about 3,500 calories. To lose 1 pound a week, you need to:

- Take in 500 fewer calories a day, or
- Use an additional 500 calories a day through activity, or
- Take in 250 fewer calories and use 250 more calories a day

The average person underestimates their caloric intake by about 50 percent. Although most of us believe we take in 1,800 to 2,000 calories a day, in reality, we may be taking in 3,600 to 4,000 calories.

To determine your own calorie needs, talk with your health care professional.

To find out your calorie intake, use a food log

An easy way to determine the number of calories you take in is to keep a food log for a few days. This will help you see where you can make small adjustments in your eating habits that will add up to weight loss.

Be sure to:

Count everything

If you make a sandwich, record everything that goes into it, including the bread, meat, tomatoes, and any mayonnaise, mustard, or other condiments.

To find out how many calories are in a specific food, use the food tracker on LifeWorks' Wellness site.

If you eat prepackaged food, you'll find the ingredients and calories listed on the label.

Pay attention to serving sizes

Calorie quantities are usually described as per "serving." If you eat more or less than the serving size, you'll have to adjust the numbers accordingly. For example, many cans of soup contain two servings. If you eat the whole can, you'll need to double the numbers.

Log weekdays and a weekend day

To reflect all the calories you consume, keep track of a weekend day and two or three other days during the week. Many of us change our eating habits on the weekend.

MyPlate

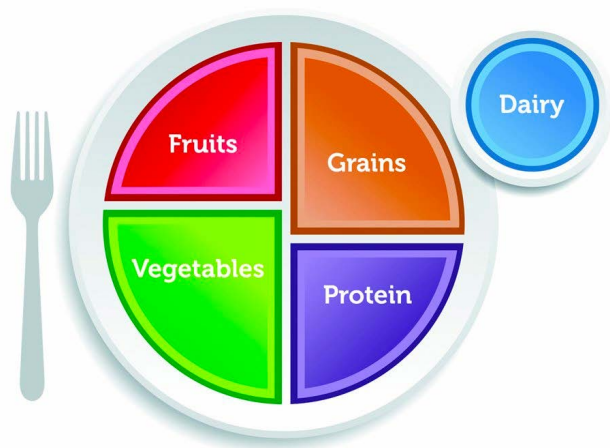
Food guidance tools can help you create your own healthy eating plan.

Following a food guide like the federal government's MyPlate plan can help you make sure you're getting all of the nutrients you need while managing your weight.

If you were raised in the United States, you're probably familiar with the USDA food pyramid. Created in 1992 and updated three years later, it was a useful but sometimes hard-to-understand way to show what healthy eating looks like.

In 2011, the USDA replaced the pyramid with a different kind of graphic, called "MyPlate." The idea is simple: which food groups, in what proportions, on one dinner plate.

Consistent with today's nutrition research, half the plate is fruits and vegetables, and the other half is grains and proteins. There's a serving of dairy on the side.



The USDA supplements MyPlate with these recommendations:

Food to increase

- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.
- Make at least half your grains whole grains.
- Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1 percent) milk.

Food to reduce

- Compare sodium in foods like soup, bread, and frozen meals, and choose foods with lower numbers.
- Drink water instead of sugary drinks.

Make at least half your grains whole

Whole-grain foods are less processed and retain more valuable vitamins, minerals, and dietary fiber than foods made from refined grains. Examples of whole grains include 100 percent whole-wheat bread, brown rice, oatmeal, bulgur, and barley.

Eating whole-grain foods, along with fruits, vegetables, and beans, can help you meet the recommended goal of 20 to 35 grams of dietary fiber from food. If you were to eat a cup of bran cereal, ½ cup of carrots, ½ cup of kidney beans, a medium-sized pear, and a medium-sized apple in one day, you would get about 30 grams of fiber.

Make half your plate fruits and vegetables

Fruits are low in fat and sodium, and high in fiber. Be sure to eat a variety of fruits, in different colors, choosing what's local and in season for freshness and flavor. If you choose canned, frozen, or dried fruits, make sure they don't have added sugar and be aware of the serving size.

Go easy on fruit juices. Choose 100 percent fruit juices and limit juice drinking to one small (6-ounce) glass a day. Be careful: Many "single-serve" bottled juices come in containers that hold two or three times this amount, which can add a lot of calories to your daily total.

Vegetables are rich in nutrients, low in fat and sodium, and high in fiber. Choose a variety of colors. Consider eating more dark-green vegetables like broccoli, spinach, collards, kale, and Swiss chard. Step up your intake of orange vegetables like carrots, sweet potatoes, and butternut squash, too.

Canned and frozen fruits and vegetables are healthy choices, but be sure to avoid products with added sugar, salt, or fat.

Get your calcium-rich foods

If you get your calcium from milk or milk-based foods, such as yogurt and cheese, be sure to look for lower-fat products.

There are numerous non-dairy sources of calcium including green leafy vegetables, broccoli, cabbage and okra, salmon and sardines, soy beans, tofu, soy drinks with added calcium, nuts, bread and anything made with fortified flour.

Choose lean protein

Foods like meat, poultry (including eggs), and fish, and certain plant-based foods like beans, peas, nuts, and seeds, are rich in protein and other important nutrients. Getting enough protein prevents body tissue from breaking down and helps it repair itself.

Choose lean meat, fish, beans, quinoa, and peas often, because these are the lowest-fat sources of protein. Be sure to remove skin from poultry, trim away visible fat on meat, and avoid frying these foods.

Limit fats, salt, and added sugar

Try to get most of your fat from healthier sources, such as fish, nuts, and vegetable or olive oils. Limit less healthy solid fats like butter, stick margarine, and shortening, as well as foods that contain these products. Check the Nutrition Facts label to keep overall fat and saturated fat intake low.

Salt

Be on the alert for sodium. Many processed foods, like canned soups, deli meats, and crackers, contain large amounts. Check the Nutrition Facts label to find products low in sodium. Choose fresh foods and meats more often to lower the amount of salt you eat. The American Heart Association provides comprehensive information about [ways to limit sodium](#) in your diet.

Added sugar

Most of the added sugars in the American diet are in regular soft drinks; candy; cakes; cookies; pies; fruit drinks; milk-based desserts, like ice cream and sweetened yogurt; and grain products, such as granola bars, sweet rolls, and cinnamon bread. Eat these foods in small amounts and only sometimes.

Added sugars are also found in jams, jellies, syrups, soups, spaghetti sauces, and applesauce.

Be sure to read the labels on all packaged items for hidden sugar.

The great food switch

Some simple substitutions can save you lots of calories:

Instead of . . .

- ⊗ 2 slices regular crust pepperoni pizza (670 calories)
- ⊗ A single hamburger patty on a white hamburger bun (420 calories)
- ⊗ 2 cups salad greens with 2 tablespoons ranch dressing (184 calories)
- ⊗ A 12-ounce T-bone steak (534 calories)
- ⊗ 1 cup fettuccine alfredo (547 calories)
- ⊗ 6 fried shrimp with 2 tablespoons tartar sauce (360 calories)
- ⊗ ¼ cup regular sour cream (120 calories)
- ⊗ 1 ounce regular cream cheese (100 calories)

Have . . .

- ✓ 2 slices thin-crust veggie pizza (384 calories)
- ✓ A veggie burger on whole-wheat bun (250 calories)
- ✓ 2 cups salad greens with 2 tablespoons low-calorie ranch dressing (80 calories)
- ✓ A 4-ounce filet mignon (331 calories)
- ✓ 1 cup pasta primavera (282 calories)
- ✓ 6 boiled shrimp with 2 tablespoons cocktail sauce (180 calories)
- ✓ ¼ cup plain low-fat yogurt (40 calories)
- ✓ 1 ounce fat-free cream cheese (30 calories)



Serving size matters

The USDA's recommendation of filling half your plate with fruits and vegetables at each meal is an easy way to visualize how much of these foods you need in proportion to other kinds of foods. If you would rather work from more specific guidelines, the recommendation is to eat five to nine servings, combined, of fruits and vegetables every day.

How big is one serving?

Here are the American Heart Association guidelines for determining a serving size:

Grains

1 slice of bread; 1 ounce of ready-to-eat cereal; ½ cup of cooked cereal, rice, or pasta (about the size of half a baseball)

Vegetables

1 cup of raw leafy vegetables (about the size of a small woman's fist), ½ cup of other vegetables, or ½ cup of vegetable juice

Fruits

1 medium fruit (about the size of a baseball);
½ cup of chopped, cooked, or canned fruit; or
½ cup of fruit juice

Meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, and nuts

2 to 3 ounces of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish (about the size of the palm of your hand or a deck of cards); ½ cup of cooked dry beans; or 2 tablespoons of peanut butter

Milk, yogurt, and cheese

1 cup of milk or yogurt, 1½ ounces of cheese (about the size of six dice)

Why the focus on fiber?

Dietary fiber is found in plant-based foods, including fruits, vegetables, beans, and whole grains. It promotes good health and reduces risk of disease. Because high-fiber foods are generally low in fat and calories, they promote weight loss. High-fiber foods also make you feel fuller longer, so you may eat less.

There are two kinds of dietary fiber—soluble and insoluble. A healthy diet includes both kinds.

Soluble fiber has been linked to improvements in blood cholesterol levels and is thought to help ward off heart disease. Sources of soluble fiber include dried beans and peas; oats; oat bran; nuts; seeds; and fruits, including apples, pears, strawberries, blueberries, and citrus fruits.

Insoluble fiber can help prevent constipation, diverticular disease, and type 2 diabetes. Sources of insoluble fiber include whole-grain foods like whole-wheat bread and brown rice; seeds; and vegetables, including carrots, zucchini, cucumbers, and tomatoes.

Upping fiber with fruits and vegetables

One way to increase the amount of fiber in your diet is by increasing the amount of fruit and vegetables you eat.

- **Wash and cut up vegetables when you get home from the store.** This way, they'll be ready when you are.
- **Make fruits and vegetable a focus at every meal and snack.** Eat raw vegetables with healthy dips like hummus or low-fat plain yogurt, and be sure to pack some to bring to work.
- **Add vegetables and fruits to favorite recipes.** Shredded carrots and zucchini are great addition to pasta and grain dishes, and to chicken and tuna salad.
- **Add extra fruit to salads.** Grapes, raisins, dried cherries, and citrus chunks are a tasty contrast with greens.
- **Add extra vegetables to pizza, soups, and sandwiches.** This is easy if you keep a container of fresh bell pepper slices, broccoli florets, or chopped scallions in the fridge.
- **Bake with fruits and vegetables.** Use applesauce (the kind without added sugar) instead of melted butter or oil in quick breads.
- **Make fruit smoothies for breakfast or a snack.** Keep some banana and mango chunks in your freezer to speed things up.
- Make a huge salad to eat throughout the week.

Add ingredients like romaine lettuce, spinach, cucumbers, grape tomatoes, snow peas, snap peas, red and green bell peppers, sunflower seeds, almonds, soy nuts, chickpeas, beans or dried cherries, and only add dressing to the portion you're about to eat.

Get fiber with whole grains, too

Here are some easy ways to increase the whole grains you eat:

- Start your day with whole-grain cereal. If this is new to you, try mixing a

whole-grain cereal with your usual cereal at first.

- **Choose whole-grain breads for sandwiches and toast,** and whole-grain crackers for snacks.
- **Incorporate brown rice and whole-wheat pasta into your food preparation.** If brown rice is new to you, mix brown and white rice.
- **Bake with whole-wheat flour.** Start by substituting small amounts of whole-grain flour at first.

- Use whole grains like brown rice, barley, farro, and millet, and quinoa, which is a seed. Mix them with vegetables like cherry tomatoes, scallions, carrots, and celery, plus a little olive oil and lemon for a healthful, fiber-rich salad.
- If your body isn't used to a lot of whole grains or other fiber, start slowly and drink plenty of water as you increase your fiber intake.



Quinoa salad with black beans and avocado ([food.com/recipe/ quinoa-salad-with- black-beans-and- avocado-473510](https://www.food.com/recipe/quinoa-salad-with-black-beans-and-avocado-473510))

Handling setbacks

You're bound to have occasional setbacks. If you step off track, it's natural to be disappointed. Instead of giving up, start fresh the next day. You're taking small steps toward lifelong change.

It's important to keep in mind that being perfect isn't possible or important. What's important is getting back on track.



Keep shopping on track with a menu plan

Planning is key for successful weight loss. Every week, make a menu plan that includes breakfasts, lunches, dinners, and snacks. This will help you avoid spur-of-the moment restaurant visits and take-out orders where you might overdo it.

- **Make a shopping list.** Check your kitchen for ingredients that you already have and make a list of items you'll need. Then stick to the list.
- **Don't shop when you're hungry.** Hunger can lead to purchasing high-calorie foods and over-shopping in general.
- **Schedule your shopping.** Shop once or twice a week on a regular schedule. If you have to make a quick stop during the week for perishable items, buy only what you need and check out in the express lane.



About fats

Fat contains more calories per gram than any other food source, which is one reason that fat has a bad reputation among people who are trying to achieve a healthy weight. However, certain kinds of fats are important to maintaining good health, especially the health of your heart. And a little of the right kinds of fats at meals can help you feel more satisfied.

Healthy fats

Unsaturated fats, which are the healthier fats, are found in fish, vegetable oils, nuts, and seeds. They are critical to your cardiovascular health.

Unsaturated fats, which are liquid at room temperature, are found in different kinds of foods:

Monounsaturated

Monounsaturated fats help lower low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol (often called "bad cholesterol") and raise high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol (often called "good cholesterol"). These fats are found in olives, olive oil, sesame oil, peanuts, most nuts, and avocados.

Polyunsaturated

Polyunsaturated fats also help lower bad cholesterol. Sources of polyunsaturated fats include seeds, whole grains, fatty fish like salmon, and include seeds like flaxseed and sunflower seeds, fatty fish like salmon and mackerel, and walnuts.

Omega 3 fatty acids

Omega 3 fatty acids may help protect you from heart disease. They are found primarily in seafood, especially salmon, tuna, and sardines. Other sources include walnuts, navy beans, wild rice, chia seeds, spinach, brussels sprouts, and flaxseed.

Unhealthy fats

Saturated

Saturated fats, which raise bad cholesterol, come mainly from animal foods, such as red meat, butter, cheese, whole milk, and other whole-fat dairy products. Saturated fats are also found in coconut, palm, and palm-kernel oils. Foods high in saturated fats are firm at room temperature.

Trans

Food manufacturers created trans fats when they processed liquid oils into solid fats by partial hydrogenation to extend the shelf life of products like cookies, crackers, muffins, and cereals. Trans fats raise bad cholesterol, just as saturated fat does. They also lower good cholesterol, which pushes coronary heart disease risk even higher.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has mandated the removal of all trans fats from food products and restaurant food. Because of this, a Nutrition Facts label will usually describe a product as containing "zero grams" of trans fats. Trace amounts can be reflected in a listing of "partially hydrogenated oil" on the label.

Switching to healthy fats

- Healthy fats are an essential part of a healthy eating plan. But because they're high in calories, it's important to eat them in moderation. Here are some ways to include moderate amounts in your eating plan:
- **Read food labels.** Look for low saturated fat.
 - **Cook with olive or canola oils** instead of butter or hard margarine.
 - **Instead of buttering your bread or rolls, dip them in a little olive oil.** You can add balsamic vinegar, garlic, herbs, or chili-pepper flakes to liven it up.
 - **Top your salads with sliced avocado, a few almonds, or unroasted sunflower seeds** instead of cheese or bacon.
 - **Work vegetarian meat alternatives such as tempeh, tofu, and soy-based veggie** burgers into your meal plan.
 - **Make meals with fish** or other seafood.
 - **Choose lean cuts** when you eat meat.

Food labels

Healthy eating means choosing whole foods like fresh fruits and vegetables, fish, poultry, and lean meats most of the time. But, if you're like most people, you will include some packaged foods in your eating plan. When you do, be sure to read the food labels before you buy, so you can be sure that you're making healthier choices.

The FDA requires food labels on almost all packaged foods, with the exception of spices and alcoholic beverages.

A food label can tell you many important things. For instance, you may realize after reading a label that you're eating twice the serving size, thus consuming twice the number of calories you thought you were. You can also

find out how much and what kind of fat a food contains, the amount of dietary fiber, and the vitamin and mineral content.

What the categories mean

Serving Size

The portion size to which the nutrition label refers.

Servings Per Container

The number of servings in the container. If you're eating one cup when the serving size is half a cup, you'll need to multiply the calories, fat, vitamins and other nutrients by two.

Calories

The number of calories in one serving. If there are four servings per container and you eat the entire contents of the container, then you need to multiply the calories by four to determine how many calories you consumed.

% Daily Value (DV)

This tells you the percentage of a recommended nutrient level in one serving of the food, based on a daily intake of 2,000 calories. You may need a different number of calories and therefore your recommended levels of other nutrients may be different. Rely on the actual number of grams or milligrams listed to know exactly what you're getting.

Sample peanut butter label.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 2 Tbsp. (32g)	
Servings Per Container About 35	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 190	Calories from Fat 130
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 16g	25%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0g	
Sodium 150mg	6%
Total Carbohydrate 7g	2%
Dietary Fiber 2g	8%
Sugars 3g	
Protein 8g	
Vitamin A	Vitamin C
Calcium	Iron 4%

Total Fat

The total amount of all fat in one serving.

Saturated Fat

The number of grams of saturated fat in one serving. The American Heart Association recommends taking in no more than 11 to 13 grams of saturated fat a day (based on a 2,000-calorie diet).

Trans Fat

The FDA has required that trans fats be removed from all processed foods and restaurant foods.

Cholesterol

The amount of cholesterol in one serving (in milligrams). Only animal products contain cholesterol. High-fat meat, milk, cheese, eggs, poultry, and fish contain cholesterol, while plant foods (fruits, vegetables, and whole grains) don't. It is important to limit cholesterol to less than 300 mg per day (200 mg/day for those with heart disease).

Sodium

The amount of sodium in one serving (in milligrams). The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute recommends limiting sodium to 2,300 milligrams a day for most people, and to 1,500 milligrams for people who have high blood pressure, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease; African Americans; and people ages 51 and older. Many processed foods have high levels of sodium, so be sure to read labels carefully and choose lower-sodium products.

Total Carbohydrate

The amount of carbohydrate in one serving (in grams). The total carbohydrate value includes dietary fiber and both added and naturally occurring sugars.

Dietary Fiber

The amount of dietary fiber in one serving (in grams). Adults should aim for 20 to 35 grams daily. Dietary fiber is found in plant foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and beans.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1/2 cup (40g) dry	
Servings Per Container 13	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 150	Calories from Fat 25
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 2.5g	4%
Saturated Fat .5g	2%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 0mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 27g	9%
Dietary Fiber 4g	15%
Sugars less than 1g	
Protein 5g	
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 0%	Iron 10%

Sample oatmeal label.

Sugars

The amount of sugar naturally present in food, as well as sugars added during processing (in grams).

Look at the list of ingredients to see if sugar has been added to the food. Sugar may be called any of these names on food ingredient lists:

- brown sugar
- corn sweetener
- corn syrup
- dextrose
- fructose
- fruit juice concentrates
- glucose
- high-fructose corn syrup
- honey
- invert sugar
- lactose
- malt syrup
- maltose
- molasses
- raw sugar
- sucrose
- sugar
- syrup

Protein

The amount of protein in one serving (in grams). Most healthy adults get more than enough protein in their diet. Dietary guidelines from the Institute of Medicine recommend protein intake of 15 to 20 percent of daily calorie intake.

Vitamins and minerals

The percentage of each nutrient in one serving, in terms of the daily recommended amount. If a percentage is high, the food is a significant source of that nutrient.

Don't let the Nutrition Facts confuse you

Food labels can be confusing. This information can help:

- The "% Daily Value" for fat isn't the same as the percentage of calories from fat. If the % Daily Value is 15 percent, that doesn't mean 15 percent of the calories comes from fat. Instead, it means that you're using up 15 percent of all the fat you need for a day when you eat one serving (based on a meal plan of 2,000 calories per day).
- If there is an amount of sugar listed on the label, it doesn't necessarily mean that sugar has been added to the product. For example, milk naturally contains lactose, which is a sugar. But that doesn't mean you should stop drinking milk; milk is full of other important nutrients, including calcium. Look at the list of ingredients. If the words "high-fructose corn syrup" or "sugar" are high on the list of ingredients, then refined sugar has probably been added to the product.

- If a package is small, it doesn't necessarily contain just one serving. A small bag of pretzels from a vending machine may contain 2.5 servings. You will need to multiply the amounts on the Nutrition Facts label by 2.5 to figure out how many calories, sodium, and nutrients you're actually eating.

Product packaging standards

The FDA also regulates the use of phrases and terms printed on product packaging. Here are common phrases you may see on food packaging and what they actually mean.

Calorie free or no calories. Has fewer than 5 calories per serving.

Light. Has one-third the calories or one-half the fat per serving of the original version or a similar product.

Low calorie. Has one-third the calories of the original version or a similar product.

Low fat. Has fewer than 3 grams of fat per serving.

Lower fat or reduced fat. Has at least 25 percent less fat per serving than the food to which it's being compared. This doesn't necessarily mean that the food is low in fat.

No fat or fat free. Contains less than 0.5 gram of fat per serving.

Good source of fiber. Has 2.5 grams to 4.9 grams of fiber per serving.

High fiber. Has 5 grams of fiber or more per serving.

More fiber or added fiber. Has at least 2.5 grams more fiber per serving than the food to which it's being compared.

No preservatives. Contains no preservatives, chemical or natural.

No preservatives added. Contains no added chemicals to preserve the product. Some of these products may contain natural preservatives.

No salt or salt free. Has fewer than 5 milligrams of sodium per serving.

Low sodium. Has fewer than 140 milligrams of sodium per serving.

Lower sodium or reduced sodium. The amount of sodium has been reduced by 25 percent from the amount in the original product. This doesn't necessarily mean that the food is low sodium.

Sugar free. Contains less than 0.5 gram of sugar per serving.

Reduced sugar. Contains at least 25 percent less sugar per serving than the reference food. Be sure to read the entire label. Low fat may have added sugar for flavor; low sugar may have added fat for flavor.

Snacks

Many people find that simply keeping healthy, low-calorie snacks on hand helps keep their appetite in check.








Thinking ahead

The key to healthy snacks is planning. If you know what you'll be snacking on before hunger actually strikes, you can be confident that what you're snacking on is nutritious and satisfying and fits into your eating plan.

Here are some ways to make sure your snacks count:

- **Include a small amount of protein in your snacks to help you feel fuller longer.** You could add a teaspoon of peanut butter to a few whole-grain crackers or have a serving of low-fat Greek yogurt with a few berries.
- **Keep healthy choices on hand, even when you travel.** Snacks such as fresh or dried fruit, nuts, and whole-grain crackers are easy to carry, even on an airplane.
- **Be sure to measure the portions of your snacks,** just as you measure the portions of your meals.
- **Keep a reusable water bottle with you.** Drinking water with your snacks will help you feel more satisfied and keep you well hydrated.

Snacks with 200 or fewer calories

	1 cup celery with 2 tablespoons peanut butter	200
	½ cup multigrain cereal with ½ cup dried fruit	200
	Fiber bar with ½ banana	200
	6 whole-grain crackers with 2 tablespoons hummus	190
	½ cup skim milk with 2 sheets graham crackers	185
	Sandwich made with thin whole-grain bread, 3 ounces turkey, and 1 teaspoon mustard	160
	1 apple with ½ cup low-fat cottage cheese	160
	19 almonds with 1 cup strawberries	150
	Low-fat or nonfat Greek yogurt	90–140

Healthy cooking

How you prepare your food can have as big an effect on your weight-management efforts as what you choose to eat. Deciding to roast a chicken instead of frying it, or to make a dip from low-fat yogurt instead of sour cream, can be all it takes to keep you within your daily calorie limit.

Try these suggestions for healthier cooking:

- **Broil, poach, boil, stew, roast, or bake meat, fish, and poultry** instead of frying.
- **Chill soups and stews and skim off the congealed fat**, or use a strainer to pour off fat.
- **Choose poultry, fish, and lean cuts of meat.** Trim all visible fat from the meat and remove the skin from poultry.
- **In sauces, use skim milk and nonfat or low-fat cheese** in place of whole milk, regular cheese, and butter.
- **Make dips with nonfat yogurt or fat-free sour cream** instead of full-fat sour cream.
- **Replace oil with the same amount of unsweetened applesauce or nonfat yogurt when baking** anything with a cakelike texture, such as pancakes, muffins, or brownies.
- **Season with herbs, spices, and lemon** instead of margarine or butter.
- **Use small amounts of light mozzarella cheese on homemade pizza**, or small amounts of light cheddar on enchiladas.
- **Use low-fat cooking sprays instead of oil, butter, or shortening** when sautéing or browning items.
- **Use vegetable, canola, or olive oil** in place of solid shortening, butter, or margarine.
- **When stir-frying meat or vegetables, use a small amount of oil** (just enough to coat the pan). Add low-sodium broth for flavor.

If you don't cook

Maybe your work commute takes up so much time that cooking seems impossible. Or maybe you're just not interested in cooking at this point in your life. You can still have a healthy eating plan.

- If you rely heavily on frozen foods, that's fine. But be sure to read the nutrition labels and ingredients list.
- Round out frozen meals with foods you don't have to cook. Prewashed salad greens, baby carrots, cherry or grape tomatoes, canned beans, seeds, and nuts make salad assembly quick and easy.
- To save even more time, assemble your salads ahead. Make a big salad for the next three days. It will keep well in a sealed container or bag in the refrigerator as long as you don't add dressing until you're ready to eat it.

Eating out

If you eat out often, these tips from the USDA will help you stick with your healthy eating plan:

- Start your meal with a vegetable-packed salad. Ask for the dressing to be served on the side and then only use as much as you want.
- For a beverage, ask for water, unsweetened tea, or other drinks without added sugars.
- Choose main dishes that include vegetables, such as stir fries or kabobs.
- Order steamed, grilled, or broiled dishes instead of those that are fried or sautéed. Ask for the sauce on the side.
- Ask for whole-grain bread, whole-grain pasta, and brown rice instead of the white versions, or ask to substitute an extra vegetable.



Chapter 4

Active for life

Regular physical activity is important for good health, and it's especially important when you're trying to lose weight. Once you've achieved your healthy weight, regular physical exercise will be key to helping you maintain that weight.

In addition, regular physical activity can help:

- Reduce your risk for cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome, dementia, and some cancers
- Strengthen your bones and muscles
- Improve your mental health and mood
- Improve your ability to do daily activities and avoid falls (if you're an older adult)
- Lower high blood pressure
- Reduce arthritis pain
- Improve quality of sleep

How much physical activity is enough?

When you're working to lose weight, increasing your physical activity increases the number of calories your body uses for energy or "burns off." This burning of calories through movement, combined with reducing the

number of calories you eat, creates a calorie deficit that results in weight loss.

For health benefits

According to the 2018 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to reap the benefits of regular exercise, adults ages 18 to 64 need both aerobic and muscle-strengthening activity.

For aerobic exercise, adults need at least:

- 2 hours and 30 minutes each week of moderate- intensity aerobic activity,
- or**
- 1 hour and 15 minutes each week of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity (for example, jogging or running, swimming laps, singles tennis, or bike riding at 10 miles an hour or faster)



Be sure to talk with your health care provider
before beginning a program of physical activity.

Whether it's moderate or intense, aerobic activity should be undertaken in several sessions. Although previous research pointed to a required minimum of 10 minutes per session, new research shows that bouts of less than 10 minutes have cumulative benefits, and count towards the weekly recommended amount of physical activity.

For additional and more comprehensive health benefits, it's important for adults to gradually increase their aerobic activity to five hours a week of moderate-intensity exercise or two and a half hours a week of vigorous-intensity exercise.

As to muscle-strengthening exercise (for example, lifting weights or using resistance bands), adults should:

- Work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, and arms) two or more days each week.
- Repeat exercises for each muscle group 8 to 12 times per set. As the exercises become easier, increase the weight or do another set.

Moderate vs. vigorous activity

Moderate activity

An activity is probably of moderate intensity if your breathing and heart rate are noticeably faster but you can still carry on a conversation.

Examples include:

- Walking briskly (a 15-minute mile)
- Biking at a casual pace (less than 10 miles an hour)
- Doubles tennis
- Light yard work (raking/bagging leaves or using a lawn mower)
- Light snow shoveling
- Actively playing with children

Vigorous activity

An activity is probably of vigorous intensity if your heart rate is increased substantially and you are breathing too hard and fast to have a conversation.

Examples include:

- Jogging or running
- Biking at 10 or more miles an hour
- Swimming laps
- Singles tennis
- Rollerblading/inline skating at a brisk pace
- Cross-country skiing
- Most competitive sports (football, volleyball, basketball, or soccer)

Which activities use how many calories?

This chart will help you understand the differences in calorie-burning potential for a variety of moderate-intensity and vigorous-intensity activities.

Moderate Activity	Approximate calories burned per hour by a 154-lb person	Vigorous Activity	Approximate calories burned per hour by a 154-lb person
Walking briskly (a 15-minute mile)	280	Basketball (and most competitive sports)	440
Biking (less than 10 miles per hour)	290	Faster walking (4.5 miles per hour)	460
Doubles Tennis	280	Swimming (slow freestyle laps)	510
Light gardening/yard work	330	Singles tennis	520
Dancing	330	Running/jogging (5 miles per hour)	590
Golf (walking and carrying clubs)	330	Biking (more than 10 miles per hour)	590
Hiking	370	Cross-country skiing (brisk speed)	600
Light snow shoveling	340	Rollerblading, inline skating	820

Adapted from Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans 2018.

For weight loss

Getting to and staying at a healthy weight requires both regular physical activity and a healthy eating plan. A calorie deficit of 500 calories or more a day, which you can achieve by reducing the number of calories you consume and increasing the number of calories you burn, is a common goal for weight loss in adults.

If you haven't been active in a while

If you haven't been physically active in a while, you may be wondering how to get started again. These tips can help:

- Look for opportunities to reduce sedentary time and to increase active time. For example, instead of watching TV after dinner, try taking a walk. Make it short at first, and gradually add 5-minute chunks.
- Set aside specific times for physical activity and enter them as appointments in your cell phone or other calendar.
- Try activities with friends or family members who are at a similar activity level.
- When necessary, break up your daily activity goal into smaller amounts of time. For example, you could break the 30-minute a day recommendation into three 10-minute sessions or two 15-minute sessions.

Walking

Walking is one of the easiest ways to be physically active. You can walk almost anywhere and at any time. And you don't need special equipment, except for a pair of walking shoes that fit well.

In addition to burning calories, walking can:

- Give you more energy
- Reduce symptoms of stress
- Help you sleep better
- Tone your muscles
- Help control your appetite
- Increase the number of calories your body uses

10,000 Steps

Research shows that people who walk 10,000 steps a day are getting most of what they need in the way of aerobic fitness. Depending on the length of your stride, you're likely to walk about four to five miles with 10,000 steps. You'll want to develop a baseline.

Wear a pedometer or digital fitness device and measure the number of steps you take in a typical day, and gradually increase, working toward a goal of 10,000 steps a day. Once you start a walking routine, you may be surprised at how quickly you feel comfortable increasing to 12,000 or even 15,000 steps a day.

If you use a pedometer or a digital fitness device to count your steps (many of them display heart rates, distances, and sleep, too), you'll find it easy to measure your success.

Even more steps

Once you start walking, you'll be looking for extra opportunities to work steps into your life. Even if you spend much of your day in an office, you can make some changes that will keep you active:

- When necessary, break up your daily activity goal into smaller amounts of time. For example, you could break the 30-minute a day recommendation into three 10-minute sessions or two 15-minute sessions.

You can:

- Park at a distance from the entrance to your work (or to the store).
- Walk while you're on the phone.
- Arrange your office so that you have to move. For example, put your trash can and printer across the room so that you need to walk to them.

- Think about using a stand-up desk for part of the day. You'll be more likely to walk to speak with a co-worker if you don't have to make the effort to stand up.
- Use a bathroom on a different floor.
- Take the stairs, not the elevator.



The American Heart Association provides helpful [information for walkers](#), including a tracker and an online tool for finding places to walk in your area, with distances already calculated for you.

Keep on moving

No matter what physical activity (or group of physical activities) you choose to do, be sure to:

- **Make your activity a clear priority.** Schedule your exercise time in your calendar. Then be protective of it. Don't hesitate to tell others that you're unavailable during that time.
- **Buddy up.** Encourage your family and friends to join you in your new activities, or walk your dog. It's a lot easier to go walking on a chilly morning if you know someone is waiting for you at the track, or that your canine companion is looking forward to the outing.
- **Be patient.** Start slowly but keep at it. If you find yourself feeling sore at first, lighten up your routine for a day or two.
- **Get back in the saddle.** Everyone misses workouts from time to time. Just be sure not to use missed sessions as an excuse to stop moving. A good rule of thumb is to go no longer than two days without exercising. Even a small amount of exercise is better than no exercise.

Strength-training basics

Strength training works individual muscles or groups of muscles. Building muscle strength allows you to do the things you enjoy without the risk of injury, even as you grow older.

You can perform strength-training exercises using resistance bands and weights. There are also exercises that use the mass of your own body as the necessary weight.

If you have access to a gym, it can be worth it to ask a trainer to show you an appropriate routine of strength-training exercises that work all of your muscle groups.

If you don't have access to a gym, you can find videos of strength-training exercises on the Internet. [Videos from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) are geared to both adults and older adults. (Take time to watch the introductory video first. It has important information about performing the exercises safely.)

Be sure to:

- **Balance your program.** Exercise all major muscle groups, including hips and lower back, legs, chest, upper back, shoulders, triceps, biceps, waist, and neck. And be sure to work on your balance.
- **Start slowly.** Perform only a few repetitions of each resistance movement during your first several workouts.
- **Incorporate rest days into your program.** Your muscles need the time to repair and strengthen. You can focus on cardio on your days off from strength training.
- **Move slowly and in a controlled manner.** Slow movement takes your muscle through its full range of motion.

Chapter 5

A plan for success

By breaking the weight-loss process into manageable pieces and focusing on one step at a time, you'll start to see results. As you start to see results, your confidence in yourself will grow.

Four key steps

1. Set your goals

Now that you've thought about your eating habits and your food triggers, and learned more about healthy eating and exercise, you're ready to set your goals and create a plan.

It's important to set a realistic weight-loss goal. Although your ultimate goal may be to lose 50 pounds, a more realistic and healthy goal would be to lose just 5 to 10 percent of your body weight during a 6-month period.

In addition to setting a weight-loss goal, you'll want to set goals relating to changing the way you eat and increasing your physical activity.

To be effective, goals must be specific, achievable, and forgiving.

"Exercise more" is a good goal, but it's not specific. *"Walk 5 miles every day"* is specific and measurable, but is it attainable if you're just starting out?

"Walk 30 minutes every day" is more attainable, but what happens if you're held up at work one day and there's a thunderstorm during your walking time another day?

"Walk 30 minutes, 5 days a week" is specific, attainable, and forgiving. In short, it's a great goal.

Make sure that your eating goals are specific, achievable, and forgiving, too. For example, you can make a goal of adding an extra serving of fruit or vegetables to two meals a day or of eating dessert only twice a week.

Plan to build on your goals. *"After walking 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week for a month, I'll increase to 40 minutes a day, 5 days a week."* *"After I've added an extra serving of fruit or vegetables to two meals a day for a month, I'll increase to adding them to three meals a day."*

Take the time to record your goals in your monthly planner, calendar, or digital device.

2. Remember past successes

When you start changing your eating and exercise habits, it can be helpful to remember past successes. Have you given up smoking? Did you successfully take off weight at an earlier time in your life?

What obstacles did you face? How did you overcome them?

3. Find support

People you know can help you out. Discuss your weight-loss concerns with friends, family, or co-workers. You won't have to look far to find someone who has been successful with their weight-loss program—or someone who is also interested in losing weight or just becoming a healthier person.

You may find someone who'd like to walk at lunchtime with you or share a schedule of bringing healthy snacks to work.

4. Reward yourself

When you've achieved specific goals, be sure to celebrate your success.

Reward yourself with something special that isn't food. Your reward could be a new item of clothing, a movie with an old friend, or maybe just an hour of quiet time away from family. Several small rewards, delivered for meeting smaller goals, are more effective than bigger rewards that require a long, difficult effort.



Why have a plan?

Having a weight-loss plan gives you an important sense of control over your eating. A plan will:

- Help you avoid impulse eating
- Prevent your mood and surroundings from interfering with your goals
- Help keep you aware of what you're eating and when you're eating it

Learning more

This content was developed using national guidelines for healthy eating and physical activity, including:

The American Heart Association

[Heart.org](https://heart.org)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

cdc.gov

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute of the National Institutes of Health

nhlbi.nih.gov

The United States Department of Health and Human Services Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

health.gov

The United States Department of Agriculture, MyPlate

Nutrition Guide

choosemyplate.gov

Through their websites, these resources provide current, comprehensive information about healthy eating and physical activity, plus interactive tools and videos that can help as you approach and maintain your healthy weight.

login.lifeworks.com

The LifeWorks platform includes a wealth of well-being tools and resources.

- Log in to the LifeWorks platform by browser with your personal account, or download the “LifeWorks” mobile app for iOS or Android.
- If your organization is also a LifeWorks Wellness client, you can log in to “Wellness Tools” through the platform’s LIFE menu to access weight, exercise, and food trackers, plus workshops and a message center for contacting your coach.

Food Diary: Day 1

Time	What I ate	How much I ate	How I felt <small>(worried, happy, angry, OK)</small>	Who I was with	Other things I tried to do instead of eating <small>(taking a walk, drinking water)</small>

Food Diary: Day 2

Time	What I ate	How much I ate	How I felt <small>(worried, happy, angry, OK)</small>	Who I was with	Other things I tried to do instead of eating <small>(taking a walk, drinking water)</small>

Food Diary: Day 3

Time	What I ate	How much I ate	How I felt <small>(worried, happy, angry, OK)</small>	Who I was with	Other things I tried to do instead of eating <small>(taking a walk, drinking water)</small>