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"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"

20 Tips To Lose Weight and Keep It Off

So how is your New Year's resolution of losing weight going? Pretty well I hope? Well, whether you have lost the weight you wanted to or you are still working at it faithfully, maintaining your new (and lighter) weight is not much different than continuing to try to lose more. The principles are essentially the same: Eat healthy foods, control your portion sizes and exercise regularly.

In order to lose weight and to keep the pounds off permanently, you need to incorporate the new, healthy behaviors into your routine so that they become a natural part of your daily life. Here are 20 ideas to reinforce your healthy lifestyle and to keep you committed to permanent weight loss.

- 1) Exercise 30 to 60 minutes each day.** If time is limited, exercise for several brief periods throughout the day — for example, three 10-minute sessions rather than one 30-minute session.
- 2) Eat three healthy meals during the day, including a good breakfast.** Skipping meals causes increased hunger and may lead to excessive snacking.
- 3) Focus on fruits and vegetables.** Top off your morning cereal with sliced strawberries or bananas. Stir berries or peaches in yogurt or cottage cheese. Liven up your sandwiches with vegetables, such as tomato, lettuce, onion, peppers and cucumber.
- 4) Weigh yourself regularly.** Monitoring your weight can tell you whether your efforts are working and can help you detect small weight gains before they become even larger.
- 5) Don't keep comfort foods in the house.** If you tend to eat high-fat, high-calorie foods when you're upset or depressed or bored, don't keep them around. Availability of food is one of the strongest factors in determining how much a person eats.
- 6) Plan a family activity.** Get the family together to go for a bike ride, play disc golf or kick the ball around in the yard.
- 7) Eat healthy foods first.** Eat foods that are healthy and low in calories first so that when it comes time to enjoy your favorites — sweets or junk food, for example — you won't be so hungry.
- 8) Pay attention to portions.** Serve meals already dished onto plates instead of placing serving bowls on the table. Take slightly less than what you think you'll eat. You can always have seconds, if really necessary.

- 9) Create opportunities to be active.** Wash your car at home instead of going to the car wash. Bike or walk to the store. Participate in your kid's activities at the playground or park.
- 10) Sit down together for family meals.** Avoid eating in front of the television. TV viewing strongly affects how much and what people eat.
- 11) See what you eat.** Eating directly from a container gives you no sense of how much you're eating. Seeing food on a plate or in a bowl keeps you aware of how much you're eating.
- 12) Vary your activities.** Regularly change your activity routine to avoid exercise burnout. Walk a couple of days, swim another and go for a bike ride on the weekend. Seek out new activities — karate, ballroom dancing, cross-country skiing, tennis or Pilates.
- 13) De-stress your day.** Stress can cause you to eat more. Develop strategies that can help you relax when you find yourself becoming stressed. Exercise, deep breathing, muscle relaxation techniques and even a good laugh can ease stress.
- 14) Eat at home.** People eat more food in restaurants than at home. Limit how often you eat at restaurants. If you do eat out, decide what and how much you're going to eat before you start and have the rest boxed to go.
- 15) Plan healthy snacks.** The best snacks include fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy products. Fruit smoothies, sliced fresh fruit and yogurt, whole-grain crackers, and carrot and celery sticks with peanut butter are all good choices.
- 16) Start your day with a high-fiber breakfast cereal,** such as bran flakes, shredded wheat or oatmeal. Opt for cereals with "bran" or "fiber" in the name. Or add a few tablespoons of unprocessed wheat bran to your favorite cereal.
- 17) Walk for 10 minutes over your lunch hour** or get up a few minutes earlier in the morning and go for a short walk.
- 18) Plan a week's worth of meals at a time.** Make a detailed grocery list to eliminate last-minute trips to the grocery store and impulse buys.
- 19) Look for a distraction when you're fighting a craving.** Call a friend, put on music and dance or exercise, clean the house, pull weeds in your garden, or run an errand. When your mind is occupied with something else, the cravings quickly go away.
- 20) Reward yourself.** Losing weight and keeping the pounds off is a major accomplishment. Celebrate your success with nonfood rewards, such as new clothes or an outing with friends.