

Make It Happen!

HELPFUL WAYS TO LOSE WEIGHT

An Everyday Guide for You and Your Family



American College of Physicians
Leading Internal Medicine, Improving Lives

Start Fresh

People want to lose weight for different reasons. Do any of these reasons sound familiar to you?

“I can’t find any clothes that look good on me!”

“I don’t like who I have become.”

“I want to enjoy playing with my grandkids!”

“I can hardly walk up the stairs any more.”

“I don’t want to get diabetes like my dad.”

“I want to look good at my reunion.”

You may have tried to lose weight many times before. You are not alone.

This guide can help you lose weight and feel better. It does not make big promises. But it will help you learn to take small steps to be healthier. When you lose even a little, you win a lot.



“Finally, a book about health that really makes sense to me.”

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Chapter 1: Eat Better

We all know that you can't lose weight without eating better. But you don't have to change everything you eat. Make food choices that work for you and your family. Little changes in your eating can make a big difference.

Remember that you are in charge!



One Step At A Time

Aim for progress, not perfection. Remember, losing weight takes time.
Be patient!

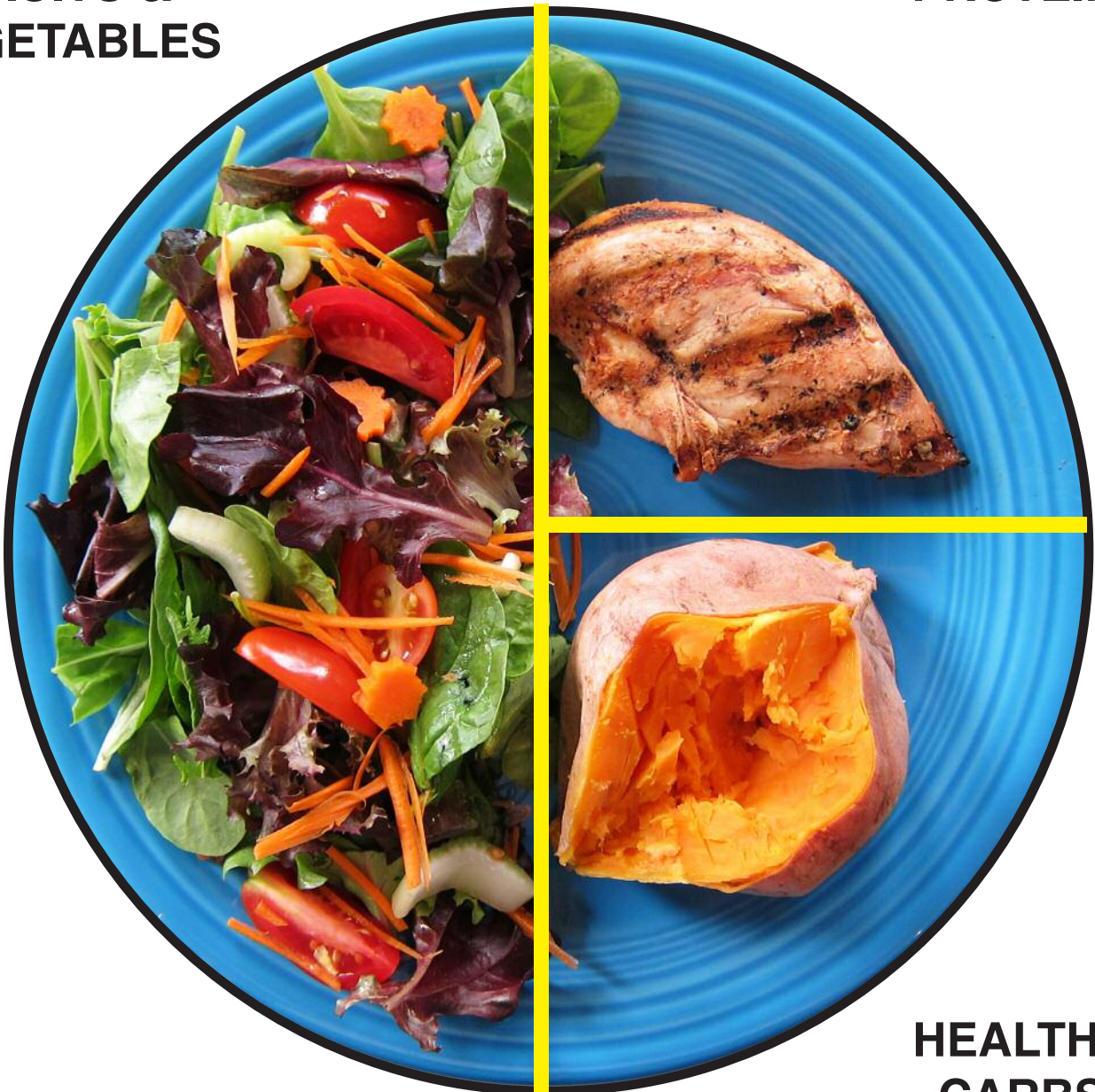


The Healthy Plate

A good first step is to picture a healthy plate. One half of the plate is for fruits and vegetables, and the other half is for proteins and healthy carbs.

**FRUITS &
VEGETABLES**

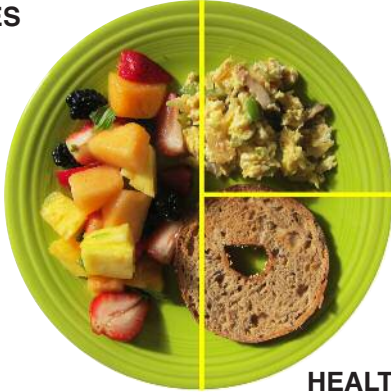
PROTEIN



**HEALTHY
CARBS**

...For Every Meal

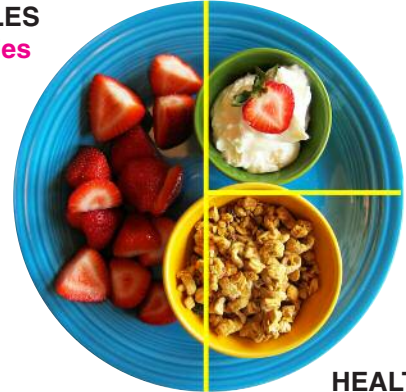
FRUITS &
VEGETABLES
Fruit



PROTEIN
Egg

HEALTHY CARBS
Whole wheat bagel

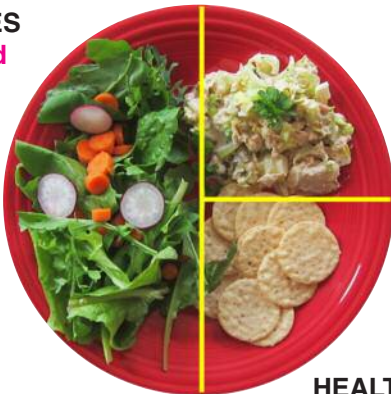
FRUITS &
VEGETABLES
Strawberries



PROTEIN
Yogurt

HEALTHY CARBS
Cereal

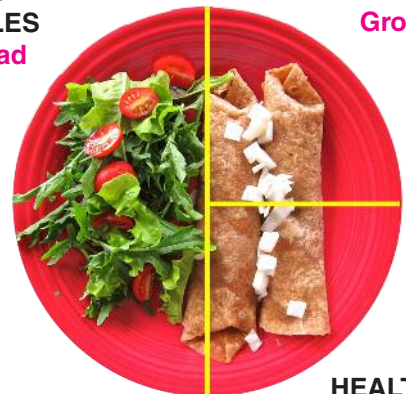
FRUITS &
VEGETABLES
Mixed salad



PROTEIN
Tuna

HEALTHY CARBS
Multigrain
crackers

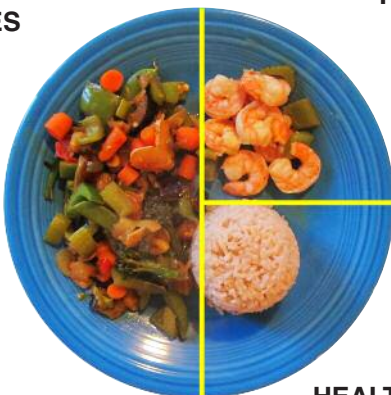
FRUITS &
VEGETABLES
Green salad



PROTEIN
Ground turkey
filling

HEALTHY CARBS
Whole wheat
tortillas

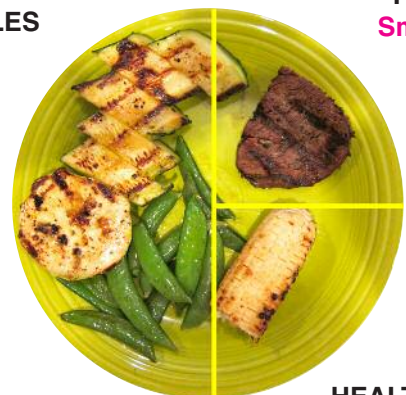
FRUITS &
VEGETABLES
Stir-fry
veggies



PROTEIN
Shrimp

HEALTHY CARBS
Brown rice

FRUITS &
VEGETABLES
Grilled
veggies

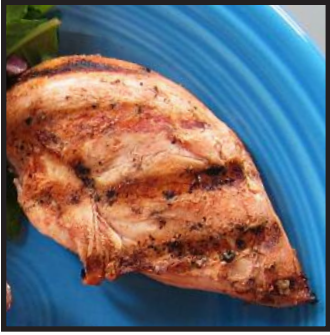


PROTEIN
Small steak

HEALTHY CARBS
Corn

Proteins Add Staying Power

Proteins fill you up so you are not hungry between meals.



Chicken



Fish



Beef



Pork



Eggs



Tofu



Nuts



Peanut Butter



Mixed Bean Salad



Hummus



Cheese



Tuna



"When I have protein at breakfast, I don't feel hungry again until lunch."

Fill Up With Fruits & Vegetables

Fruits and vegetables give you lots of nutrition without a lot of calories. Fill at least half your plate with them. They also make great snacks.



Carrots



Broccoli



Greens



Peppers



Pineapple



Beans



Berries



Melons



Grilled or broiled veggies



Spinach



Grapes



Apples

*"If I chop up fruit, everybody eats it!
The pieces are also great in salads and smoothies."*



Watch Your Carbs

Carbs make you gain weight. They fill you up for a while, but the full feeling doesn't last long.

When you eat carbs, be careful of your portion size.

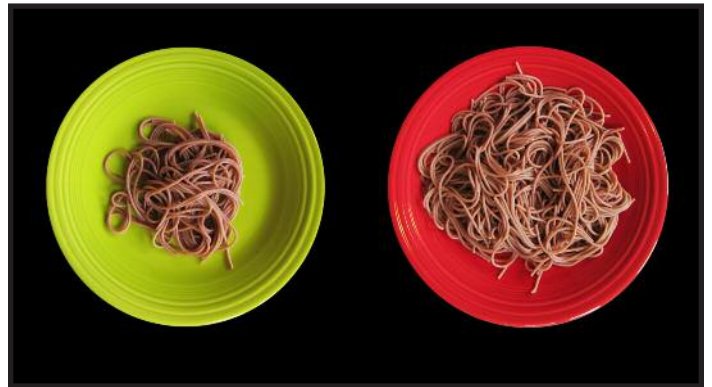
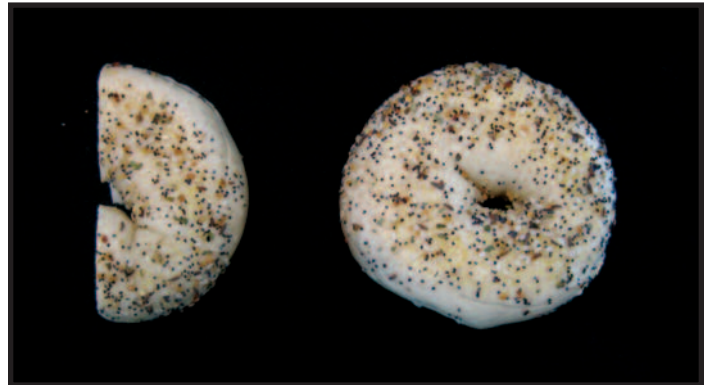
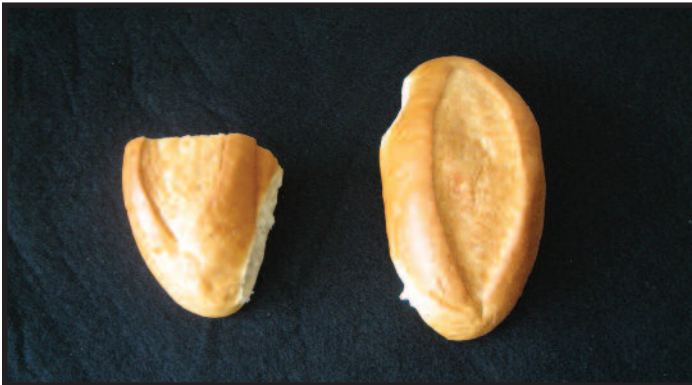
Right Size

Too Much



Right Size

Too Much



Some carbs are healthier than others and can make you feel full longer. Choose healthy carbs like brown rice, whole wheat pasta and bread, and multi-grain snacks.

Tips About Carbs

"I use a teacup to measure the right amount of rice."



"I still eat a baked potato. I just choose a smaller one - about the size of a computer mouse."

"If the bread is on the table, I HAVE to eat it. So I don't put it on the table anymore."



"My family doesn't notice the difference when I buy whole wheat bread and crackers."

"A big bowl of pasta or white rice fills me up for a little while, but I'm hungry again in an hour!"



Watch Your Portions

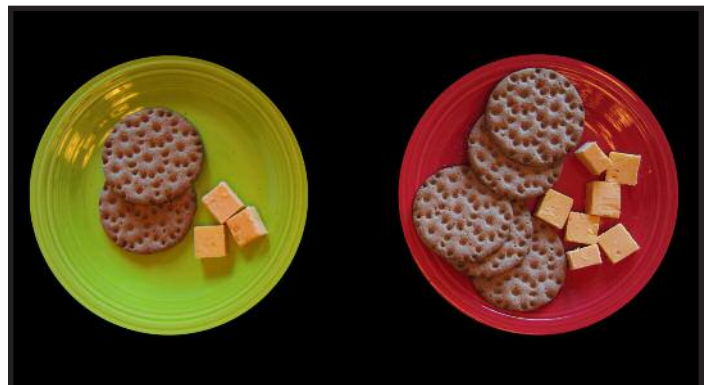
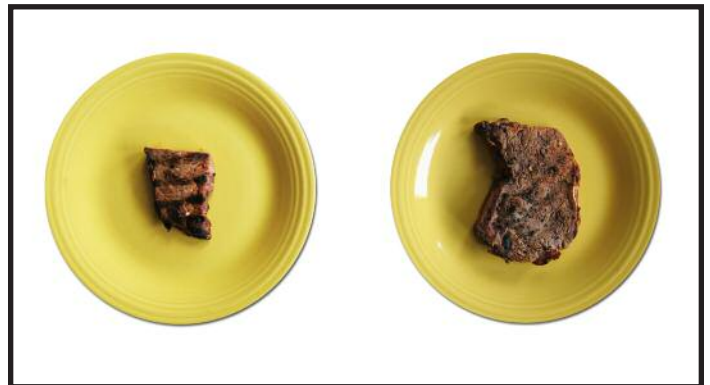
We eat a lot more food today than people used to eat.
Here are some examples of portions that are the right size and too much.

Right Size

Too Much

Right Size

Too Much



"I don't worry about measuring all my food. I just eat a little bit less of everything."

Smaller Plates

Another reason we eat too much is that our plates are so big now. Bigger plates trick us into thinking we need more food to fill us up.

If you use a smaller plate, you will probably eat less food.



"I like eating off of a smaller plate because I don't notice I'm eating less food."



I Don't Want To Feel Hungry

Lots of people worry that if they eat less food they will be hungry. People who have lost weight and kept it off use these tricks to keep from feeling hungry:

- Eat protein at every meal.
- Eat slowly. It takes a while for your body to feel full.
- Fill up on fruits and vegetables.
- Plan to have a small, healthy snack an hour or two after each meal.
- Drink lots of water.



"I keep a protein bar at my desk to snack on between meals. It helps me from eating too much at lunch and dinner."

"My FEAR of being hungry was much worse than the actual FEELING of being hungry."



"I eat every 3 or 4 hours now, and I'm still slowly losing weight."

Just So You Know...

Here are some other things you need to know about keeping a healthy weight:

Low-fat and no-fat foods still have calories.

If you eat too much, you will still gain weight.

Ads are made to make you hungry.

You are in charge! Just because it says “value meal” doesn’t mean it’s a good choice. Don’t fall for it.



Weight loss support groups help people lose weight.

Join one, or start one of your own.

Losing weight doesn’t happen at the same pace all the time.

Some weeks you will lose more than others. Some weeks you may not lose at all. This is normal. Don’t give up.

Be Aware...

People eat for all kinds of reasons besides being hungry. Figuring out when and why you eat will help you break bad habits.

Here are some habits and how people have changed them:

I eat when I'm stressed out.

"I used to eat whenever I was stressed out. But it only made me feel better for a couple of minutes. Then I'd get mad at myself for eating."

Instead of eating when you feel stressed:

- Take a walk or listen to music you like.
- Stop and take some deep breaths.
- Accept that there are some things you can't control, and eating won't help.



...Of Why You Eat

I'm a clean-up eater.

"I eat everything that's left on my kids' plates."

Try these tips:

- Serve kids smaller portions. Get them used to the correct portion size.
- Remind yourself that extra food is better in the freezer than on your hips.
- Put extra food and leftovers into small portions for tomorrow's lunch.



I eat without realizing it.

"I'm a snacker. I can sit in front of the TV and eat a whole bag of chips without realizing it."

Make a plan for snacking:

- Make healthy snacks easy to reach and unhealthy snacks hard to reach.
- Don't sit down with a large bag to snack on. Keep only one serving within reach.
- Try not to snack while you're watching TV or in the car.

Snack Smarter

Plan your snacks. Make sure you keep healthy snacks available so you aren't tempted to reach for junk food. Crunchy foods like dry cereal and raw fruits and vegetables will help you feel satisfied. Kids love 'em too!



Unbuttered popcorn



Fresh fruit



Veggies with hummus



Hard-boiled egg



Turkey slices



Yogurt with berries

Drink Smarter

Soda, fruit drinks, juices, and many coffee drinks have lots of calories. People who have lost weight and kept it off say that one of the easiest changes they made was to switch what they drank to:

- Water. Add lemon, lime or orange slices to perk it up.
- Flavored seltzer water.
- Unsweetened tea or coffee (hot or cold). Add sugar substitute if you want.
- Low fat or skim milk.
- For something sweet, try diet soda or sugar-free drink powders.



“Wow, I didn’t realize beer has as many calories as soda!”

The Sweet Life

For lots of people, dessert is hard to give up. You don't have to cut out desserts completely as long as you make good choices.

Try low fat frozen yogurt, sugar-free popsicles, or fresh fruit.

People who have lost weight and kept it off say their desserts are:

- Only once a day, once a week, or on the weekend.
- A small portion size.
- Low in sugar.



“I can’t give up sweets!”

“I switched from dessert to fruit after dinner. That’s the only change I made. It took time, but I lost 10 pounds.”



“I love grapes. Try them frozen for a cold sweet treat.”

“A couple of squares of dark chocolate really takes away my craving for sweets.”



“I mix yogurt and fruit for my snack after school.”

Plan On It

People who lose weight and keep it off have a plan - they think ahead about what they are going to eat and when they are going to eat it. Here are some suggestions:

- Plan breakfast the night before.
- Pack a lunch.
- Plan dinner before you leave the house in the morning.
- Make extra food on the weekend. Freeze it in single servings.

Your plans will help you stay on track when:

- You're tired.
- Your kids ask for fast food.
- You run out of willpower.



Don't Skip Meals!

Some people skip breakfast and lunch so they won't get the extra calories. But at night time they feel starved and eat way too much.

People who eat at least three regular meals a day weigh less than people who skip meals.

People who have lost weight and kept it off:

- Plan to eat more often.
- Plan a protein with each meal.
- Plan a healthy snack between meals.



"I don't worry about being hungry anymore because I know I am going to have a snack in an hour or two."

"I buy single snack packs or make single portions from the family-sized bag."



There's No Place Like Home

Eating at home is better for you than eating out. Restaurants add more fat and sugar to meals than you would if you were cooking for yourself.

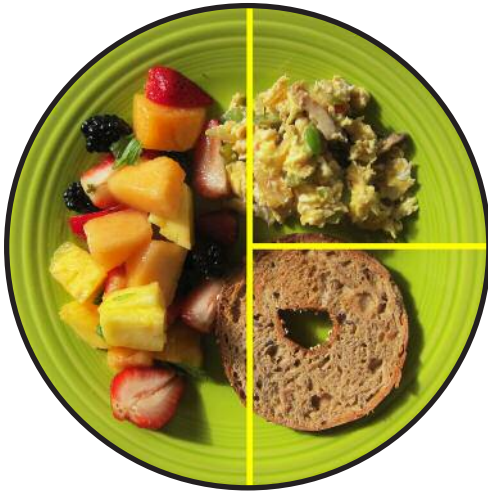
Try these ideas for eating at home:

- Sit down when you eat. When you eat standing up, you tend to eat more food, and not think about what you are eating.
- If you live with other people, eat together. Talking makes you slow down and feel full with less food.
- Leave the extra food in the kitchen. When the serving dishes are farther away, people tend to feel less hungry for seconds.
- Try not to cook fried foods. Save these for special occasions.



Start The Day Right

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. It's a fact: people who eat breakfast weigh less than people who skip it.



If you don't have time in the morning, eat something quick with protein like:



Protein bar



Hard-boiled egg



Yogurt



Cereal with fruit and milk

Let's Do Lunch

If you eat lunch at school or at the office, bring something from home.

- Make a little extra for dinner and pack some for lunch the next day.
- Pack a turkey sandwich and some baby carrots.
- Pack some yogurt, a granola bar, and a piece of fruit.
- Bring a diet frozen dinner.
- When you eat out for lunch, order soup, salad, or half a sandwich.
- Use leftovers to make a wrap.



Eating Out

Eating at restaurants can be hard because many dishes are too big and have too many calories.

Here are some tips:

- Ask the waiter not to put bread, crackers, or tortilla chips on the table.
- Ask for sauces and dressings on the side. Use only a little.
- Ask for vegetables or salad on the side instead of fries, potatoes, or rice.
- Order meats and fish grilled, steamed, broiled, or baked instead of fried.
- Save half your meal for a to-go box.
- Order an appetizer for your main course.
- Look at the menu ahead of time and plan your healthy order.
- Do not “super size”.



The Buffet Line

Lots of people have trouble sticking to the right portion sizes when they eat at buffets. Some people decide they won't go to buffet restaurants at all. That's a good plan...but it doesn't work for everyone. If you go to buffets, plan ahead so you don't eat too much. Try these ideas:

- Order off the menu if that's available.
- Start with soup or salad first to help fill you up.
- Use a salad plate for your main meal.
- Drink a glass of water before going up to the buffet.
- Wait fifteen minutes before you go back for seconds.



"I make a healthy plate even when I'm eating at a buffet."

It's Party Time!

Make a plan when you are going to a big party or event. Here are some tips that may help you stick to the right portion sizes and a healthy plate:

- Pay attention to the amount of food you are eating.
- Don't stand near the food table.
- Choose carrots, celery, or other vegetables to munch on.
- Drink sparkling water instead of wine, beer, or soft drinks.
- Keep yourself busy at the party. Ask the host if you can help out.



"I eat a snack before I leave so that I'm not too hungry when I arrive at the party."



On The Road Again

It can be hard to eat healthy when you are traveling. Make a plan. Here are examples for you to eat when traveling:

- Pack yogurt, fresh veggies, or a sandwich.
- Keep a protein bar or a package of dried fruits and nuts in your purse or briefcase. These foods travel well and fill you up.
- Choose drinks without extra calories, like flavored waters and unsweetened tea.
- Don't settle for the first restaurant you see. Find a healthy choice.
- If traveling by car, bring a cooler with water and healthy snacks. Pull into rest stops and make a picnic instead of ordering fast food.



"I used to eat fast food when I traveled. Now I have learned to plan ahead."

You Can Do It!

It's not about giving up everything. It's about making little changes you can live with. Choose one of these easy ideas, or write down one or two things you will do for the next few weeks. Take charge! You **can** do it!

- ☐ I will eat breakfast every morning.
- ☐ I will not eat seconds at dinner.
- ☐ I will ask the waiter not to bring bread to the table.
- ☐ I will not "super size" my meals at fast-food restaurants.
- ☐ I will pack a lunch instead of eating out.
- ☐ I will weigh myself once a week.
- ☐ I will join a weight-loss support group.
- ☐ I will write down what I eat for two or three days to figure out what I can cut back on.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

"I don't wait until I've gained five pounds. I make a change when I've gained just two or three pounds."



Chapter 2: Move More

Being active will help you and your family stay healthy. It can also help you:

- Feel better about yourself.
- Keep off extra pounds.
- Have more energy.
- Feel less stressed out.

Here are some ways that people get started:

- Make a plan for when you are going to exercise. Do it at the same time every day if you can.
- Do things you enjoy.
- Ask a family member or a friend to join you.
- Try a gym or community center where you can talk to other people and get help to start.



“When I just DO it, I feel better!”

Do Things You Enjoy

No one likes boring exercises. Make it interesting. Mix it up. Do different activities during the week and on the weekend to keep it fun. The more you do it, the easier it gets.



"You're never too old to shoot some hoops."



Partner Power!

It's always easier and more fun to work out with another person. Find someone who will walk, play ball, go to the gym or take an exercise class with you.



*"I met new friends at my exercise class.
They miss me if I don't show up!"*

Work It Into Your Day

Exercise isn't going to happen unless you plan it into your day. Make it part of your routine, even if it's just 10 minutes. You'll find it gives you extra energy.



"I work on the 10th floor, but I get off on the 8th floor and walk up the last two flights."



Using A Pedometer

For some people, wearing a pedometer motivates them to be more active. You can use a pedometer to find out the number of steps you take every day. Buy one at a drug store or sporting goods store.

Three Easy Steps to Using a Pedometer:



1. Clip the pedometer to your belt or waistband.



2. Make sure it sits straight somewhere on the side of your body.



3. Wear it all day long to count how many steps you take.

Now that you know how many steps you take in a regular day, try to walk more steps tomorrow. Can you do 100 more steps? 200 more steps? Every week or so, try to add 100 more steps to your day. It's easier than you might think.

Step It Up!

Here are some ways to get a few more steps every day:

- Take the stairs.
- Park further away.
- Get off the bus one stop earlier and walk.
- Walk in the mall when it is too hot or too cold to walk outside.
- Use a treadmill or stair machine at a gym.



DID YOU KNOW?

**Every 2000 steps you take is about a mile.
Every step counts!**

Give Yourself Credit

If you take care of young children, do housework, mow the lawn, walk to the bus, or take the stairs, then you are already getting a little exercise. Now it is time to build on that.

If you are comfortable exercising a little now, try to:

- Go a little further or a little longer.
- Go a little faster, even just for a few minutes.
- Add a new activity or an extra day.



"I listen to music when I walk. I started at four songs, and now I'm up to eight."

You Can Do It!

Pick things **YOU** like to do. Try one of these suggestions, or write down 1 or 2 activities that you enjoy. Take charge!

- ☐ I will take a walk three days a week.
- ☐ I will sign up for a class at the gym or community center.
- ☐ I will keep my gym bag and shoes in the car.
- ☐ I will put on my favorite music and dance to 3 songs.
- ☐ I will take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- ☐ I will set a goal to finish a 5K walk/run.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Don't get stressed out if you miss a few days (or even a few weeks). No one is perfect, and it takes a while to build new habits. Just start back tomorrow.

"I feel great when I shake it!"



Chapter 3: Sleep Well

When people are tired, they often crave fatty or sweet foods. Getting a good night's sleep can help you feel less hungry.

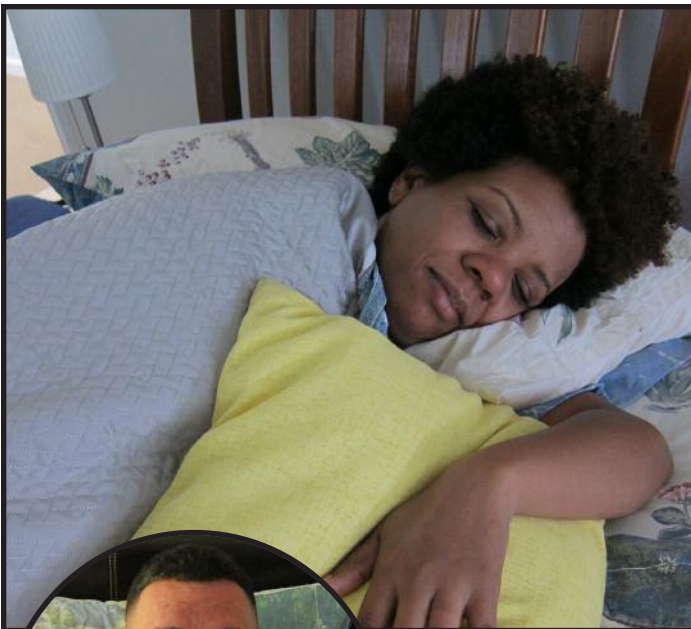
Getting enough sleep also helps you:

- Have more energy.
- Feel less stressed out.
- Stay healthy.



DID YOU KNOW?

- People who sleep well weigh less.
- Exercising during the day can help you sleep at night.
- Adults need 8 or 9 hours of sleep.



"I noticed if I drink too much alcohol I have trouble sleeping at night."

Tips for a Good Night's Sleep

Here are some things you can do to get a good night's sleep:

- After lunch, choose only caffeine-free drinks.
- Go to bed at about the same time every night.
- Make sure your room is cool, quiet, and dark. Use an eye mask, ear plugs, or a white noise machine if needed.
- Use an alarm clock with dim red numbers. Bright white or blue numbers can keep you up.

Have a bedtime routine that is calming for you. Before going to bed, try to:



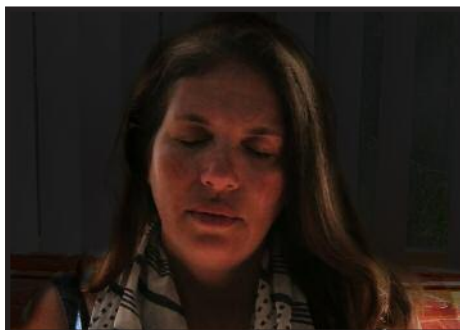
Read a book



Take a warm bath



Drink something soothing like chamomile tea



Meditate



Pray



Listen to relaxing music

When You Can't Sleep

- If you get up at night, keep the lights dim.
- If you are worrying for a long time at night, set yourself a 5-minute limit. Then focus on something that relaxes you.
- Get out of bed if you feel frustrated. Do something relaxing, and come back to bed when you feel tired and ready to sleep.
- Get the pets and the kids out of your bed.

The lights from these things tell your brain it is daytime and make it hard to sleep:



Computer screens



Cell phones and games



TV

Talk to your doctor if you:

- Snore a lot.
- Are tired after a full night's sleep.
- Use sleeping pills often.
- Have frequent nightmares.

Your doctor may be able to help you.



You Can Do It!

Remember, a little more sleep can make you feel better. Choose one of these easy ideas or write down some things you will do for the next few weeks.

☐ I will make sure the bedroom is dark or use an eye mask.

☐ I will not watch TV in bed before I go to sleep.

☐ I will start a calming routine an hour before bedtime.

☐ I will go to bed at the same time every night.

☐ I will not eat just before bedtime.

☐ _____



"I learned to quit looking at the clock in the middle of the night. It makes me feel anxious."



Chapter 4: Stress Less



Many people eat when they feel angry, anxious, tired, bored, or unhappy.

When you are reaching for food, stop and think about why you're eating. Are you really hungry, or do you eat because you're upset?



DID YOU KNOW? Exercise is a great way to lower stress, lose weight, and sleep well. What a deal!



Eating When Stressed Out

If you eat when you are stressed out, cut yourself some slack. Everyone has ups and downs, and everyone feels stress. Don't beat yourself up. Make a plan for what you are going to do when you feel stressed out. Try these:



Work on a hobby



Play with a pet



Do a puzzle or game



Hug your kids or grandkids

You Can Do It!

Stress causes many people to gain weight. Choose one of these easy ideas or write down 1 or 2 things you will do for the next few weeks.

- ☐ I will ask myself if I am really hungry before I start eating.
- ☐ I will take a short walk instead of eating when I am feeling burned out.
- ☐ I will be kind to myself when I realize I am eating because I am upset.
- ☐ I will make a list of things to do besides eating when I am stressed out.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____



*“When I am really stressed out, I call a friend.
Talking helps me relax.”*

Acknowledgments

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To order, go to: www.acponline.org/loseweightguide

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