



## FITNESS FOCUS

clothes each morning, and plotting out your day to include at least 30 minutes of physical activity.

### CONTROL EMOTIONS

Emotional control is the most important aspect of this three-pronged approach. People tend to consume “comfort food” in times of distress. This type of behavior can completely sabotage an otherwise fit day. It is very important to recognize a stressful situation and take the proper measures to ensure you are not eating for comfort.

### FIRST STEPS

Few people can lose weight without cutting the calories they consume. As the saying goes, “You can’t exercise your way out of a poor diet.” A 500 kcal per day deficit is associated with a weight loss of about 1 lb a week (2). Cutting calories can be challenging and may leave you quite hungry. Choosing unrefined carbohydrates with a low glycemic index may help to curb your appetite. For those trying to lose weight, strict portion control of energy-dense foods is essential. Learning to avoid so-called supersize options and choosing mini or snack-size varieties can be a useful strategy.

### MAINTENANCE

To be successful in the long-term, you need to be able to identify high-risk situations (when you may be likely to overeat) and to develop practical coping strategies. A mental dilemma occurs when you regress to old habits. To avoid this pitfall, new habits must be formed. Good habits can include learning how to shop for groceries or finding new cooking methods. This knowledge also is fundamental when eating at a restaurant or cooking on a budget and is vital for long-term weight loss maintenance.

Here are some quick tips:

- Eat vegetables to help you feel full.
- Drink plenty of water.

- Get tempting foods out of your home.
- Stay busy — you don’t want to eat just because you’re bored.
- Eat only from a plate, while seated at a table. No grazing in front of the ‘fridge.
- Don’t skip meals.
- Keep a food journal.

Remember, motivation is what gets you started; habit keeps you going!

1. Rao M, Afshin A, Singh G, Mozaffarian D. Do healthier foods and diet patterns cost more than less healthy options? A systematic review and meta-analysis. *BMJ Open*. 2013;3(12):e004277. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2013-004277.
2. Heymsfield SB, Greenberg AS, Fujioka K, et al. Recombinant leptin for weight loss in obese and lean adults: a randomized, controlled, dose-escalation trial. *JAMA*. 1999;282(16):1568–75. doi:10.1093/jama.282.16.1568.

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