

Seven Steps to Slimming Down

STEP 1: Know When to Eat

Staying trim is all about timing: It's crucial to eat something every three hours. If you don't eat regularly, your metabolism plummets and guess what, you gain weight.

A few tips:

1. Eat breakfast within one hour of rising.
2. Eat every three hours.
3. Stop eating three hours before bedtime.

Eating every three hours is a natural way to suppress your appetite. Knowing when to start eating, how to eat throughout the day and when to stop is critical.

STEP 2: Move in the Morning

Some of you might prefer to put the pillow over your head rather than roll out of bed and exercise. But Exercising eight minutes in the morning does three important things.

1. Dramatically boost your metabolism. You burn more fat when you work out in the morning.
2. Give you an endorphin high that will make you feel great all day.
3. Ensure you consistently lose two pounds a week.

Also make time for sleep as well. Get those eight hours, wake up feeling rejuvenated and get ready to move!

STEP 3: Visualize Your Success

Creating a mental picture of the new you is a great way to stay focused on your goals.

Ask yourself these questions:

1. How will you see your body shrink with the smarter choices you make?
2. How will you feel when you attain your ultimate body?
3. What will people say to you when you're lighter?

Close your eyes and imagine a future dream vacation after you've reached your goal weight. Are you watching starfish swim in the Caribbean? Perhaps you're strolling the vibrant streets of Paris.


STEP 4: Buddy Up

Sharing your weight-loss goals with a friend, co-worker or family member is a great way to ensure support. The person you choose should be someone you feel comfortable talking with openly. Perhaps you exchange a daily e-mail or a brief phone call. You should discuss the number of pounds you've lost and two things you did that week that you're most proud of. Your buddy can also help you put on the brakes when you feel yourself heading toward the refrigerator.

Building your inner support team will ensure you've got a great foundation of friends to help you on your journey.

STEP 5: Keep a Journal

When you hear those cookies calling you into the kitchen, one of the best things you can do is stop and write in your journal. Writing down the events of the day, how they made you feel and your successes can inspire you to "just say no" to the fridge. As you write, you should make sure to explore your fears, anger, sadness and challenges as well. Getting it all out there will help to quiet those voices calling you to overeat and keep you focused on your big picture goals.



Set a time to write every day. When you put pen to paper you've learned the secret to becoming your own greatest ally.

STEP 6: Learn the Secrets to Eating Out

Don't let dining out be your downfall. Most restaurants serve too-big portions. Here are a few tricks to keep you on track:

1. Ask for a take-home container to be brought with your meal. When your meal arrives visualize a better portion size and put anything that doesn't fit into that portion in your container.
2. Chew each bite of food between 20-30 times. It helps digestion and prevents overeating.
3. Watch the lattes: If you're in the mood for a java fix, remember that most coffee drinks are higher in calories than a cheeseburger.

STEP 7: Stay Hydrated

Water is your secret weapon. Drinking water greatly increases your oxygen levels. And in order for your lean muscle tissue to burn fat, it needs oxygen to convert the fat into energy. You won't have to eat as much to be satisfied if you drink enough water. But eight glasses of water a day is not enough. It's better to use a 16-ounce glass and fill it every hour. Whenever you feel thirsty, you're already dehydrated. So don't wait for it to happen, make sure you're keeping that water glass filled and your body in a well-hydrated state.