

# Weight Loss!

## Top 9 Tips for the New Year

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It's that time of year again when so many of us make a New Year's resolution to lose weight. Yet we're tired of calorie counting and constantly thinking about the food we can't eat. And we've tried so many diets that didn't work, it's hard to get motivated again. Sound familiar?

Let's face it, losing weight is a complex issue and I am not going to pretend there's an easy solution. There are no magic pills or quick-fix weight loss programs

that will bring you lasting results. Neither is there a specific diet or exercise routine that will work for everyone.

In spite of what we've been told for many years, losing weight is not just a matter of eating less and exercising more!!

As a case in point, I recently worked with a young woman in her forties who is quite knowledgeable about nutrition and exercise. Amy was very conscientious about restricting calories and consistently exercised an hour or more each day in addition to having a high level of activity in her job. Yet for the past few years she consistently gained weight no matter how little she ate or how much more she exercised. To make matters worse, not only was she gaining weight but she was losing muscle mass.

The major problem with Amy's approach (which is fairly common with many people who have tried numerous fad diets) is that in an attempt to lose weight, she was starving her body of essential nutrients. Thus, her body flipped into survival mode, significantly slowing down her metabolism, throwing off her hormone balance, and causing her to feel tired and fatigued most of the time and unable to sleep. In addition, increasing the duration and intensity of her exercise was actually causing her to burn muscle rather than fat.



Fortunately, when I met Amy she was open to a new way of thinking and was willing to try a new approach. Through a process of education and personal consultation, we were able to work together to develop a food and exercise plan that fit her food preferences and metabolic type, as well as her lifestyle.

The nutrition emphasis in Amy's case was to make sure she was getting all the nutrients she needed, primarily essential fatty acids, moderate amounts of lean protein, and high-fiber vegetables. She was also willing to minimize her intake of sugar and starchy carbohydrates for a couple of weeks in order to normalize blood sugar levels and raise her metabolism back to normal. We also reduced her exercise to a more moderate level—a range of intensity and duration where her body would burn fat rather than muscle.

It was definitely a paradigm shift for her to start eating healthy fats and not to count calories. But she did so—and magically the inches started to drop off. Within a few weeks, people she saw on a regular basis started noticing that she was getting thinner. Yes, she was losing weight, but more importantly she was losing fat, not muscle. In addition, she was sleeping better and regained energy and a



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healthy appetite.

Even though this example is specific to Amy, my point is that weight loss is more about ensuring that your body gets adequate nutrients at the cellular level rather than restricting calories. I have seen it over and over again in my practice that when someone begins to regain homeostasis, or balance, through a positive mindset, proper nutrition, and moderate activity, he or she begins to readily shed excess weight.

So how do we regain homeostasis and ensure that our body is getting the nutrients and exercise it needs at the cellular level? Let's begin with what I consider the top nine weight-loss tips.

1. **Begin with the end in mind.** Set realistic and specific goals for achieving your optimum health and self-image. Keep a positive mindset and daily affirm your desire to achieve your goals. A worthy goal to strive for is joy and happiness. If you focus on those things that bring more joy into your life, you will have a much better chance of improving your health and achieving your ideal weight.
2. **Minimize stress.** Medical research has linked chronic stress to over 80% of all illnesses. Stress is a major health factor and can inhibit weight loss, even with the best food and fitness program. The quickest and simplest way to minimize stress is to learn deep-breathing techniques that you can practice throughout your day.
3. **Eat whole, fresh foods.** Choose foods that are nutrient dense and avoid fast foods, fried foods, and processed foods as much as possible. Also avoid foods that are high in sugar, sodium, and trans fats (read labels). If you choose to eat these unhealthy foods at times, adjust your food intake for the next day or two to compensate.

#### 4. **Drink adequate water.**

Although we usually take it for granted, water may be the only "magic potion" for permanent weight loss. Water helps the body metabolize stored fat and suppresses the appetite naturally. On average, a person should drink at least 8 eight-fluid ounce glasses of purified water every day. However, the overweight person needs one additional glass a day for every 25 pounds of excess weight.

5. **Get moving.** Our bodies simply cannot tolerate inactivity. The key is to find a low-impact exercise or physical activity that you enjoy. Start with walking or rebounding on a small trampoline if you are overweight and work with a fitness specialist to develop a program that you will stick with.

#### 6. **Take food supplements.**

Unless you are eating completely organic, live food, it is almost impossible these days to get adequate nutrients from our food sources. Studies have shown that most overweight people have significant nutritional deficiencies. I recommend taking at least a good quality, multi-vitamin and multi-mineral supplement, as well as a broad-spectrum antioxidant formula.

#### 7. **Reduce toxic exposure.**

Long-term accumulation of toxins can prevent weight loss and cause many health problems. Buy organic food and personal care products when possible. Be sure to thorough-

ly wash all produce. Convert your home to non-toxic cleaning products to improve indoor air quality.

8. **Cleanse your body.** Most of us clean out our refrigerator periodically but fail to do the same with our bodies. Chronic constipation is a major problem with many overweight people and significantly impacts health. Seek help from a natural health practitioner to resolve any digestion and/or elimination problems. Consider taking herbal colon cleansing products as needed.
9. **Seek support.** Find a friend or partner who is committed to supporting you in your health goals. If you have specific health issues, work with a weight management consultant or health practitioner. Ongoing support is just as essential to your success in achieving your ideal weight as it is for a professional athlete or business professional to achieve success in their endeavors.

Expect success! Know that you have what it takes to achieve your ideal weight, be healthy, and live the life you deserve. Now is the time to do it! ■

*For a free initial nutrition and weight management consultation, contact Nancy Hearn at 406-222-7304. Nancy offers a six-week weight management program designed to help people optimize their health and achieve their ideal weight.*

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