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# **Nine Essential Tips for Weight Loss Success**

Stay Motivated, Lose Weight

ME.  TRANSFORMED



It's happened to all of us – the dreaded moment of realization, when the truth of our little indulgences all comes crashing down. We go to pull on a shirt or pair of pants that we know fit last month... yet suddenly, they don't.

Before you know it, one is staring at the scales in disbelief, trying to figure out where that excess weight has come from. Images float behind our eyes – chocolate, 'just a little bit more' and a particularly appetizing takeout meal – and soon, we know where the problem has come from. So we take a deep breath, compose ourselves mentally and declare – that's it, I'm going to have to diet.

If you have recently found yourself in the same situation, you will know how troubling such a realization can be. In one effortless decision, we kiss our peace of mind and our enjoyment of food goodbye, in the pursuit of a slimmer shape.

What doesn't help is the confusion that surrounds the entire dieting world. Glance at any weight loss section of a book store and you'll see hundreds of different books, each one absolutely insisting *their* method is the right one. How on earth can you know who to trust?

The truth is, fad dieting does not work. Many of these diets have come and gone from public consciousness, though it is a matter of fervent debate on whether they took their users' excess pounds with them. Celebrity endorsements, limiting portions, eating one particular type of food, excluding different food groups... they all differ, and they all make any conscientious dieter's head spin.

In reality, what works is a simple, balanced healthy eating plan and regular exercise. We know – it's so boring! Who wants to be told that, when there are a thousand diet meddlers on the market who promise instant results in a week? Yet it remains a biologically consistent fact; for long-term healthy weight loss that you don't regain, you have to change your eating and exercise habits for good.

However... there are ways and means of making any healthy eating plan a little easier to stomach. The following are tips and tricks you can implement into your dieting regime to ensure a better chance of success. These tips focus on co-coordinating your lifestyle and dealing with motivation – not strict rules on what you can and can't eat. It's all about moderation, but that doesn't mean there are not subtle ways you can alter your habits and lifestyle, too.



### **Tip Number One: Complacency Bites; How to Avoid The “Low Fat Trap”**

Let's imagine a scenario. You've been to the grocery store, and while eyeing the chocolate mousses hungrily, you spotted a pack of yogurt proclaiming to be “low fat”. You scanned the ingredients label and agreed with this claim, and made your sensible – but somewhat sad – decision to buy. You've left the chocolate mousse behind, and decide to eat a yogurt once you arrive home from the store.

With the yogurt eaten, you eye the remaining three. Well, you tell yourself, what can it hurt? It says “low fat” after all... so you consume the remaining yogurts, still feeling like you've been “good”.

The truth is, you would probably have been better off eating one of the chocolate mousses rather than four of the low-fat yogurts. There is something of a general assumption that low fat translates to “you can eat as many of these as you want”. You may notice the next time you're in a grocery store that high calorie sweets and desserts are usually sold singularly, but the low fat options are sold in packs of four or six. This is done deliberately, to encourage the free-for-all mentality.

**So the first tip you can take is thus: do not assume that “low fat” means “diet smart”.** In fact, study the ingredients label of anything claiming to be low fat. While it may be low in fat, you are likely to discover it has high levels of sugar or – oddly – salt, to compensate for the taste the fat would usually have provided. So while it may indeed be low in fat, the yogurt has other effects on any dieting individual.

Treat any low fat item – it does not have to be yogurt – in the same way as you would treat something that was full fat. Wherever possible buy single sizes to protect against indulgence, and make sure to read the labels thoroughly – don't just check the fat or calorie content.

Although it may be low fat, it is still food, and it will still need to be balanced into your diet. Forgetting to do so is a primary reason for many people not achieving their weight loss goals as desired, as they fall into the “low fat trap”. Make sure you're not one of them.



## Tip Number Two: Be Careful of Portion Sizes

Controlling portion sizes is an excellent way to allow yourself to eat the food you love – even when you're attempting to lose weight. If there is a particular main course style dish, for example Chinese takeout, that you love – you may assume that you will have to do without it for the duration of your diet.

Not so. Even though most take out meals are packed with fats and sugars, there is a way to allow yourself to enjoy the food you love even when you're trying to shed weight.

It's fairly simple, just follow the steps below. For the example, we'll use a lo mein from a Chinese takeout – however, the same method applies if you cook the food yourself.

1. Call your local delivery restaurant, order what you usually would. For arguments sake, we'll say you ordered a chicken lo mein and two shrimp egg rolls.
2. Wait for food to arrive.
3. When the delivery arrives, go and collect food. Take the food into the kitchen.
4. Now the crucial bit: **empty out half of the chicken lo mein onto your plate.** Reseal the rest and leave to cool to room temperature.
5. Now for the egg rolls. Take out one of the egg rolls and drop it on your plate. Again, leave the rest to cool.
6. Take your plate and enjoy!
7. Do not go back for seconds!

The above is a rather overly descriptive way of doing it, but nevertheless, it works. You've been able to eat the food you enjoy, but at a portion size that won't wreck your diet for an entire week.

There are other benefits, too, namely – you now have half a chicken lo mein and an egg roll leftover. Wrap these in foil and store in the fridge, and enjoy for dinner the next night. You've saved money *and* extended your treat.

Now, you may be wondering how this can be of any use whatsoever. Surely, you cry that eating Chinese take out or any other fat-laden delight will still disturb any dieting intentions? Well, yes and no.

The main reason dieters fall 'off the wagon', as it were, is due to denying themselves the things they enjoy. This builds up a craving for a certain food, which inevitably becomes so intense a binge is a near-certainty. During that binge, most dieters will eat huge amounts of a forbidden food, and undo all of their good work. This destroys motivation as well as any calorie ideals.

By allowing yourself half of an adored food, you will be able to halt these cravings and the inevitability of a binge. Yes, the meal will still be fattening, but by controlling your portion size, you have already made a big change to how you usually eat. Experts on portion control say that if everyone did this with every meal and did not alter their diet in any other way, they would still lose several pounds a week. Portions are overly large as it is in most



households; this is simply a method of preventing craving and bingeing, as well as aiding your weight loss.



### **Tip Number Three: Dealing with Big Events**

One of the crunch times for dieters is when a big event is approaching; this is usually an event based around food, such as a birthday, holiday, or a work dinner. In this situation, it can be extremely embarrassing to confess that you are on a diet. Such a comment seems to invite speculation from the people around you, and you may even be forced to listen to “you don't need to lose weight!” comments which are intended to be kind but somehow feel insulting.

This is the reason most dieters tend to fail when confronted with this hurdle; the embarrassment factor. Announcing to the world that you are on a diet tends to draw attention to any weight problem you have, and this is something one naturally wishes to avoid.

There are three different ways to deal with a big event, in which you cannot avoid eating calorie-loaded food:

#### **1. Plan Ahead**

Throughout the week leading up to the event, you can “save up” your calories. This means limiting your diet slightly more than usual, reducing your calorie consumption for the six days prior to the event. This in turn means you can use these 'saved up' calories for the event; where you can eat normally.

However, this method is risky. If you are going to a restaurant or party, you cannot be sure how many calories or other no-go attributes are in the food being served. What if you save up too much – or worse, too little?

#### **2. Go to the event, and eat little.**

Rather than openly announcing that you are dieting to friends and family, you can merely attend the event and eat as little as possible of any rich foods. Many will try and pass this off as a 'stomach upset' or merely say they are 'not hungry'.

It is effective – if you have the discipline. In actuality, it can ruin your enjoyment of the party, particularly if you use the 'stomach upset' line and draw further questions about your non-existent health problem.

However, if you genuinely feel you have the self-control to go to an event and watch what you eat, there is no harm in doing so.

#### **3. Go and enjoy!**

By far the best tactic and the most enjoyable is to go and eat as you please.

The main problem with dieting is the mundane nature of the foods you can eat. Yes, salad can be nice, but salad every night for a year is enough to send anyone heading for the cookie jar. It is therefore important to try and give yourself 'days off'.



To be clear, a 'day off' should not be a day when you wake up hungry and decide you'll skip the diet for that day. This kind of behavior can lead to the diet failing in its entirety, as if you give yourself this much lee-way it can be hard to make yourself begin dieting again.

An event, party, birthday or whatever is the best time to have a 'day off'. The event is fixed in the calendar, so you know it is coming and are prepared for it. This takes away the element of just giving in to cravings and gives you an element of control over the situation.

If you feel guilty over the idea of indulging yourself after so much hard work, why not try booking a step or exercise class for the next morning? This means you can enjoy the event all the more, with the knowledge you will work harder in the gym than you normally might.

As long as you plan for a 'day off' well in advance, they can actually be a good thing for your diet. It helps loosen that restrictive feeling that diets can bring, which can in turn energize you for the rest of your dieting period.



#### **Tip Number Four: Quelling the Desire To Snack Without Calories**

In a perfect world, chocolate cake and pizza would have zero calories – and would also be beneficial to your health. In fact, in a perfect world, they'd be the nutritionally-recommended food of choice.

Sadly, this is not a perfect world, and eating means one must inevitably ingest calories. Chocolate cake and pizza can be eaten in moderation, but they will do little to suppress a middle-of-the-day snack desire while at the same time allowing you to remain on your diet.

The desire to snack is something that derails many dieters, and for that reason the food industry has focused on creating “low-everything” food, which is meant to contain so few calories that snacking on it is not a problem. Unfortunately, by removing one element – such as fat – from a food, manufacturers need to increase levels of other ingredients. High fructose corn syrup, sugar, or salt are particularly common.

So is there a way to suppress the urge to snack without resorting to calorie-laden food, or sometimes worse, low-everything food? Well, yes and no.

There are certain foods which contain virtually no calories. A prime example of this is celery; a rather bland food, but some people can develop a taste for it and enjoy snacking. One stick of celery contains less than 1% calories, and if you are physically active, is burnt off in a matter of seconds.

Other fruits and vegetables do well on the no-calorie front; as a rule of thumb, the paler and greener something is, the less calories it will have. Green vegetables are good, and of the fruits, green apples contain the least calories. All of these are good things to snack on.

If however, you feel the need for a sugar hit, why not try sprinkles? Sometimes called jimmies, sprinkles are used to decorate cakes and other desserts as a 'finishing touch'. These tiny little particles can be a great way to get a sugar 'hit' without ingesting too many calories. Simply pour a small – and we mean *small* – amount onto the palm of your hand, and then lick them with your tongue. Let the sprinkles sit there for awhile and savor the taste before swallowing. The calories consumed, provided you do indeed keep the portion minute, are negligible – and it should stave off a desperate sugar craving. Use sparingly for maximum efficacy.

Of course, the ultimate way to fill an empty stomach and help reduce cravings is simple – water. Water bloats the stomach and makes you feel full, with the added bonus of it containing no calories. If you do not like the taste of water alone, you can add some drops of lemon, lime or other preferred citrus, to give a mild but satisfying taste.

Finally, be reassured – the longer you continue with your diet, the less you will experience cravings. Over time, your body will adapt to your new eating regime and the desperate desire will begin to fade.



### **Tip Number Five: Throw Away the Scales**

You are probably looking at that section heading and thinking – *what? Are you crazy? How am I going to know I've lost weight if I throw away my scales?!*

While this may seem like a radical suggestion, many dieters will attest to the fact that this can be an extremely useful psychological tool.

When you are dieting, the scale becomes your enemy, the dread of the bathroom. Some people weigh themselves several times a day, while others manage to restrain it to a weekly weigh-in. Whatever the frequency of the usage of your scale, it genuinely may be time to banish them for good.

The problem with scales is that they take very little into account. All they can show you is the weight of something which is placed on them. This may seem to be exactly what you need, but think about it. Weight fluctuates throughout the day, as your body moves through its natural rhythms; you can gain and then lose again three to four pounds. If you weigh yourself – by sheer bad luck – in one of these 'up' fluctuations, your motivation will plummet.

There is also the issue that the change in mass presented on the scale may not actually be related to fat gain or loss. For a start, if you have increased your exercise routine during your diet, you may be in the process of building muscle. Muscle weighs more than fat. If you embark on an intense weight lifting routine, you may actually find yourself gaining weight – though your body fat percentage would be significantly reduced.

Thirdly, while a 'goal weight' is not a bad idea, few dieters remember to take into account their height and body type when setting a goal weight. This means you could be striving for a goal that is actually, for your body type, unhealthy. Even the Body Mass Index can grossly misjudge this; many professional athletes have BMIs which class them as 'overweight' or even 'obese' – yet their only issue is to be broad and to have a lot of muscle on their frame.

The bathroom scale is therefore a pitfall that dieters do not need, considering the implications it can have on your morale and general motivation. If you feel you have had a good week with your eating plan, but your scale says differently, what kind of encouragement is that for you to continue?

A more accurate way of determining the success of your weight loss is to measure yourself with a tape measure. While increased muscle density can make measurements larger, this would only be true if you were intensively working out – you need a more substantial difference to affect a tape measure than you do a pair of scales.

Before you begin your diet, grab a tape measure and a pad. Then measure the following:

- The circumference of your thighs...
- ... calves...
- ... upper arms...



- ... neck...
- ... and your waist.
- You can also measure underneath your breasts (if female) or take a regular across-chest measurement if male.
- Women may also want to measure their hips.

Write all of these measurements down, and try to keep note of where exactly on a particular body part you measured. (For example, on the calf, choose to measure three inches up directly from the ankle bone – this will provide more consistent results). When you have recorded all of your measurements, put the notebook in a drawer and forget about it for awhile.

**At least two weeks after the start of your diet**, you can measure once more. Compare with the original measurements, and note how your clothes fit now. Please remember the first few weeks may show only a small reduction, but this should be much less damaging to your psychological state than anything your scale will tell you.

After six months, if you genuinely feel prepared for the experience mentally, you can step onto the scale. If you have followed your eating and exercise plan correctly, you will see a substantial loss of weight – this is pure motivation, which would not have been gained if you had been monitoring your weight loss daily using the same apparatus.

So perhaps the tip is not “throw away your scales” - more, “use them infrequently”. If possible, however, you should rid yourself of scales in the house – you can always check your weight every six months using scales available at a doctors' office or a gym. All of this should help keep your motivation going; weekly, you will see your measurements decreasing (so you know your diet is having an effect), but then after six months you will see a drop in weight that will make you feel it has all been worthwhile.



### **Tip Number Six: Lead Me Not Into Temptation**

Is there a particular food you have a weakness for?

The vast majority of people will answer this question positively, their mind already half dominated by the one type of food they find it impossible to resist. If you have your temptation-promoting food in mind, just remember that this is likely to be a key reason for any weight loss plans becoming derailed.

Is it really so tempting now?

Well, that's the problem – it is. When we really enjoy something, we want it, and there is a part of us that doesn't care what it will do to us. This is exactly the problem with food that you particularly love.

While one may wish there was a way to cure people of their food weaknesses, unfortunately, there is not. A craving for a particular food must be managed, and the key to that is to ensure you do not have the opportunity to become tempted.

Let's look at two scenarios. Both of the women in these scenarios have a weakness for freshly baked bread:

1. Woman A works for a bank in the center of town. She's currently on a weight loss program which she hopes will succeed. Every morning, she walks into work as part of her exercise regimen. As she does so, she passes a bakery, which is firing their oven and creating the first batch of the day. As she walks past, she can smell that delicious aroma, and she feels her mouth water and her stomach rumble.
2. Woman B also works for a bank in the center of town, and she too is on a weight loss program. However, she is not able to walk to work because she has to take her children to school in the morning. She drives straight from her home to the school, and then directly to the employee parking lot.

Who is more likely to be successful at handling their craving for baked bread?

Well – *that's easy!* You think. Obviously, Woman B is going to be more successful – she does not have to deal with the delicious smell of freshly baked bread every morning, and she is therefore more likely to succeed in keeping it out of her mind (and her mouth!). This situation has obvious results... so how does it figure in your weight loss plans?

Simply, if there is something you have a craving for, you must go as far as you possibly can to avoid it. If you were, for example, Woman A in the example, you would need to weigh the pros and cons of the situation. Yes, you get more exercise by walking to work, but that walk leads you straight into the path of temptation. Which is going to be more beneficial in the long run?

Here are a few ways to avoid temptation:



- **Don't buy it!** This sounds so simple, but it is something to bear in mind. If you have a weakness for cookies, don't buy them. If your children or your partner enjoy cookies and want them in the house, simply tell them that they must buy cookies for themselves and store them out of sight.
- **Alter your routine if you need to.** If you tend to pop into the local coffee shop every morning, and find yourself eyeing a plate of tempting blueberry muffins... it may be time to find a new coffee shop. If necessary, only do this for the first few months of your diet – when your cravings will be at their most potent.
- **Tell your friends.** If people you socialize do not know you're dieting, they are all the more likely to innocently offer you a chocolate or a cookie. If you feel confident enough, tell them you are dieting and – for the time being – ask if they could refrain from eating certain foods in front of you.



### Tip Number Seven: Small Changes Make Big Differences

A dieting regime can so often feel like a chore, and for that reason, any small changes you can make that are effective will feel like a huge relief. After all, *something* about this painful dieting business has to be easy!

To begin, think about your lifestyle. Is there anything you could do or change slightly that would increase the speed at which you burn calories? We all know burning calories is a good thing, and we all know exercise achieves it – but many do not have the inclination or the time to partake in thorough exercise as regularly as we would like.

However, there are indeed small changes you can make. Below, are a few of them. These may not be particularly effective alone, but if you make some or all of these changes, you will burn more calories – and that means you will lose weight faster.

- **Instead of taking the elevator, use the stairs instead.** Over time, increase the speed at which you take the stairs. If you can finish your upward or downward journey slightly out of breath, you're doing well.
- Rather than use a drive through for any service or collection, **park and go into the store yourself.** Leave time in your day to account for the extra time needed.
- **Speed up your cleaning.** If you use the vacuum, use it quickly – with short, sharp movements that make you twist and turn your entire body. Become a demon duster, polishing surfaces in a few moments flat. Cleaning is good, gentle exercise as it is – if you deliberately decide to do it at an increased pace, you will double the efficiency of the calorie burn. What's more, you'll also get an unpleasant chore over much faster!
- Your parents probably used to snap at you for it – but believe it or not, **fidgiting can help you burn calories.** Increase your need to fidget by deliberately sitting uncomfortably if you are sitting to watch television or read a book. If in one hour of television watching you get up and readjust your position five times, you could burn 20 to 30 calories. It isn't much, but it all adds up.
- If you have a pet dog, **retrain yourself to think of walking the dog as jogging with the dog.** By upping your pace just slightly, you will automatically begin to burn calories faster as well as getting fit. This has the added bonus of enjoyment for your dog, and the exercise will also help release a wave of endorphins – the feel good hormone – that will make you feel fantastic.



### **Tip Number Eight: Incentives Make You Stronger**

One of the biggest problems with dieting is that it can seem like never-ending torture. After all, you're constantly and consistently denying yourself the things you want – and this in turn can affect your lifestyle and your general sense of enjoyment. The reason diets are so hard to stick to is because of how restrictive they are, and while the moments of “I've lost weight!” glory are enjoyable – they're also transient.

This is particularly true if you've been dieting for awhile and have not quite seen the progress you've desired. The smaller joys of weight loss or dropping a dress size become forgotten in the endless round of wanting food – not being able to have food – feeling miserable. Motivation is a huge issue, and one that needs some work.

When you create your motivation within your diet, you are creating problems. This is due to the fact that your motivation is enmeshed within the thing you need motivation for; there is no point saying “I will have a cupcake if I lose X amount of weight by X date”... chances are, you will probably feel guilty when the time comes to eat that cupcake, because you'll be worrying about what it will do to your diet. For true motivation, you need to find inspiring and incentive factors outside of the diet itself.

While it may seem absurdly materialistic, in reality one of the best ways to motivate yourself is to indulge a different enjoyment. Before you begin your diet, thinking of something – an item, something material – you want. Or maybe you can envision a particular theater show you would like to see; something that you have previously denied yourself for whatever reason.

When you have your object or day out in mind, you will be able to set an incentive goal. The next point is an important one, so make sure you take note:

**Do not promise your reward based on anything to do with your weight or the food you eat.**

**Your reward, your purchase of a material possession or participation in an activity you enjoy, should be completely detached from your weight, your diet or from food.**

The reason one has to be so strict about this is due to the motivation factor once more, and the need for that motivation to come from something outside of the diet.

The idea is to picture the thing you desire, and then set a date or time when you will allow yourself to purchase the item / attend the event. Remember, **do not base this date around anything to do with your diet.**

It's so easy to say you will do X activity when you have lost X amount of weight, and think that is different enough from the first example on this page – because the reward does not involve food. However, it isn't different enough.

Set a time-scale, albeit an arbitrary one. At the end of this, allow yourself to purchase the item or attend the event – whatever you have chosen. The best way to do this is to simply



pick a calendar date in the future; use whatever method you prefer, but ensure it is not related to your diet in any way.

The idea is then to allow yourself to indulge in your non-food passion when the time comes. Say you set your reward for six months after commencing your diet. In the weeks leading up to the event, just as you begin to need to plan it, providing you are still making a realistic effort with your diet – indulge away.

You will have to be strict with yourself, but not too strict – it's a fine balance to walk, but one you must master. You are aiming for an overall compliance with your diet – the occasional slip here and there should not be counted against you. Be honest with yourself, and if you have done as you feel you should have, enjoy the treat.

This may seem somewhat contradictory to the earlier idea that you should not base your reward around your diet, but the concepts do differ slightly. The key is not to set the reward within your diet; there is no harm in using your reward to measure your dieting progress. Provided your reward does not involve food, you should be fine.

The real reason for this is because of that all important M-word; motivation. During the hard weeks leading up to your preplanned date, when you are hungry and occasionally feeling miserable, you can look forward in time to the reward in the future. Hold this reward to you, almost like a talisman against hunger pangs and those low moments. Make the reward your motivation.

It may not always work, but having this kind of reward in mind will help you focus during your dark points. We all need something to look forward to, after all.



### **Tip Number Nine: Pre-Preparing Meals for Diet Success**

You probably know the feeling; you've had a hard day at work or running after the kids, and you're exhausted and hungry. You open the refrigerator and for the briefest of moments contemplate cooking up a nice, healthy meal... until you realize you're too tired and you grab the nearest thing or call for a pizza delivery.

It's not exactly pleasant to hear, but one of the main reasons people gain weight is laziness caused by a busy lifestyle. Convenience food is just that – convenient, and we often can't resist its ease of use. The trouble is, convenience food is very rarely good for you.

Thankfully, there are ways and means to get around the problem. The solution is rather simple, but it nevertheless works – turn yourself into a manufacturer of convenience food!

Thanks to the internet, wonderful recipes are now close at hand with just a few taps on a keyboard. There are a number of things you can cook up and then store, which can then be eaten cold or will only take a few minutes to warm up in the microwave. A few suggestions:

- Pasta salad
- Potato salad
- Ready-made tuna salad
- Curry
- Stir fry – gather the ingredients together and you only need a few minutes cooking time, then you're good to go.
- Sandwiches
- Low-sugar cookies

Set aside an afternoon and make a few meals for the week ahead, then store them safely in your refrigerator. All of the above – and many meals besides – are quick and easy to heat up, and are just as convenient as ordering out and waiting for the delivery to arrive.

If you tend to buy lunch at work or when you're out on the go, try pre-making sandwiches instead. Throw in some dried fruits and (as mentioned above) some sprinkles, if you have a sweet tooth. You then have a ready to go meal which will save you time, money and calories in your lunch hour.

The final point mentions low-sugar cookies; these can be a real investment too, if again you have a sweet tooth. Again, using an internet search – or just an old fashioned recipe book – you should be able to find a method of baking cookies which will be kind to your calorie counting. Bake these in large batches and store in a tin, just like you would keep store bought cookies fresh. The end result is having something sweet and satisfying – but not too bad for you – right at hand when you need it. A good idea is to keep a small box of one or two cookies in your car, or at your desk at work, just in case the need strikes when you're on the go.



Genuinely, if you can eliminate – or at the very least, cut down – on your dependence on convenience food, it will have an overwhelmingly positive effect on your dieting ambitions. As you will have made the food, you will know the calorie content and exactly what went into it – no relying on imaginative packing from manufacturers who brand something “good for you” and then pack it with unrecognizable ingredients. Over time, you will refine this cooking skill and will be able to produce storable, edible items that you will enjoy – and you'll be slimmer and healthier for it, too.



## CONCLUSION

### Good Eating Is For Life, Not Just For Post-Christmas

Come here, we'll tell you a secret. Do you want to know the number one reason why fad diets fail?

The reason is basic but true; it's because fad diets set a time limit.

Think back to the thousands of commercials and dieting ads and aids you may have seen in magazines. All of these fad diets promise “results” (without defining what these results should be) within a certain time-scale. A week, seven days, is a popular one – no one can resist the idea of making over their body in a week – though some diets advocate several months spent following their eating plan.

In basic terms, most fad diets do work as in they will allow you to lose weight. This is helped by the non-too-responsible tactic of encouraging people to essentially enter starvation mode during the diet; with food often replaced by a liquid, or syrup, or a particular vegetable. It is biological fact that this will make you lose weight – and all you have to do is follow the diet for a set amount of time, and you'll be slimmer and happier!

Except... what happens when the diet ends?

It isn't a pretty story, and the result is something which is known as “yo-yo” dieting. Remember yo-yos, those toys that spring up and down on a rope, constantly going either north or south? This is the kind of spin that fad dieting puts you in to.

You climb up and up the rope during the diet; losing weight, feeling better, gaining confidence. And then, the diet stops. You take your body out of the diet's requisite starvation mode and begin to eat normally again. The end result? You spiral down, right back down, as your body instantly begins to gain weight now you are eating properly again.

Of course, you're not happy about gaining weight – and after having recently been so slim! - so you begin another fad diet. The weight comes off, and up the rope you go. Then you stop the diet, the weight comes on again... and so the yo-yo continues. It doesn't stop, and it's extremely damaging to your long term health to lose and gain weight so rapidly.

### So how do you avoid yo-yo dieting?

The answer is one you may greet with dread, particularly given the “quick fix” nature of society.

Put basically, you must make changes to your diet that will last a lifetime.

The fad diet sellers know that no one can survive long term on their diet; this is why they recommend a short-term program, which will do little long term damage. As it happens,



this short-term promise also has a dual role as a cute marketing ploy which appeals to the desire for a quick fix. They win all round... you don't.

There are usually a lot of reasons why people gain weight – and despite the cliches, there can be clinical, medical reasons for weight gain. It is important you do not use this as an excuse, but when you are trying to solve your problems once and for all, it is worth considering your medical state.

For example, most contraceptives – such as the pill or an injection – will imbalance your body, and you may find you gain weight. Unfortunately, this is something most people just have to live with – the alternative choice of having a child is not an option, and most long term couples shy away from condoms. However, if you are having particular trouble with weight gain caused by a contraceptive, it may be time to have a chat with your doctor. There are many methods of contraception, and it may be that some have less of an ill effect on your weight.

There are various other non-serious medical maladies that can cause weight gain, with contraceptives and other prescription medications the prime candidates. If you genuinely feel you are gaining weight too quickly, or not losing weight as you should, **talk to your doctor about the problem.** A simple round of blood tests could eliminate some of the conditions that can cause people to gain weight; and if you do suffer from such a problem, the underlying cause can be treated and you can begin to lose weight with confidence.

Now comes the tough part – really considering why you have gained weight in the first place. In the modern society, the primary candidate for weight gain is due to a lack of time. We are all chained to our desks or victims of the rat race, and the time for the gym cannot seemingly be found. Then we slouch home from work, exhausted, and grab the nearest thing to eat – not caring how many calories it contains.

The unfortunate truth is that it is only by solving your lifestyle that you will solve your weight problems in the long term. You need to identify the cause of your weight problem. Do you comfort eat? Do you simply not have time to exercise? Do you not feel like cooking after a long day of work?

When you have identified the problem, you can go about fixing it – something that no fad diet can offer. The only viable route to long term weight loss and a happier, slimmer you is to change your eating habits forever.

**It doesn't sound that appealing – we know.** But that's why advocating moderation has been a continued theme throughout this book. Moderation is the absolute key, and denial is the lock. If you deny yourself a food you enjoy forever, you are not going to enjoy life, your diet *or* your slimmer self. You will simply feel the overriding feeling – denial.

Food is to be enjoyed, and no one is trying to say that you should switch off everything you enjoying and spend the rest of your life eating rabbit food. What you should do is focus on food you enjoy that is a problem in terms of weight gain; chocolate, cookies, cakes, rich foods, takeaway foods or snack items such as nuts. These foods should stop being a



regular part of your diet and merely become an indulgence, something you only enjoy once or twice a week.

The rest of the week should be dedicated to eating healthy, ensuring you gain the full nutritional value from food by eating fruit and vegetables, and from exercising regularly. Then, allow yourself to eat what you enjoy – but just eat less of it. We talked earlier of dividing portions of takeaways so you do not consume so many calories in one sitting; apply this method across everything you enjoy.

**The second fundamental part of losing weight is exercise.**

Now, if you say the word “exercise” to people, images of people running on treadmills in gyms usually spring to mind. However, it is worth noting that exercise does not have to involve an expensive gym membership.

Merely walking or jogging around the streets near your house is exercise; as is, as mentioned earlier, cleaning. To effectively burn calories, you just need to raise your heart beat – you don't need to be slogging it out on a cross-trainer in a gym. There are thousands of ways you can incorporate raising your heart beat into your usual routine.

To ensure you are indeed burning calories with your lower-level exercise, you will need to establish your resting heart rate. To do so:

- Sit down in a quiet room, where you can focus.
- Sit still for awhile and breathe deeply.
- Place your fingertips on your wrist or on your neck – everyone is different, and some people feel their pulse better in certain areas. Pick whichever area works for you.
- Count how many times your pulse beats within a 30 second period.
- Then double it, and write that figure down.

You now have your resting heart rate measured in beats per minute (BPM). To burn calories efficiently, you simply need to raise that heart beat. The faster your heart beats, the more calories you burn – hence why people turn to gyms. Yet just raising your heart beat a little can have a dramatic effect on your ability to burn calories and, in turn, lose weight.

**The formula for successful weight loss that lasts is not a complex one:**

Healthy eating + moderation of enjoyed foods + moderate exercise = a healthy weight.

The above will not only help you lose weight, but it will help you keep it off, too. Follow the tips as outlined above to further your chances of success, and we wish you the very best of luck.