



## 7 Food Habits That Work for Weight Loss

Are you tired of dieting? If you are then try a few of these tips to get started on better eating habits for long term success with weight loss. You will find simple lifestyle changes such as quick and easy breakfast ideas, smart snacks, and food label tips. They may not sound magical – but they do work!

### 1. Breakfast Basics

Getting into the habit of eating breakfast gets you and your metabolism on a regular schedule and our bodies do better with a routine. For quick and easy breakfasts try a piece of fruit, granola bar, yogurt, hardboiled egg on toast, English muffin with peanut butter, a smoothie, cereal, frozen waffles, oatmeal, or even just a glass of milk or juice.

### 2. Lunch List

Planning ahead is the key to having a healthy lunch. You can take a turkey sandwich and chips or fruit from home for 500 calories or go to a restaurant and order a sandwich and fries for 600 calories or more just in the sandwich. Make a list of foods you would like for lunches. Wraps, popcorn, cheese & crackers, or premixed salads can make a quick, healthy lunch.

### 3. Supper Slim-Down

This is often the meal where we often overeat because we haven't eaten enough during the day and we are starving by supper time. There are many tricks you can use here but finding a way to eat smaller portions and lower calorie foods is the goal for weight loss. Try these suggestions . . .

- Use a smaller plate
- Keep the serving dishes off the table
- Make it a rule not to eat while watching TV
- Eat slower and pay attention to the flavors in the food

#### **4. Snack Smarts**

When we start eating less at meals it is normal to get hungry between meals. Snacks can help your body control weight and help prevent overeating at meals. 100-200 calories for a snack is generally a healthy range. Yogurts, fruit, raw veggies, whole grain crackers, pudding, an ounce of nuts, or 5-6 cups popcorn lightly buttered are all snack ideas that are also good sources of nutrients. If you are craving some “junk food” then for 100-200 calories you could have a snack size candy bar, 4-5 hard candies, 3 caramels, 5-6 Hershey’s kisses, 4 licorice twists, a 20oz cappuccino made with low fat milk, 1 envelope hot cocoa mix with water or low fat milk, or 15-20 chips.

#### **5. Beverage Balance**

Be sure you are not drinking too many calories. To lose weight and still get necessary nutrients you will not have room for many caloric beverages other than low fat milk. Drinks other than small amounts of juice should be a treat. Think of soda pop as liquid candy. The acid and sugar eat away at your teeth and the calories can sabotage your weight loss efforts without giving you any nutrition. Next time you reach for the 20oz soda at the store remember you are getting over 15 teaspoons of sugar.

#### **6. Restaurant Rules**

Set some new rules for yourself when eating out. I try to limit how often I eat out to once a week or less. Restaurant meals are generally 2-3 times the recommended calorie amount and are generally high in fat and sodium. When you do order out try these ideas to keep your calorie intake close to your goal:

- Share a meal with someone
- Ask for a to-go container right away & portion before you eat
- Avoid fried foods & skip the appetizer
- Ask for sauces, butter and dressings on side
- Order thin crust pizza instead of thick crust
- Remember alcohol is high calorie also

## **7. Diet Deletion**

Stop looking for the magic pill or quick-fix diet because it does not exist. What have been proven to work time after time are changing eating and activity habits and practicing those changes until they become our new lifestyle. Diets are temporary, restrictive and mess up our body's metabolism so that each time we try to lose weight it gets more difficult.