

Weight Loss the Healthy Way

Will power, calorie skimping, or “dieting” are not the answers to healthy, permanent weight loss. Did you know that 95% of dieters gain back any weight they lose within two years after a diet?¹ Read on to learn why. This article will “skim” over the dietary basics of healthy, permanent weight loss and emphasize the supplement options for someone trying to shed a few extra pounds.

Fat Loss Won’t Happen Without the Right Foods

One of the first reactions of someone struggling to lose weight is to drastically cut calories, particularly from fat and protein. It seems a little backwards, but this weight loss method backfires. In order to survive what it perceives to be a famine, the body will turn down metabolism in a protective mechanism to hold onto any nutrition it gets. In fact, within hours of restricting calories, the body will slow down and remain slow until the restriction is lifted. The resulting slowdown of calorie burning results in the familiar post-diet rebound weight gain. Moreover, after the trauma of dieting, the body adds extra pounds to protect against what it perceives as the danger of future famines or diets.¹ The bottom line, if you want to gain weight – diet!

So what are the right foods to be eating for permanent weight loss? Put simply, whole foods. These include grass-fed meats, fish, eggs, fermented dairy products, fruits and vegetables, nuts and seeds, legumes, whole grains, and unrefined oils. Most whole foods contain a balance of nutrients, which are sources of nourishment for the mind and body and necessary for optimal body function. The body must be working efficiently to allow weight loss to occur. On the other hand, processed and refined foods are loaded with ingredients that undermine health, such as sugar, refined flours, damaged fats, and additives. These harmful foods rob the body of valuable nutrients in the stress of trying to digest them. For example, excess consumption of sugar and refined flour spike insulin levels, encouraging fat storage. These foods also deplete the mineral chromium, which is essential for preventing blood sugar fluctuations that lead to sugar cravings and mood swings.

Muscles are calorie-guzzling tissues and help keep metabolism high, which is why protein and exercise are so important for achieving one’s optimal weight. Additionally, fats, along with protein and fiber, are slow-burning nutrients, meaning they are digested slowly and keep your appetite satisfied. These nutrients are also essential in the body for countless metabolic processes. Below are some suggestions to help you “undiet.”

- Ditch white sugar and processed flours (that means watch out for bagels, pastas, baked goods, etc.). Use natural sweeteners and whole grain flours that provide more nutrition and work with the body.
- Do not skip meals or undereat – the body knows it is starving and will encourage fat gain. Skipping meals, particularly breakfast, automatically slows metabolism and induces afternoon and evening food cravings and overeating.
- Be sure to consume ample healthy protein in every meal, which is found in free-range animal products, organic eggs, fermented dairy products, and legumes. Breakfast is an especially important time to incorporate protein. It is also a good idea to start your meals with proteins to reduce your interest in empty carbohydrate foods.
- Focus on healthy, unaltered fats such as organic extra virgin olive oil, coconut oil, ghee, and butter as well as the fats found in avocados, nuts and seeds, fatty fish, and

grass-fed meats. Include one of these in every meal. Avoid margarine, heated polyunsaturated oils, and fried foods. The damaged fatty acids in these foods wreak havoc on all bodily processes.

- Consume copious amounts of brightly colored vegetables and approximately two servings of fruit per day. These foods are loaded with antioxidants, which are essential for protecting the body during weight loss. As we release fat from our fat cells, we also liberate the toxic chemicals that the body stores in them. Once liberated, these chemicals can irritate and damage many tissues in the body, particularly the liver.²
- Focus on balancing your body. Giving your body what it needs and avoiding what it does not need to function optimally will allow it to shed excess pounds. The key to finding your balance is determining *your* optimal diet – there is no one diet that works for everyone!
- Laugh at “fad diets.” Instead, think, “long-term health and fat loss.” These short-term weight/water loss gimmicks only lead to further fat gain and mental disturbances. Keep in mind, diet comes from the Latin word *diaeta* meaning “a way of life.”
- Lastly, rule out factors that could be contributing to the underlying cause of weight gain or inhibiting fat loss. For example, thyroid dysfunction, toxic overload, food allergies/sensitivities, parasite infection, yeast overgrowth (namely *Candida albicans*), leaky gut syndrome, chronic stress, and hormone imbalance.³

Fat Loss Supporting Supplements

Nutrient deficiencies can result in a number of imbalances, including increased appetite and slowed metabolism, both of which contribute to fat storage. Keep in mind, although a quality diet is essential for fat loss, a well planned supplement program can have a tremendous impact. A good quality multivitamin and mineral is a must for insurance against basic nutrient deficiencies. In addition, a number of nutrients have been shown to be specifically useful for weight loss.

Vitamin A and Beta-Carotene: Vitamin A facilitates nutrient absorption by strengthening the lining of the digestive tract. Along with vitamins C and E, it boosts immunity and increases one’s resistance to infections, parasites, and yeast overgrowth. Vitamin A is also necessary for healthy functioning of the thyroid, which is essential for metabolism. Beta-carotene can be converted into vitamin A in the body. A general daily recommendation for vitamin A is 10,000 IU to 20,000 IU and a typical dose of beta-carotene is 25,000 IU.³

Vitamin B Complex: Collectively the B-vitamin complex supports the brain, intestines, and liver, as well as providing nutritional support for healthy metabolism, helping increase energy, and aiding digestion. Unfortunately, commonly endured factors, such as stress, diet (sugar and refined foods) and poor lifestyle choices, can deplete the body’s stores of the B complex.³ Find a B complex formula and follow the directions on the bottle.

Vitamin C: This nutrient is vital to keeping the adrenal glands and the thyroid functioning healthfully. Vitamin C is particularly important when the body is under stress. A general recommended dose is 1,000 to 9,000 mg daily (to bowel tolerance) in divided doses.⁴

Fiber: Increasing dietary fiber can help promote weight loss. The best fiber supplements for weight loss are *psyllium*, *guar gum*, *glucomannan*, and *pectin*, because they are rich in water-soluble fibers. When consumed with water before meals, these fibers bind to water in the stomach to form a gelatinous mass, which increases a sense of satiety and prevents one from overeating. Fiber can also help enhance blood sugar control, decrease insulin levels, and reduce the number of calories absorbed by the body.⁵ Be sure to drink adequate amounts of water and start out with a dosage between 1 and 2 grams before meals and at bedtime and gradually increase the dosage to 5 grams with each meal.⁶

Chromium: This mineral helps stabilize blood-sugar levels through proper insulin utilization, which is important for preventing the conversion of blood sugar into fat and for diminishing food cravings.³ A general recommendation is 200-300 mcg per day.

Lipotropics: Lipotropic agents, choline, betaine, methionine, vitamin B₆, folic acid, and vitamin B₁₂, promote the flow of fat and bile to and from the liver.⁶ These nutrients essentially help the liver metabolize fatty acids. "Lipo" means fat and "tropic" means to burn; hence, fat burners. If only it were that easy! Assisting your liver with metabolizing fat may allow the whole process to run smoother and you may store less fat calories. There is also some evidence that lipotropics encourage the release of fat from storage into the bloodstream to be burned as energy (thus it must be accompanied by exercise).

Gymnema sylvestre: This ayurvedic herb may help lessen one's desire for sweets and helps balance both blood sugar and insulin levels.^{7,8} Traditionally, 2 to 4 grams of the leaf powder per day is used. For best results, take the herb along with some of the blood-sugar-balancing minerals (chromium, zinc, magnesium, and manganese).⁹

Spirulina: This nutritive blue-green algae is particularly rich in protein and also contains carotenoids, vitamins, minerals, and essential fatty acids¹⁰ Spirulina may help increase energy, improve mental function, and help gradual weight loss. In one double-blind study of 16 overweight individuals, ingestion of 2.8 grams of spirulina three times per day for four weeks resulted in a small but statistically significant weight loss.¹¹

CLA: Conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) occurs primarily in beef and dairy products, but the commercial form is derived from sunflower oil. This fatty acid can work as a muscle-building supplement and aids fat metabolism. Essentially, muscle mass is preserved at the expense of fat stores during exercise. One study proposed that an effective dose for a 165-pound person is 3-5 g/day.¹²

5-Hydroxytryptophan (5-HTP): This supplement is the precursor to the neurotransmitter *serotonin* and has been shown in several short-term controlled studies to reduce appetite and to promote weight loss.^{13,14} In one twelve-week double-blind trial, overweight women who took 600-900 mg of 5-HTP per day lost significantly more weight than did women who received placebo.

Milk Thistle: Liver health is critical when talking about weight issues. This organ is the main "filter" for the toxins that the body absorbs from food, air, and water. With the overly toxic world of today, toxic overload is common. Toxic conditions in the body may cause a buildup of fat. As mentioned in the book *Weight Loss, The Definitive Guide* by Burton Goldberg, "Most people do not associate weight gain with exposure to toxic substances, but the truth is that the poisons that accumulate in our bodies can cause biochemical imbalances and damage organ systems, leading to a host of degenerative diseases. However, well before these diseases take hold, our bodies will often begin to accumulate fat in response to the increased toxic burden." Milk thistle extract may protect

the cells of the liver by blocking the entrance of harmful toxins and helping remove these toxins from the liver cells.^{15,16} In addition, be sure to eliminate any controllable toxic exposures, such as cleaning supplies, beauty products, dry cleaned clothes as well as water and food choices.

Consider weight loss a side effect or extra bonus of being healthy. Focus on getting your body in balance, eliminate any factors that may be contributing to your weight issue, and be gentle with your body. First examine your diet and toxic exposure and make changes where appropriate. Also, look at your exercise and sleep patterns. Having a positive and accepting attitude is critical when it comes to weight loss. The mind is intimately connected with the body, which is also another reason that chronic stress can be a contributing factor for hindering fat loss. Then consider adding a few of the fat loss supporting supplements mentioned above. Explore your individual situation and determine what will work best for you for healthy, permanent weight loss.

¹ Ross, Julia. M.A. *The Diet Cure*. Penguin Books, New York. 2000

² Crayhon, Robert. M.S. C.N. *Nutrition Made Simple*. M. Evans and Company. New York. 1994.

³ Goldberg, Burton and the Editors of Alternative Medicine. *Weight Loss. Alternative Medicine Definitive Guide*. Tiburon, California. 2000.

⁴ Murray, Michael, M.D. *Encyclopedia of Nutritional Supplements*. Rocklin, C. Prima Publishing. 1996.

⁵ Spiller GA. *Dietary fiber in health and nutrition*. Boca Raton, FL. CRC Press. 1994.

⁶ Pizzorno, Joseph and Murray Michael. *Textbook of Natural Medicine: Obesity*. Second Ed. Churchill Livingstone. 1999.

⁷ *Journal of Ethnopharmacology*, June 23, 1995

⁸ *American Journal of Physiology*, April 1995

⁹ Smith, Melissa. Curb Your Carbohydrate Cravings! *Delicious Magazine*. 1997.

¹⁰ Dillon JC, Phuc AP, Dubacq JP. Nutritional value of the alga Spirulina. *World Rev Nutr Diet* 1995;77:32-46.

¹¹ Becher EW, Jakober B, Luft D, et al. Clinical and biochemical evaluations of the alga spirulina with regard to its application in the treatment of obesity. A double-blind cross-over study. *Nutr Rep Intl* 1986;33:565-73.

¹² Edmund R, Burke. Ph.D. *CLA Burns Body Fat First*. Health and Nutrition Breakthroughs. 1998

¹³ Ceci F, Cangiano C, Cairella M, et al. The effects of oral 5-hydroxytryptophan administration on feeding behavior in obese adult female subjects. *J Neural Transm* 1989;76:109-17.

¹⁴ Cangiano C, Ceci F, Cascino A, et al. Eating behavior and adherence to dietary prescriptions in obese adult subjects treated with 5-hydroxytryptophan. *Am J Clin Nutr*. 1992;56:863-67.

¹⁵ Faulstich H, Jahn W, Wieland T. Silibinin inhibition of amatoxin uptake in the perfused rat liver. *Arzneim-Forsch Drug Res* 1980;30:452-4.

¹⁶ Tuchweber B, Sieck R, Trost W. Prevention by silibinin of phalloidin induced hepatotoxicity. *Toxicol Appl Pharmacol* 1979;51:265-75.