

## EATING LIGHT & HEALTHY

**A**t one time or another, half the women and a quarter of the men in this country have tried to lose weight. The ones destined to try again and again are most likely those looking for shortcuts. There are none.

The only *way* to step off the diet treadmill is to find a weight-loss program that helps you lose weight slowly and steadily; one that trains you to adopt a healthy eating plan so simple it becomes a way of life. With that in mind, here is an introductory guide to the last diet you may ever need.

### GOOD HABITS

**START STRONG.** People who eat a healthy breakfast generally feel less hungry throughout the day.

**CURB YOUR APPETITE.** Drink a glass of water or some tea just before a meal.

**STOP COUNTING CALORIES.** The best diet foods are complex carbohydrates. Low in fat, fast-burning, and rich in vitamins and minerals, *they* are also high in bulk, which means you can feel full on fewer calories. Eat whole-grain cereals, rice, breads, pasta, beans, nuts, and some types of fruits and vegetables.

**EAT WHAT YOU LIKE.** Nothing makes a diet more difficult than having to eat rice cakes when you can't stand them.

**SIT DOWN.** Train yourself to eat in one place, preferably at a table. It's too easy to overeat when meals are grabbed on the run or while standing in front of the refrigerator.

**SLOW DOWN.** Eat slowly enough to give your body time to release the enzymes that tell your brain when you've had all you need.

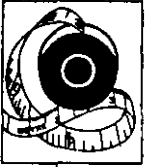
**EXERCISE.** It burns calories and suppresses the appetite, and it's awfully hard to lose weight without doing it. An easy way to get started is to strap on a pedometer and go for a walk, then work on increasing your mileage from one week to the next.

**DON'T GIVE UP.** Falling off your diet once or twice does not mean the effort is hopeless. Simply acknowledge that you overate, and get back on the plan.

**REWARD YOURSELF.** Treat yourself with a massage, or a piece of gourmet chocolate, or whatever, for each week that you maintain your new weight.

### FIRST-RATE SNACK PACK

- Air-popped popcorn seasoned with herbs
- Bagels
- Breadsticks
- Broth-based soups
- Cereals, low-sugar, low-fat
- Cocoa, low-sugar, low-fat
- English muffins
- Fresh fruit
- Frozen fruit-juice bars
- Gingersnaps
- Graham crackers
- Low-fat or nonfat frozen yogurt
- Matzoh
- Milk shake of low-fat milk and frozen fruit
- Pita chips with salsa
- Plain nonfat yogurt with fruit and cinnamon
- Pretzels
- Rye crisps or rice cakes thinly spread with peanut butter or low-fat cheese
- Sorbet
- Tabbouleh
- Vegetables marinated in vinegar or dipped in low-fat yogurt seasoned with herbs
- Whole-wheat crackers



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### EATING OUT

Restaurants are more accommodating than you might think—a 1993 National Restaurant Association survey found that nearly 90 percent of all table service restaurants will alter food preparations on request. Here's how to design delicious, low-risk meals with a chef's help.

**GAIN THE EDGE ON HUNGER** by starting with a broth-based soup, fruit, raw vegetables, unbuffered bread, or a light seafood appetizer.

**CHOOSE ENTREES** that are steamed, poached, broiled, roasted, baked, or cooked in their own juices. Fish is almost always the best choice. Pass up anything fried or sauteed.

**CUT THE FAT** off red meats, and remove skin from thicken before eating it.

**STAY AWAY FROM THICK, RICH SAUCES**, and stick to ones that are thin and stock-based. Avoid hollandaise, bearnaise, beurre blanc, or anything that sounds like gravy. Choose red pasta sauces over white.

**ASK FOR YOUR VEGETABLES STEAMED.**

**ORDER SALAD DRESSINGS ON THE SIDE**, and then use them sparingly. Try lemon juice, plain vinegar, or buttermilk dressing as low-fat alternatives.

**EAT SMALL PORTIONS**, or order half-portions at a reduced rate—and never stuff yourself. As your stomach expands, so does your appetite.

### THE RIGHT DIET

The best commercial diet programs focus on smart food choices. No plan is perfect, but the good ones all have the following features in common:

- > Recommend food that is low in fat and sugar, high in complex carbohydrates, such as breads and vegetables.
- > Teach you how to cook delicious low-fat meals that are quick and easy to prepare.
  - Include an adequate supply of vitamins and minerals.
- > Ask you to eat at least 1,100 calories a day.
- > Allow you to eat a variety of foods and foods you like in moderation
- > Let you eat in restaurants occasionally.
- > Encourage new eating habits and exercise.

### CAUTION

**AVOID CRASHING AND POPPING.** Studies show that people who repeatedly go on and off crash diets actually gain weight over time. The sad fact is that the only thing crash dieters ever learn is how to starve. Try suppressing your appetite with most diet pills and you risk a number of nasty side effects, such as irritability, insomnia, high blood pressure, and chemical dependency. Plus, once you stop taking them, *any* weight you've lost will probably sneak right back on. Weight control is a learned behavior.