

5 Musts for Healthy Weight Loss

Healthy weight loss is what every struggling person wanting to take off those extra pounds wants. Sometimes the headache (and often backache) of living with the issue is so overwhelming, that the solution is often dangerous and ill-advised. Cutting carbs, avoiding fat, doing sit-ups for 10 minutes straight, taking diet pills and other supplements, and even fasting from food all together are all common ways people try to lose fat. Fact is, some of these fast held ideas may actually hinder your long term and healthy results. My hope is that with these five simple tips, your journey of weight loss becomes not only easier, but actually a pleasurable experience.

1) **Eat plenty of protein.** High protein diets (containing 1.5-2 grams/kg body weight) have been shown in numerous studies to increase long term weight loss, improve body composition, and even cut down the amount of food consumption per day. Did you know that a high protein diet is a strong stimulator of the hormone CCK, a satiating gastrointestinal hormone that has been shown to inhibit food intake in both rats and humans? Protein also takes more energy to break down than carbohydrates and fat. Remember that fat, carbohydrates, and protein are all essential for optimum health, so don't cut them out of your diet.

2) **Vigorously train when doing cardio.** Why exercise for two hours when you can get the same work done in 20-30 minutes? More is not always better. Ever heard of fat burn mode? Stop wasting your time. Though you may be burning a higher percentage of calories from fat in "fat burn mode," you can burn a lot more calories and more fat overall by stepping up your game. The American College of Sports Medicine suggests that all adults should engage in thirty minutes or more of moderately intense physical activity per day or vigorously intense bouts of 20 minutes on three or more days per week.

3) **Squeeze in some weight training!** Resistance exercise (a.k.a. weight training) is one of the best ways to see positive body composition changes. Not only does this type of training keep your muscles and bones strong, it also burns a lot of calories and continues to do so even after you're done by increasing your resting metabolic rate! Two to three days of this type of training is recommended for most people. Keep the days evenly split throughout the week and listen to your body to prevent overtraining. If you're first starting out, high repetitions and little rest is recommended. From there, start adding on some weight and go between heavy and light days to prevent plateaus. For the best and safest instruction, find a certified personal trainer in your area with NCCA certified credentials on www.idealift.com.

4) **Create a negative energy balance.** This means, you're eating fewer calories than you're burning throughout the day. A good place to start is following the recommended 2000 calories/day. This coupled with daily exercise will most likely put you into a negative energy balance. Never try to fast from food for weight loss because the weight you lose will likely be muscle, lowering your BMR and probably leading to even more weight gain! Also, very low calorie diets (less than 1200 C/day) should never be done without clinical supervision by licensed health care practitioners. When in doubt and for best advice, find a registered dietitian on www.eatright.org.

5) **Set a good SMART goal.** A good goal will greatly improve your chance of success and a good goal is 50% likely to be accomplished. Try setting a big goal and breaking it up into micro goals so that you can feel rewarded and increase your motivation and self efficacy along the way. When creating a goal, remember the acronym SMART. SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time bound. Let your friends and family know your goal; be loud and clear about what you want and not only will they help you with some motivation, but you will feel more obligated to succeed just so you don't let them down. Picture the end results and don't take that image out of your head.

Wishing you all the best in health and wellness,
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