Weight loss, in the context of medicine, health, or [physical fitness](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Physical_fitness), refers to a reduction of the total [body mass](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Body_mass), due to a mean loss of fluid, body fat or [adipose tissue](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adipose_tissue) or lean mass, namely bone mineral deposits, muscle, tendon, and other connective tissue. Weight loss can either occur unintentionally due to malnourishment or an underlying disease or arise from a conscious effort to improve an actual or perceived [overweight](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Overweight) or [obese](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Obese) state. "Unexplained" weight loss that is not caused by reduction in calorific intake or exercise is called [cachexia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cachexia) and may be a symptom of a serious [medical condition](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medical_condition). [Intentional weight loss](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Weight_loss#Intentional) is commonly referred to as slimming.

Losing weight is never easy and there’s no one tip that’s going to change that. However, it also doesn’t have to be as complicated a process as many of us make it by counting every calorie or stripping our diet of entire food groups while trying to follow aggressively restrictive diet plans.

Instead of adopting a radical or all-encompassing approach, try adopting a series of healthy habits and making them an integral part of your eating routine. As your good habits start to outweigh the bad, you may well find that losing weight and, crucially, maintaining a [healthy weight](https://www.coachmag.co.uk/weight-loss/7663/what-is-a-healthy-weight) become natural to you. And you’ll get to keep on eating carbs throughout.

Below you’ll find 26 tips that can put you on the path to losing weight. You don’t have to try to take on all 26 at once. In fact, we’d definitely advise against trying that, because you’ll overload yourself and quickly lose motivation. Pick a few to start with that you think you can manage, then keep coming back and adding more in to your lifestyle. Before too long you’ll find that the healthy choice becomes your first choice in all kinds of scenarios, and when you add all those together, you’ll be losing weight without even thinking about it.

**1. Drink more water**

The quickest and easiest way of reducing calorie intake is to drink more water. A study of more than 18,000 adults found that increasing daily water consumption by just 1% resulted in the intake of 70 fewer calories, while drinking three extra glasses lowered calorie intake by 205. Decreased sugar consumption was a main reason for the calorie reduction, according to the Journal Of Human Nutrition And Dietetics.

**2. Be smart with carbs**

Carbs still get a bad rap for making people fat. That’s partly because some types – think chips or crisps – are easy to over-eat. But wholegrain carbs, like unrefined brown bread, rice and pasta, can actually help you lose weight, according to a new study from the University of Eastern Finland. [Eating wholegrains](https://www.coachmag.co.uk/nutrition/5219/why-you-should-be-eating-more-wholegrains) increases levels of betaine compounds, which improves glucose breakdown to keep your metabolism firing.

**3. Eat more seafood**

Eating oysters, crab, salmon and tuna, and other copper-rich foods like beef and brazil nuts, can help you lose fat by improving your fat cells’ ability to regulate metabolic processes, according to a study by Johns Hopkins University in the US. Subjects suffering from low copper levels had “fatter” fat cells, the researchers found, because the deficiency altered how these cells process the storage and burning of fatty acids and sugars.

**4. Be mindful at meals**

Sitting at a table to eat instead of doing it at your desk, on the sofa or standing up reduces your risk of over-eating by making you more mindful during meals. Research from Cornell University in the US found that people eat far more in social situations – think standing at the buffet, when walking or talking, or at your desk while working – than when sitting down and thinking about how each mouthful smells, tastes and feels.

**5. Be consistent**

“This doesn’t mean you have to do the same boring squat routine every day – it just means you have to be consistent with your fitness routine,” says Kira Mahal, trainer at [MotivatePT](https://www.motivatept.co.uk/" \t "_blank). “It’s easy to start a new fitness routine but it’s very difficult to continue it. Write down your workouts for the week and make sure to stick to that.

“I recommend working out five days a week with two rest days in order to see results. Keep your workouts exciting by switching it up every day. After a few weeks, working out will become a habit and you will start to crave it.”

**6. Beware added sugars**

These can creep into all kinds of foods that you might not expect to be full of the sweet stuff, like condiments and shop-bought sauces. “Opting for foods without added sugar is a must,” says Jonny Mills, trainer at boutique fitness studio [Sweat It](https://sweat-it.com/). “Sugar spikes your blood glucose and if you don’t burn it off it’ll be stored as fat.”

#### 7. Upgrade your tastes

TRY TO REMEMBER YOU’RE A GROWN-UP AND YOU EAT LIKE ONE“Make it easier for yourself to make better choices,” says personal trainer [Jess Wolny](https://twitter.com/jesswolny?lang=en). “The phrase ‘acquired taste’ is basically redundant for food – all your tastes are acquired, so acquire healthier tastes and you’ll want to eat healthier. Make the change to black coffee instead of cappuccinos or dark chocolate rather than a slab of Dairy Milk, and after a few weeks you’ll never want to go back. One good tip is to try to remember you’re a grown-up and you eat like one. When reaching for a snack, think: would a child want this? Don’t rely on willpower – this stuff isn’t supposed to be hard.”

#### 8. Stay accountable

“Being accountable to yourself goes hand in hand with support from friends and family,” says personal trainer and physique coach [Phil Graham](https://twitter.com/philgraham01?lang=en). “Accountability comes in many forms – it could be just a promise to yourself or telling the whole world via social media – but it’s essential for keeping you motivated when the going gets tough. And a support network is also crucial for times when things go wrong and you need to get back on track. Even better, find someone who has been there and done it themselves because their advice and insight can be invaluable.”

#### 9. Be a goal getter

“Too many people start their fat loss plan without setting an end date or a realistic goal,” says personal trainer [Leon Kew](http://www.leonkew.com/). “You need targets to keep yourself motivated, especially for situations when it would be easy to make bad decisions – when you get offered cake on a colleague’s birthday, it’ll be easier to turn down if you know you’re only two weeks from your goal. Set a finish date that you are 100% confident you can hit. There will inevitably be times where you’re tempted to go back to old habits – and having a specific goal, with smaller milestones along the way, can keep you on track.”

#### 10. Track your progress

“It’s vital to take photos and measurements and keep a training diary that details not just moves you do and weights you lift, but also how the session felt,” says personal trainer and fitness model [Olly Foster](http://action-reaction-training.com/" \t "_blank). “This will give you the insight to make smart changes to your programme to keep your body guessing so the fat keeps falling off.”

#### 11. Record what you eat

“Writing down what you eat is a great way of tracking your eating habits,” says personal trainer Adam Jones. “Does your nutrition differ on weekends or under times of stress? To go one step further, you could do this with a training partner and show each other what you’re eating. No one wants to write down McDonald’s or Krispy Kremes if they’re in friendly competition.”

#### 12. Clean out your cupboards

“If I am trying to get lean I won’t keep foods at home I know I should be avoiding,” personal trainer at [UP Fitness Marbella](https://upfitness.co.uk/) Shaun Estrago. “Even if you have amazing willpower it can be almost impossible to get in after a very long day and eat the food you know you should when there’s a stack of tasty treats just an open cupboard door away.”

**13. Separate fats and carbs**

“Avoid eating fats and simple carbs together, especially once your rate of fat loss begins to stall,” says personal trainer [Matt Sallis](https://twitter.com/Matt_Sallis). “When you consume carbs insulin levels spike (the extent depends on the type and amount of carbs), and insulin’s job is to shuttle any recently ingested energy to the areas of the body that need it most. If you’ve been training hard these nutrients will be delivered to muscle cells to repair and rebuild them. But any excess energy you consume, particularly from fats and simple carbs like sugar, will be stored in fat cells, which is the last thing you want.”

**14. Indulge yourself**

“The number one priority in any fat loss challenge is compliance,” says David Godfrey, performance director at [One Performance UK](http://oneperformanceuk.com/). “If you can’t sustain the programme in the long term you’ll never achieve your goal – or you’ll simply rebound as soon as you do. Calculate your calorie target for the week and allow 10% of that to come from your favourite foods. Most people feel like they’re cheating when they eat their favourite foods, so incorporating them into your nutrition plan helps keep you on track without guilt or painful sacrifice. The psychological impact of this is huge.”

**15. Don’t rely on fat burners**

“At best [fat burners](https://www.coachmag.co.uk/nutrition/supplements/1157/best-fat-burners) are an expensive combination of caffeine, green tea and other ingredients designed to raise the metabolism or mobilise fat,” says personal trainer and fitness model [Sean Lerwill](http://www.seanlerwill.com/). “At worst you may be taking be something detrimental to your health. Many people take a fat burner as an excuse to skip the gym when they’re tired (often because they aren’t eating enough) or short on time, in the mistaken belief that it will do the job instead of exercise. But even if your fat burner does mobilise fat you still need to exercise to burn it off or it will just continue to be stored.”

**16. Eat gut-friendly foods**

“Nutrient absorption through the gut is the key to successful fat loss,” says Matt Warner, head of personal training at [Ultimate Performance](https://upfitness.co.uk/) Manchester. “Inflammation of the gut lining can prevent absorbing nutrients, which can make you more hungry and knock your hormones out of whack, encouraging fat storage. Avoid foods that you’ve found to cause gut discomfort and [eat more fibre](https://www.coachmag.co.uk/healthy-eating/5636/fill-up-on-high-fibre-foods) (veg) and [omega 3 fatty acids](https://www.coachmag.co.uk/supplements/5429/omega-3-fish-oil-supplements-if-you-only-take-one-supplement-take-this-one) and vitamin D3 (oily fish), as well as taking a high-quality probiotic to replenish your gut with good bacteria.”

**17. Be smart with carbs**

“One effective method to get you losing fat is to swap starchy carbohydrates, such as bread, grains, rice and potatoes, for fibrous carb sources like broccoli, cauliflower and dark leafy green vegetables,” says [Anthony Nyman](https://twitter.com/ptantnyman?lang=en), personal trainer at Transform Antics. “This will shift your body from fat-storing mode to fat-burning mode. You’ll also consume more fibre and more vitamins and minerals essential to good health. And don’t skimp on veg portions – load up on it to keep you feeling full.”

**18. Build new habits**

“The crucial factor to success is forming new, healthier habits. When you first learn to drive a car you must focus on changing gear, indicating and braking all at once, which can feel overwhelming – but it soon becomes automatic,” says personal trainer and fitness model [Jamie Alderton](https://twitter.com/GrenadeJay). “Once you start to develop new habits, such as planning your meals, sticking to a structured training programme and getting better-quality sleep, it becomes easier not only to lose body fat but also to keep it off.”

**19. Make your own meals**

“If you don’t prepare your own food then you can only guess at what you’re actually eating in terms of calories, macronutrients (carbs, fats and protein), micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) and fibre,” says personal trainer [Gus Martin](http://www.gusmartinpt.com/). “If you don’t have a clear idea of what you’re eating, you simply can’t stick to the daily limits needed to create a calorie deficit, which is when your body has no choice but to burn fat stores.”

See related

[How To Lose Weight Fast](https://www.coachmag.co.uk/weight-loss/2174/how-to-lose-weight-fast)

[The Best Exercises For Weight Loss](https://www.coachmag.co.uk/weight-loss/7437/the-best-exercises-for-weight-loss)

[Whip Yourself Into Shape With This Weight Loss Workout](https://www.coachmag.co.uk/cardio-workouts/7650/whip-yourself-into-shape-with-this-weight-loss-workout)

**20. Boss the supermarket**

“The most important session of the week for fat loss isn’t in the gym, it’s in the supermarket,” says personal trainer [Steve Kowalenko](https://twitter.com/virtus_strength?lang=en). “The choices you make when you’re food shopping will determine how well you set yourself up for the week ahead so buy, cook and eat real food. Sustainable long-term fat loss is about ingraining good habits and that all starts with what you put in your food basket.”

**21. Avoid post-gym coffee**

“A pre-workout cup of coffee can improve gym performance thanks to the powers of caffeine, but you should avoid it after training because it raises cortisol,” says Ashton Turner, co-founder of [Evolve353 gym](https://www.evolve353.com/). “Exercise increases levels of this stress hormone, which helps you make positive physique changes, but you need it to return to normal levels once you leave the gym. Coffee will keep levels elevated.”

**22. Avoid sugar mixes**

Think ordering the protein-feast half chicken at Nando’s justifies a cheeky Coke on the side? Think again. A 2017 study published in the journal *BMC Nutrition* found that having a sugar-sweetened drink with a [high-protein meal](https://www.coachmag.co.uk/healthy-eating/7062/3-mouth-watering-high-protein-meal-recipes) can decrease metabolic efficiency and prime the body to store fat. Fat oxidation was worse with a higher-protein meal, so a fizzy drink can undo all your good work. Stick to sparkling water.

**23. Keep good food close**

Get your laziness to work in your favour for once. Volunteers at Saint Bonaventure University in the US who were given a choice of apple slices or popcorn ate whatever was closest – even when the popcorn was only a metre or so further away and they claimed to prefer it. There’s an upside to choosing an apple, too: research suggests that they promote the growth of healthy gut bacteria which aids weight control.

**24. Sit down to eat**

Research from Cornell University in the US suggests you’re likely to eat more in social situations – especially at the buffet, or when you’re walking while you eat. If you’re hitting the buffet, use this slim-diner checklist: pick a seat facing away from the food, use chopsticks if there’s an option, and scout out all the food options before you pick up a plate.

**25. Use your illusion**

Everyone loads up on food when the plates are bigger – that’s just basic buffetology – but can you use the effect in reverse to trim your waistline? Yes, according to new research published in the journal *BMC Obesity*. Researchers designed plates designed on the “Ebbinghaus illusion” – the one where the size of surrounding circles makes a central circle look bigger or smaller – and asked volunteers to load up as they saw fit. Results were clear: the group with the optical illusion plates self-selected small portions throughout the test, although they also ate less than the government-recommended amount of veg. The moral? Serve your desserts on the smallest plate possible, and your veg on an oversize platter.

**26. Stay relaxed**

In research from the University of California, test subjects who ate high-sugar, high-fat foods were at more risk of a larger waistline and higher belly fat if they were chronically stressed. For the less stressed, negative effects were less apparent. Use what the US Army calls Tactical Breathing at stressful moments – four seconds in, four seconds holding, four seconds out. It’ll tell your nervous system to chill.