

5 TIPS TO STOP DIETING

If you have set a New Year’s resolution of losing weight, you might be a little lost with how to begin. Here are some helpful tips:

SETTING YOUR WEIGHT LOSS GOALS

Before you get started with your weight loss New Year’s resolution, you need to have some goals in mind. It is important that you try to be realistic with your goals, and instead of just saying you want to lose X amount of pounds, you have some actionable goals as well. For each health or weight loss goal you set for yourself as your resolution, list some actions that you should do in order to achieve those goals.

**Setting Actionable Goals**

An actionable goal is one where you are able to define exactly what needs to be done to achieve it. If you want to fly a plane someday, the actions would be to learn how to fly planes and get your flying license. The same concept works with any type of weight loss goals you have. You need to start by choosing a realistic goal for your New Year’s weight loss, whether that means losing a certain amount of weight in the year, or losing 1-2 pounds a week consistently. You might also decide to choose a goal based on the size of clothing you wear.

Once you have chosen the realistic goal, you will then need to make a list of actionable steps it takes to achieve that larger goal. This might help you choose smaller goals along the way as well. If you want to lose 50 pounds by the end of the year, then you know you need to lose about 4 pounds a month. This is just 1 pound a week, so it falls within the reasonable goal category. Now decide how you can lose a pound a week, from what diet you should follow, to healthy lifestyle changes to make, like following a fitness routine, cutting out sugar, or stopping late-night snacking. This gives you a good place to start with your New Year’s resolution.

FOCUS ON A BALANCE BETWEEN NUTRITION AND FITNESS

Now that you know what your goals are, it is time to delve into those actionable diet and fitness steps. You probably know by now that both diet and exercise are equally important when you are trying to lose weight. If you only change your diet, but continue living a sedentary lifestyle, you might lose a little weight, but it is hard to keep up the same level of weight loss throughout the year. You need a good way to burn off excess calories, which means adding in exercise. Plus, fitness is really important for general health, just like changing your eating habits.

You also don’t want to just workout more, but continue eating whatever you want. There needs to be a balance between the two. You don’t need to exercise 2 hours a day, 7 days a week and follow a 1,000-calorie diet every day either; in fact, these are unhealthy habits to start. Here are some tips for finding a good balance between improving both your nutrition and fitness:

**Start exercising slowly –** To start with your workout routine, start exercising slowly. This is especially important if you are accustomed to a sedentary lifestyle, but want to begin working out more in the new year. You should not just start with marathon training right away or begin running 10 miles from the very first day. Regardless of the type of exercise routine you intend to begin, do it slowly and gradually. Work up to your ultimate fitness goals.

**Choose a fitness routine you will enjoy** – It is also important that you choose an exercise you are going to enjoy doing. It might seem great that you can walk every day, but if you hate walking, you won’t keep up with it. One idea is to switch to a more enjoyable form of walking, such as hiking or walking by the beach. On the other hand, you can choose another exercise entirely, such as yoga, kick boxing, swimming, or playing a sport like tennis. There are lots of ways to get in your daily exercise to help you lose weight.

**Know how many calories exercises will burn** – Speaking of the balance between nutrition and fitness, part of the reason you exercise to lose weight is to burn more calories. This means knowing exactly how many calories to burn, and what exercises burn the most calories. If you are using cardio machines, such as elliptical trainers or treadmills, the machines will let you know how many calories you have burned. For other exercises, you should use a fitness tracker.

**Calculate how many calories you need to eat daily** – Make sure with your nutrition, you know what you are eating and how many calories you are consuming. Even if you aren’t following a low-calorie diet, this is a good way to know where you are at and track how much you eat each day. Eventually, you won’t keep tracking your food, but it is good in the beginning.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT DIET PLAN FOR YOU

By this point, you are probably thinking about the different diets you can follow. Using the word ‘diet’ has negative connotation, making you feel like you are depriving yourself of something, so it is important to first get into the proper mindset. Look at it as a way to change your dietary habits, not necessarily following a restricting diet.

There are a lot of different diets you can follow, depending on your needs and what your food preferences are. If you are a vegetarian currently, you might not like a diet like Paleo where it relies heavily on meat. You can still be a vegetarian Paleo, but it is difficult and not the best option when you are first starting out. Before the New Year arrives, it is good to decide what you will eat or what diet you will follow. Learn a little about each one until one really strikes you as something you can do.

Here are some options:

* Paleo
* Keto
* Whole30 or Whole Foods Diet
* Low-Fat or Low-Calorie
* Vegetarian or Vegan
* Raw Foods

The diets listed here are not necessarily “fad diets”, but ones that do rely heavily on switching to a healthier lifestyle. Make sure you have done your research and look at what you can or can’t eat in each diet so you can decide on the best one. This can really help you to decide which one is going to be the best option for you. Don’t feel like you need to choose something because it is popular or because your friends are doing it. Also don’t feel restricted to follow all the rules of the diet you choose. You can create your own custom diet as long as you are eating healthier, watching your portion sizes, and trying to consume as many vitamins and minerals as possible.

It is also recommended that you talk to your doctor or a nutritionist before making major changes to your diet.

SCHEDULE EXERCISE INTO YUR DAILY ROUTINE

One of the problems with starting a new fitness routine isn’t having the motivation to do it in the beginning of the year, but making it a part of your new lifestyle. A New Year’s resolution shouldn’t just be something you do for the first few weeks of January, but encourage you to make a brand new lifestyle change. It is meant to turn you into a stronger, healthier, and fitter person overall. This means choosing a fitness routine, switching it up as needed, and really making it a part of your regular schedule.

By including it in your schedule just like any other appointment, you are going to keep up with it a lot better and treat it just as important as your weekly nail appointment or going to the dentist. Here are some more tips for keeping up with your fitness routine:

**Turn it Into a Fun Challenge With Friends**

Making new lifestyle changes and doing it all on your own can be a huge bummer. It also keeps you from really answering to someone and motivating yourself to exercise on days when you would really rather skip the gym. A good way to keep up with it on a regular basis is to start a challenge with your friends. Put together a group of friends that will keep each other motivated, where you check in, and maybe even offer a prize to the person who walks the most steps or runs the most miles in a certain period of time. The challenge keeps everyone in the group accountable for the new weight loss goals you have, and you can even get together to workout together if you all live local.

**Think About it More as a Healthy Lifestyle Change**

Sometimes, weight loss and working out is all about your mindset. Don’t just think about it as a short-term goal, but as a brand new lifestyle change. Think about yourself in a year, 10 years, or 20 years, and see how you will still be working out. You may be leaner and fitter, but you will still be dedicated to being healthy and fit. You want this to be something you do for the good of yourself and for your family. Perhaps you have young kids and you want to be a good role model for them. Working out regularly is something they will see you doing, which can help battle childhood obesity.

**Make Sure You Are Doing it For the Right Reasons**

One of the things that often leads to failure is losing weight or working out for the wrong reasons. If you are doing it to impress someone or because your significant other has made comments, you are not doing it for the right reasons. This is not going to be enough to see it through and gives you an unhealthy mindset from the very beginning. However, once you have made the decision for yourself because you want to be healthier, then you will notice it is a lot easier to motivate yourself to exercise every day.

**Have a Good Workout Area**

If you intend to do most of your working out at home, then make sure you have a dedicated area. This keeps you from getting distracted and becomes your quiet space where you focus on your fitness routine. This can be a treadmill in your bedroom, elliptical machine and trampoline in your family room, or an office you are converting to a home gym. Just be consistent and try to exercise in the same place each time.

TOOLS FOR TRACKING YOUOR WEIGHT LOSS

Another thing to get ready before the New Year arrives is to have a tool for tracking your weight loss. You don’t need to spend a lot of money or have a fancy tool either; it can be as simple as using pen and paper. Just decide on the method that will work best for you. Here are some options for tracking your weight loss:

**Get a Digital Scale**

If you are more concerned about pounds on the scale than your measurements, then getting a digital scale is highly recommended. This keeps you from guessing what pound you are at, such as with a regular weight scale. The numbers are right there, and many newer ones also have some advanced features. Make sure you use the scale at the same time of the day each time, with the same clothing. If you choose to weigh yourself Monday mornings at 6:00am with no clothes on, then try to be consistent each time you weigh yourself on the scale.

**Use Pen and Paper**

While many people like to use apps on their phone for tracking weight loss, you can just use a pen and paper. If you are using a journal to log your food and exercise, that same journal can be a wonderful tool for tracking your weight as well. Every time you weigh yourself or take measurements, jot it down in your journal to keep track of your progress.

**Download an App**

Apps are good for convenience and to easily enter your weight or measurements. They are also good because you get graphs of how much you have lost over a certain period of time. Some apps, such as MyFitnessPal, will also provide other resources, such as tracking your fitness, food, and water intake each day.

**Keep a Spreadsheet**

If you like to use your computer for tracking weight loss, consider starting an Excel spreadsheet or use whatever spreadsheet program you prefer. Enter the date and the weight or measurements in whatever increments you prefer, then leave a space for any notes you find relevant.

**Take Your Measurements**

Taking your measurements is another good way to keep track of your weight loss. Before the New Year begins, get a flexible measuring tape like the ones fabric stores and craft supply stores have for sewing. Measure around your upper arms, thighs, waist, hips, breasts, and buttocks for accurate measuring. Write down or record the measurements in whatever tool you have decided to use. This is often good because muscle weighs more than fat, so if you are doing a lot of weight training, you can better see your body changing through measurements.

**Consider Your Clothing Size**

Another way to see how much weight you have been losing is to consider your clothing size. You might notice that even if the scale doesn’t reflect your weight loss, your jeans are suddenly loose, or you can fit into your ‘skinny clothes’. Put on some of your smaller sized clothes throughout the year to track your progress.