

Trying to slim down and feeling frustrated? If you are really trying but the number on the scale just isn't budging, you may be doing more harm than good despite your best intentions. If losing weight was easy, nobody would be overweight. Every person's body is different, and this holds true when it comes to embarking on a weight-loss journey as well. There is no one-size-fits-all routine when it comes to eating to lose weight, but there are some general rules that everyone needs to know before starting their personal weight loss regimen. Here are some dieting do's and don'ts to help save your weight-loss efforts. Starving yourself works initially. However, you are just setting yourself up for failure. When you lose weight by not eating up to 50% of that weight loss comes from muscle tissue, not from fat. Muscles are your body's metabolic furnace. Each pound of muscle on your body burns 50 calories a day at rest. While every pound of muscle that you lose on a starvation diet slows your metabolism down, causing you to burn 50 less calories a day. And that sets you up for pound per pound pure disaster. While you may be proud of the 10 pounds you lost by eating only celery sticks, five of those pounds are likely from muscle loss. And five pounds of muscle that previously burned 50 calories per pound equals a 250-calorie reduction in your metabolism. Now that we've put the calculators away... The bottom line? If you lose weight slowly and healthfully, you'll lose pure fat and keep your metabolism revved up

Let's face it. We're a society that likes to eat -- and too often eat bad things, typically because of our busy lifestyles. In the controversial world of supplements, meal replacements attempt to meet all the requirements. Why have healthy food when you can get everything you need from a package? Most health problems we face today are due to the national habit of eating over-processed, pre-packaged foods. Well prepackaged weight loss products like energy bars and weight loss shakes are convenient, they are probably not helping you to lose weight in the long run. Some of the pitfalls when it comes to meal replacements are, they can be very expensive, they are generally loaded with carbohydrates in the form of simple carbs which have more of a tendency to produce fat cells than the complex carbohydrates found in nature. Furthermore, eating meal replacements can get very monotonous. Most people eventually feel deprived and have other food cravings, and as a result start binge eating. There is however, a place for meal replacements when people are really having

difficulty eating for one reason or another, but for healthy, free-living people of any age, they should be eating whole food, and they should be taking the time and the effort to do so. There are lots of healthier, more filling options with the same or fewer calories than the average meal replacement option. Keeping healthy food nearby can help prevent you from eating something unhealthy if you become excessively hungry. Snacks that are easily portable and simple to prepare include whole fruits, nuts, baby carrots, yogurt and hard-boiled eggs. If you want to be a leaner, healthier person, then one of the best things you can do for yourself is to eat whole, single-ingredient foods. These foods are naturally filling, and it's very difficult to gain weight if the majority of your diet is based on them. You can't put everything present in whole foods into a pretty package. If you could, scientists would have already done so. You won't find enzymes or nutrients such as antioxidants, healthy bacteria, pre and probiotics, and literally, the roughage required in your diet to stimulate the gastrointestinal lining. You need those things to stay healthy, weight loss aside.

You might think that the more hours you're awake, the more calories you're burning, so you should be losing more weight. But you'd be wrong. While you weren't sleeping, your body cooked up a perfect recipe for weight gain. When you're short on sleep, it's easy to lean on a large latte to get moving. Regularly scrimping on sleep may also put you at higher risk for developing mood disorders like depression and diseases such as heart disease and diabetes. Sleep is like nutrition for the brain. Most people need between 7 and 9 hours each night. Get less than that, and your body will react in ways that lead even the most determined dieter straight to the Dairy Queen. Hunger is controlled by hormones that respond to sleep cues, leptin and ghrelin. Leptin is a hormone that is produced in your fat cells, and the less leptin you produce, the more your stomach feels empty. Ghrelin, on the other hand, stimulates hunger while also reducing metabolic rate and increasing fat storage. Research in the Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism has shown that sleeping fewer than six hours reduces leptin and stimulates ghrelin: causing you to feel hungrier and less satisfied. Then there's the hormone cortisol. When you don't sleep enough, your cortisol levels rise. Not only does cortisol regulate the food reward centers in your brain that make you want to eat more food, cortisol can also inhibit the breakdown of

fat for energy and increase breakdown of muscle. I know I know... It can be difficult to get enough sleep every night. Between work, schedules, family, responsibilities, planning, cooking healthy meals and exercise. But if you really want to be healthy and lose weight, make your nightly shuteye a priority.

To eat or not to eat? How snacking affects appetite and food intake isn't universally agreed upon. One area of debate is when to consume calories throughout the day. Is eating three times a day best to achieve weight loss? Or is it better to eat more — or less — frequently? These are tough questions. Some diets suggest eating every two to three hours. Others suggest limiting it to three times per day or even only twice a day. Nevertheless, regardless of *when* you eat, *what* you eat is hugely important. If you're grazing on refined or sugary foods, you miss out the balance of fiber, fat, and protein your body needs. While if your consuming 3 meals per day that consist largely of saturated fat, refined carbs and sugar? Well your still in the same boat. Mixed results suggest that weight responses to eating probably vary by individual and time of day. We require more long-term studies to determine the optimal number of times a day to eat. In short, eating fewer calories helps you lose weight.

We obviously need water to survive, but drinking the recommended amount, which many fail to do each day, is imperative if you want to lose weight. And, if you really want the water you drink to help you lose weight, you should follow the "8x8" rule recommended by most nutritionists: Drink eight eight-ounce glasses of water per day for weight loss and to maintain an ideal weight. You might need to drink more water if you exercise a lot or sweat heavily, or less water if you drink other beverages like herbal tea (make sure they are decaffeinated). Substituting water for sugary drinks like pop and juice can make a major dent in your daily calorie count. Experts say that hunger is sometimes misinterpreted as cravings for food. It could be a sign of dehydration. So instead of consuming food, drink water when a craving first hits. This will make sure you're not confusing hunger for thirst and will also help you cut down on the amount of food you eat, helping you with your weight loss. If you don't like water, try adding lemon or lime to an ice-cold glass of water. Here is an easy recipe to make water more appealing without adding unwanted chemicals, sodium, sugar or calories. Bottoms up!

### Ingredients:

6 cups chilled spring water  
12 thin slices of cucumber  
4 thin lemon slices  
4 sprigs of fresh mint (slightly crushed)  
2 sprigs fresh rosemary

Directions: Combine ingredients in a pitcher, cover, and chill for 2 to 8 hours. Add ice cubes just before serving.

Do incorporate exercise and fitness into your lifestyle, but remember the goal is to use exercise to be healthy and lose weight, not as an excuse to eat more. You should dedicate at least 30 minutes a day four times per week to fitness. Start with something simple like walking. You can easily add more steps in your day. You can add biking, swimming, dancing, and strength-resistance exercises too. Strive for both aerobic and strength training workouts -- but always get a doctor's approval before you begin any exercise program.

In a world full of temptation, it can be tough to maintain a healthy weight much less lose some. Following these do's and don'ts should go a long way to assist you on a path toward healthy weight loss. One of the biggest problems with diets is that they rarely work in the long term. If anything, people who diet tend to gain more weight over time, and studies show that dieting is a consistent predictor of future weight gain. Instead of going on a diet, aim to become a healthier, happier and fitter person. Focus on nourishing your body instead of depriving it. Weight loss should then follow naturally. Healthy, happy people work at being that way. There are no quick fixes. Change your habits and change your life.

October 2019