

10 Steps to a Healthier Life

If you want to lose weight and keep it off, follow these 10 steps to a healthier life.

- **1. Make a commitment to lose weight.** A commitment is more than a goal. It is a framework for your progression in life, a long-term vision that goes beyond just reaching your targeted ideal weight. And when you combine rock-steady commitment with positive emotion that propels you to the next level, suddenly succeeding on a daily, weekly or monthly basis becomes much easier.
- **2. Set reachable goals.** When you embark on a lifestyle change to lose weight, it's crucial to establish goals. However, they must be realistic if you hope to reach them. An unrealistic goal for weight or clothing size sets you up for discouragement, and people who become discouraged will usually stop the program altogether and eventually gain back all their weight.
- **3. Keep a food journal.** Keeping a food journal while losing weight is a tremendous motivator for most individuals because it creates accountability. I am not recommending that you track your calories every day during the program. That, like many dieting techniques, can become such a burden that it is more harmful than helpful. To get an idea of how many calories you are ingesting daily, however, you need to start this program by recording everything you eat and the associated calorie intake for three weekdays and one weekend day.

You may discover your meal portions are too big. Or you may find out your calorie count for a particular meal is much higher than you thought. It will be easy to determine such problems if you simply take the time to record what you eat and the number of calories consumed in a food journal.

- **4. Measure yourself.** You do not need a scale or any other fancy tools to evaluate your progress—just a simple tape measure. By focusing on your waist measurement and achieving your goal measurement, you will eliminate one of the main risk factors for disease, toxic fat in your abdominal area. You can track other measurements, such as body weight and body fat percentage, along with your waist measurement *once a month*—not once a week. Log these in your food journal so you will have a clearly established goal.
- **5. Eat the right foods in the right combination.** Your body needs three food components daily: carbohydrates, proteins and fats. All the calories you consume can be attributed to one of these groups. Healthy, low-glycemic carbohydrates should comprise about 40 percent of your total calorie intake per day, good proteins 30 percent, and healthy fats another 30 percent. Each meal should contain all three components. Avoid all white flour and white sugar as well as beverages and food products that contain artificial sweeteners. (For more details about exactly what foods to eat and beverages to drink, see *Dr. Colbert's "I Can Do This"* book.)
- **6. Eat at the right times.** One of the most important principles of the "I can do this" diet is to eat three meals a day, with no carbohydrates after 6 p.m. The reason is that these three meals provide the fuel your body needs at the times it needs the fuel most. The most important of these three fueling times is breakfast—a meal many people often skip.
- **7. Eat healthy snacks.** The correct fuel mixture at meals should control your hunger for three to four hours. Yet most people go longer than that between meals, allowing their blood sugar to drop and causing a noticeable decrease in energy and mental clarity. The right mid-morning and mid-afternoon snacks will enable you to

remain hunger-free and productive for several hours, and a snack an hour before bed will help ensure restful sleep.

- **8. Control your portion size.** Most Americans eat *more* of what they eat than is healthy for them. We have become accustomed to ignoring serving sizes on food labels and eating the amount we've trained our stomachs and brains to demand. It's time to exercise some portion control!
- **9. Engage in physical activity.** Exercise is essential. This truth applies universally to every human being, but especially to anyone hoping to lose pounds. You can restrict your diet and eat less than your daily requirement, yet without burning off calories through physical activity, you have only half the equation.
- **10. Take safe weight-loss supplements.** A weight-loss supplement is a nutritional product or herb intended to *assist* your healthy eating and activity plan with the ultimate goal of losing weight. A supplement comes alongside; it does not replace.

Following the lifestyle principles described here will provide many benefits beyond weight loss. It will help you improve your overall health, manage stress and prevent stress-related eating. In fact, it is the best program you can be on during not only the good times but also the most chaotic times of your life.

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