

Healthy Ways to Burn Fat

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Whether you're embarking on a weight loss diet to improve your [health](#), to play [sports](#) well or just to feel better, you're probably looking for the most efficient way to achieve your goals.

When experts discuss losing weight, what they're really referring to is losing fat. There are a number of [healthy ways](#) to go about losing fat. The most popular include diet, [exercise](#) and some combination of the two. There are also some less tried and true methods that you can explore.

Losing Weight Through Changes in Your Diet

When it comes to losing fat, nothing is more accurate than the old adage, "calories in, calories out." In theory, the fewer the calories you take in, the less fat you will store and the less weight you'll have to lose. Sometimes it's that easy and sometimes it isn't.

In order to lose one pound of body fat, you'll either have to consume 3500 calories less or expend that many through exercise. The best way is by doing both. If you divide an average week into seven days, you'll need to consume 500 fewer calories than you do now to lose one pound of fat per week. There are lots of easy ways to conserve on 500 calories. Start with swapping out full-sugar soft drinks with their diet equivalents. For instance, an 8 ounce can of root beer contains over 100 calories. If you change to the diet version, you'll have already accomplished one-fifth of your daily goal.

Ironically, you won't save any calories by switching from butter to margarine. One tablespoon of regular, salted butter and unsalted margarine both contain 100 calories, so it pays to learn how to read food packaging labels. If the foods you like do not have packaging, try looking at the CalorieKing food database by clicking on the link in the Resources section at the bottom of this article.

Exercising to Lose Weight

Another relatively easy way to lose weight is by exercising. Using the same model as above, instead of restricting 500 calories from your diet, you could expend 500 calories by exercising.

Different activities performed by different people of different body weights will have different results. For instance, a 220 pound man walking for 30 minutes at 3 mph will expend 176 calories. A 110 lb. woman, walking at the same speed for the same 30 minutes will only expend 88 calories. One way to increase the caloric expenditure is by increasing the speed. The same 110 lb. woman could increase her caloric expenditure to 110 calories by bumping up her walking speed from 3 to 4 mph, or a 15 minute/mile.

Another added bonus of using exercise for weight loss is the residual effect exercise has on the body. If you walk for 45 minutes in the morning, your body will remain at a higher idling speed throughout the day. As a result, you'll burn more calories while sitting at your desk after exercising than you would if you skipped your workout.

Using Diet and Exercise Together

Diet and exercise on their own are great ways to lose weight. But a 2007 study published in the Journal of Family Medicine reported that the most effective way to lose body fat permanently is by combining caloric restriction with daily exercise. As you begin to lose weight by eliminating unnecessary calories from your diet, you'll lose body fat.

Exercising will increase your caloric expenditure but as we've seen in the discussion above, you'll need to increase the intensity and duration of your activity as you start weighing less. This will build more metabolically active muscle and sustain a higher metabolism throughout the day.

Other Ways to Burn Fat

After you've been exercising for several months another proven way to increase your metabolism is to add light weight training to your exercise program two to three times a week. Replacing placid fat with metabolically active muscle will increase your total caloric expenditure over the course of the day.

Other less tested approaches to losing body fat include drinking caffeinated beverages, eating smaller, more frequent meals and not skipping breakfast. Caffeinated beverages are natural stimulants. A study in the 2004 Nutrition Research Newsletter reported that drinking caffeine can increase the body's metabolism and help with increase weight loss.

Eating smaller meals keeps the digestive system turned on throughout the day. It takes energy and consumes calories to digest even small meals. So, keeping the digestive system busy throughout the day instead of once or twice is a good way to burn extra energy that translate to caloric expenditure.

There have been many studies looking at the role of breakfast in weight reduction programs. According to one study, there was a direct relationship between skipping breakfast and increased body weight. Other studies have shown that people who skip breakfast are more likely to snack and eat more calories a day than those who don't.

Resources

- [Calorie King Food Database](#)
- [Caloric Expenditure Chart](#)