

# Three Top Tips for Weight Loss

By Allen Smith, eHow User



According to a 2007 study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, over 34 percent of American adults over the age of 20 are overweight or obese. Since 1991, the incidence of obesity in adults has skyrocketed by over 75 percent. However, losing weight has become easier than ever before because of advances in medical treatment and technology. There are three essential tips to losing weight and keeping it off--make small but effective changes in your diet, get active and use moral support.

## Make Small but Effective Changes in Your Diet

A brief search on [the Internet](#) or a walk down the aisle of your local bookstore will produce an overwhelming number of approaches to dieting. Most of them are very difficult to follow and will have you back on the path to extra pounds in no time. Instead, start with your current eating patterns and make the easy changes first. After being successful with the easy changes, work your way up to the more difficult ones.

The easiest way to see pounds come off is by making simple substitutions in the [foods](#) you enjoy. If you drink sodas without artificial sweeteners, investigate the new ones. Many of the diet colas and other beverages you've experienced in the past have been dramatically improved. Try swapping mayonnaise on sandwiches with low-calorie mustard and other tasty condiments. Replace high-fat french fries with naked baked potatoes with margarine. When you eat meals out at a restaurant, always ask for margarine or low-fat sour cream on the side. That way you can use as little or as much as you like. If you can reduce your caloric intake by 500 calories a day, seven days a week, you should lose one pound a week or four pounds a month--a realistic and obtainable goal that can result in permanent weight loss.

## Get Active

Most dietitians and [exercise](#) specialists agree on at least one thing: the best way to lose weight is by making changes to your diet AND exercising. Like your eating patterns, begin exercising in small steps--activities you enjoy that you can easily fit into your lifestyle without turning your life upside down.

When you park at the mall, instead of parking close to the stores, use the parking spaces that are further out on the perimeter. Use the stairs instead of the escalators. Make it a point to get at least 20 to 30 minutes of exercise a day--even if you have to break it up into two or three shorter segments. Adding exercise to your lifestyle has short-term and long-term benefits. You'll immediately burn calories while you exercise. If you exercise early in the day, your body will continue to run on a faster idling speed, meaning that you'll continue to burn more calories throughout the day even after your walk has ended. Click on the link at the bottom of the page for a brief list of aerobic activities.

## Use Moral Support

One of the tips for success that smoking cessation programs use is to tell all of your friends and family that you're about to quit smoking. It not only keeps you honest but is also a great resource of moral support during times of weakness. If you've decided that it's time to begin losing weight, use your family and friends for support. Sign a written contract with your family that you will lose X number of pounds in X number of weeks--you fill in the blanks. Because they live and work with you, they'll be available when you start thinking about

skipping that walk, or having ice cream for dessert instead of non-fat yogurt. Friends and family are also great for keeping you on your fitness program. See if you can find others in your neighborhood who would like to begin a daily walk with you. If someone from the group decides not to show, give them a call and put them on the spot. Being expected as part of a group will give you a sense of commitment and get you out of bed in the morning.

Your family can also come up with a variety of non-food rewards for hitting your milestones. For instance, every time you reach a five-pound goal, you get to choose which movie the family wants. Be creative and come up with small goals to strive for. It will make your journey more fun and rewarding!

## Resources

- [National Heart Lung and Blood Institute: BMI Table](#)
- [American Heart Association: List of Aerobic Exercise Activities](#)