



How to Lose 5 Pounds

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How many times have you heard someone say that they want to lose five pounds? And how many times have you heard that the diet starts *tomorrow*?

Tomorrow? Why not *right now*?

The truth is, losing a mere five pounds is *very* realistic and it can be a great kick-start to your metabolism and energy levels. Plus, it can help you fit into that little black dress or suit for that upcoming wedding, reunion, or vacation. **But you have to make the commitment to start *now*, not tomorrow, not Monday, but *right now*!**

Below is a healthy plan to help you shed 5 pounds quickly, easily and most importantly, the healthy way. As with all diets, check with your doctor before starting any weight loss or exercise plan.

- 1. Begin by drinking more water.** Your body requires water to function properly and with the right amount of water, your digestive system will work more efficiently. Plus, by filling your stomach with water, you'll eat less and feel full faster.
 - Water helps flush your body of toxins and water weight. ***Yes, more water actually helps your body get rid of excess water.***
 - The daily minimum intake of water is 64 ounces (or almost 2 liters). If you're like most people, your current intake of water is probably less than half of the recommended amount, so drink up!

2. Get off the couch and get active. When you move your body you build muscle, which burns fat. There are so many activities that you can engage in that don't cost money or require expensive gym equipment to help you get fit and lose weight. *Here are some ideas:*

- Walking around your neighborhood or in a local park
- Biking
- Hiking
- Swimming
- Throwing a ball with your kids or spouse
- Frisbee
- Volleyball
- Tennis
- Inline skating (with the proper safety equipment of course)

3. Make healthier food choices. To effectively boost your calorie and fat burning processes, eat healthier foods like leafy green vegetables, fruits and lean meats.

- You'll also want to limit your intake of red meat, high calorie and fat dressings, gravies and sauces and avoid sugary drinks, candy or other foods with lots of sugar.
- Sugar causes you to *put on* weight, so when you eliminate sugar, you help eliminate weight gain. Also, try to choose natural or organic foods in order to avoid consuming chemicals that may actually cause you to retain weight.

4. Use portion control to limit the amount of food you consume. Studies show that reducing the amount of food you eat actually produces the quickest weight loss. Obviously you want to do this in a healthy manner, not obsessively or out of control.

- ***Eating 6 small meals a day***, as opposed to the three larger meals you're probably accustomed to, has been shown to be healthier, help reduce fat stores and to increase metabolism.
- ***If you're wondering what a healthy portion looks like, it's all in the hands.*** In other words, a healthy portion or serving size is about the size of your fist, palm, or hand, depending on what food you're eating.
- ***Close your fist.*** That's a healthy portion size for a serving of rice, pasta or other side dish.

- ***Open your hand and look at the size of your palm.*** This is the perfect amount of chicken breast, pork or other types of meat. It should be about the size and thickness of a deck of cards.
- ***The size of your entire open hand*** is the perfect size for veggies.

5. Replace unhealthy snacks with nuts, raw veggies or fruit. Here are a few examples to help you choose healthier snack options:

- When you're craving chips or other salty, crunchy snacks, grab a handful of nuts instead. They are healthier for you and satisfy the craving for salt or crunchiness. Also, try to buy nuts with less salt. Natural or raw varieties will help to reduce your salt intake too.
- When you want something sweet, grab a piece of fruit like an apple, banana, orange, or melon. The natural sugar is way better for you than eating a bowl of ice cream or a handful (or two) of cookies.
- Have the munchies in general? Nibble on some raw carrots, celery or broccoli.

Losing 5 pounds can be fun and make you feel so much better about yourself. Probably the best part is that it can be done quickly, in as little time as a week or two, depending on your specific circumstances.

Whether it's to kick-start your weight loss plan or to fit into that little black party dress, ***taking off 5 pounds is a step in the right direction to a healthier, more fit you.*** It begins *now!*