

Habits of successful weight-loss patients



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WEIGHT LOSS, WELLNESS & AESTHETIC CENTERS



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If you're committing to losing weight, you've already taken a huge step towards improving your health and wellness. By acknowledging that it's time to make some changes and adopt healthier habits, you've already passed a huge hurdle.

Much of your success will depend on adopting sustainable healthy habits. This guide was designed to help teach you some of the most successful habits of weight-loss patients, so that no matter where you are in your journey, you can be prepared to make lasting changes that will help you lose the weight and keep it off for good!



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Your diet

It's no secret that you'll need to make changes to your diet if you want to lose weight. Most likely, you'll be eating less food. And while many people elect to continue eating many of the same foods, those who are most successful are the ones who are able to make the switch to a healthier diet.

Don't worry if you feel like you can never eat your favorite foods again. Eating a healthy diet should never feel like deprivation. There are countless delicious foods that you can eat! Give it some time, and you'll likely find new favorite foods that are much healthier. And while you can occasionally allow yourself a special treat, most people find that their old favorites don't continue to hold the same appeal for them once they're living a healthier life.

You may need to change the way you approach shopping for food. Get into the habit of [shopping in the outer sections of the supermarket](#) – where you can find fresh produce, dairy products, and lean meats. Skip the center aisles, which are full of processed foods that are often high in sugar and sodium.

Make these foods your dietary staples

Water

Stay hydrated by drinking lots of water throughout the day. Thirst is often mistaken for hunger. Staying well hydrated will help you feel more energized and will help all of your body's systems function properly, which in turn helps you shed weight. People who are attempting to lose a significant amount of weight often hit a plateau, which they sometimes find is remedied if they increase their water intake. If you find it difficult to drink a lot of water, flavor your water with lemon wedges or slices of cucumber.

Protein

Every meal should contain a healthy source of protein. Consuming protein can help you maintain your muscle mass while losing fat. Protein also helps you feel full for longer periods after your meals, preventing you from snacking between meals. If you feel hungry between meals, snack on high-protein foods, such as slices of lean deli meat, string cheese, or nuts.



Healthy fats

It's a hard concept to grasp, but **healthy fats won't make you gain weight**. Like protein, they'll keep you feeling full, and they're needed for essential functions throughout the body. So don't be afraid to reach for the olive oil or the guacamole! Other sources of healthy fats include nuts, fish, flax seeds, and coconut.

Fruits and vegetables


Make sure your body is getting adequate nutrition by incorporating plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables into your diet. You may have to experiment to find new ways of preparing and eating vegetables to find something you like, so don't be afraid to try some new recipes. If the thought of eating vegetables isn't at all appealing, try to give them a chance. Many people find that after their taste buds adapt, they love foods that they previously hated – such as broccoli, cauliflower, and Brussels sprouts.



Foods to avoid or cut back on

Simple carbohydrates

Simple carbohydrates are highly processed foods that your body converts into sugar, which contributes to weight gain. Simple carbs include refined foods such as white bread, pasta, sugar, and white rice.




Switch to more wholesome alternatives, such as brown rice and whole grains, which contain fiber and nutrients that aren't found in simple carbohydrates. In addition, avoiding refined foods can lower your blood glucose levels, which can help control hunger pangs and cravings.

Added sugars

Get into the habit of reading food labels. Many foods have added sugar, which can go by many names, including dextrose, maltose, sucrose, fructose, high-fructose corn syrup, corn syrup solids, cane juice, cane syrup, fruit juice concentrate, and molasses. Sugar is the ultimate empty calorie. It provides no nutrients, makes your blood sugar climb, and suppresses your immune system. Whenever possible, skip the sugar and any foods that list sugar among the first three ingredients. Yogurt is a notorious example – one container of yogurt can have as much added sugar as a can of soda. Whenever possible, pick foods that don't contain a lot of added ingredients.

Liquid calories

Also watch the sugar content in any bottled drinks. Even “healthy” drinks like sports drinks and fruit juices can be loaded with added sugar.



Drink mostly water to stay hydrated. Watch out for coffee drinks, also – some can contain as many calories as a small meal. Opt for regular coffee with cream instead and skip all the sugary syrups and whipped cream.



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Tips for dining out while losing weight

Restaurant eating can still be enjoyable when you're watching what you eat, if you follow a few guidelines. Many restaurants offer smaller portions or low-calorie options on their menus. The following tips will help you continue to make dining out a fun activity instead of a stressful experience.

- **Share an entree with friends.** Many restaurant portions are too big for one person to eat. If you're dining out with friends, order one or two entrees for everyone to share.
- **Order a half-portion or lunch-sized portion of your meal.** Most restaurants are happy to accommodate any request for smaller portions, and often list them on their menus. You may even be able to order off the children's menu. If the restaurant doesn't offer smaller portions, request a to-go box upfront. Place half of your meal immediately in the box to take home and save for later.

- **Look for lean-protein meals.** Switch out heavier red meats or meals with high amounts of carbs and breading for fish, turkey, and chicken meal options, which are healthier.
- **Try something from the appetizer menu.** Opt for healthier appetizers such as grilled shrimp, hummus, stuffed mushrooms, lettuce wraps, or salad instead of fried mozzarella sticks and nachos.
- **Boycott fried foods.** Always order grilled, baked, roasted, or steamed foods, and ask if any meals are fried so you can avoid them.
- **Skip the sauces.** Sauces and dressings are often loaded with sugar. Request that all salad dressings, gravies, and sauces be served on the side so you can control how much you consume.
- **Order from the “light” or “low-carb” menu.** Healthier menus are popping up everywhere in restaurants with meals prepared for those who wish to be health-conscious while dining out.
- **Eat your veggies.** Substitute all high-carb side items such as potatoes and rolls for vegetables.
- **Go without the bread.** Ask your server to take away the bread basket and hold any bread or rolls that come with your meal.



10 simple ways to eat less and control portion sizes

Limiting portion sizes is one of the most important parts of managing your diet and losing weight. As the decades pass, portion sizes continue to grow larger and larger, especially at restaurants. In most cases, you can eat half, or one-third of a meal and still get an adequate amount of food based on recommended serving sizes.

Adopt the following habits to help you control your portion sizes and become more mindful of how much you're eating.

1. Start measuring accurately

Use kitchen gadgets and accessories such as measuring cups, measuring spoons, and scales to measure portions and serving sizes.





2. Become better at estimating serving sizes

Try to [visualize certain objects](#) that can help you estimate and measure serving sizes. For example, 1 cup of food equates roughly to the size of a tennis ball. A single portion of chicken or meat is three ounces, which is about the size of a deck of cards.

3. Use smaller plates and bowls

Because we tend to want to fill up our plates, use smaller dishes that hold just the right serving size. Using larger dishes and plates could cause you to eat larger portions without realizing it.

4. Dish out servings in the kitchen instead of at the table

Placing meals and side dishes on the dining room table could encourage you to eat second helpings and extra portions. Keep all food in the kitchen and serve yourself just the right amount of food so you aren't tempted to go back for more.



5. Eat slowly

You've likely heard that it takes 15 minutes for your stomach to tell your brain that you're full. Eat slowly and chew your food thoroughly. Set your fork down every few minutes and resume eating only if you still feel full.

6. Portion out meals and snacks in advance

Some dieters and weight-conscious individuals find it beneficial to prep their meals in advance and place the correct amount of servings in sandwich bags and food storage containers. Then when it's time to eat, the correct amount is already portioned out for you.

7. Add milk or cream before coffee

It can be hard to keep track of how much sugar, cream, and milk you pour into coffee or tea when you add them to drink. Measure out your cream and sugar before you add your coffee to your mug.

8. Measure cooking oils carefully

Although some oils are healthier than others, eating more than you need can tack on extra calories. Use only the amount of cooking oil necessary.



9. Include vegetables in every meal

Most vegetables are rich in fiber, which can create a lasting feeling of fullness. Vegetables are also packed with vitamins, minerals and antioxidants that your body needs to function properly and stay healthy. Instead of thinking of vegetables as a side dish, treat them as the main course, and include a few different kinds with every meal.

10. Stop eating when you feel 80 percent full

Eating until you are completely full isn't necessary, and can make you feel miserable. Learn to recognize when you are about 80 percent full, and stop eating. You can always grab a quick healthy snack later on if you are still hungry.

5 diet habits to stop immediately

If you've attempted to lose weight in the past through diet and exercise, you've most likely attempted some diet tricks that didn't work. Many popular diet fads can even be harmful. Be wary of weight-loss products that promise quick results with little effort.

If you've tried any of these diet habits, stop practicing them immediately and get back on track to healthy weight loss.

1. Cutting out entire food groups

Cutting out entire food groups, especially complex carbohydrates, can result in major nutritional deficiency. Don't forgo entire food groups — instead, lean toward eating the healthier items in those food groups. For example, choose healthy carbohydrates such as cooked vegetables, and cut out simple carbs such as white bread.





2. Skipping breakfast

Skipping breakfast will result in a loss of energy, and may cause you to overeat later in the day. Skipping breakfast can actually slow down your metabolism in order to hang on to calories. To keep your metabolism functioning at an optimal level, eat smaller meals throughout the day.

3. Drinking diet soda

Some people believe that diet soda is healthier than regular soda, but artificial sweeteners have actually been linked to excess weight gain and other health concerns. Ease yourself off soda of all kinds and drink more water.

4. Eating “low-fat” and “fat-free” foods

Many food products labeled “low fat” and “fat free” often [replace fats with sugar](#) and other additives that are high in calories. In most cases, the regular versions of food products are healthier than their low-fat and fat-free counterparts.

5. Thinking about your healthy diet as a “diet”

Healthy eating should be viewed as a lifestyle change and way of life versus just a “diet,” which is typically viewed as a temporary situation. Instead of thinking of yourself as being on a diet, focus on how much better you feel eating healthy food, and think of all the goals you can accomplish as you lose the weight – whether it’s fitting into your skinny jeans or having more energy to play with the kids. Thinking about being on a diet can be disheartening to most people who are trying to lose weight.



Exercise for weight loss

Exercise is an important part of your journey to successful weight loss. From the moment you decide to lose weight, start adding more activity into your daily routine. This doesn't mean you have to go out and join a gym or purchase an expensive set of workout DVDs - it simply means start finding ways to be more active. As you begin to lose weight and your stamina improves, you will be able to increase your activity level.

Tips for increasing physical activity

Seemingly simple activities that get you moving can pay off in a big way. Walk to the store if possible, or park your car further away. Work in your garden, mow the lawn, or rake leaves.





A simple walking routine is one of the best things you can do for your weight and overall health. Walk the dog or take a short walk after dinner. At work, take the stairs instead of the elevator, and walk down the hall to talk to someone instead of sending an e-mail. During your lunch break, walk around the building or take a walk outside if the weather is nice.

Aim for more intense activity three days a week to start, and work your way up to exercising five days a week if possible. Try different activities in order to switch up your routine – your body gets used to workouts if you do them repeatedly, and you won't see the same results after a while. Changing your routine will confuse your body so that it starts responding differently, and will also help keep you from getting bored with your workout. If your exercise routine usually consists of walking or using the elliptical, try swimming or cycling instead.

Pay attention to non-scale victories

Try not to focus too much on the numbers on the scale. You may go through periods where your weight is stable, but that doesn't mean your body isn't changing. Try focusing on your body composition instead of on your weight. Pay attention to how you feel and how your clothes fit. Taking regular pictures of yourself can also help you see changes that might otherwise go unnoticed.

Small changes that are unrelated to weight, otherwise known as non-scale victories, can happen when you least expect them, and they can keep you motivated to continue with your healthier new lifestyle. In many cases, non-scale victories can be even more meaningful and encouraging than losing weight. Watch for these types of milestones, or make a list of your own non-scale goals, and allow yourself to celebrate these little victories, no matter how small they seem.





- Being able to wear your wedding rings or other treasured pieces of jewelry that were previously too tight
- Shopping in any store you want, not just stores that offer “plus sized” clothing
- Fitting into your favorite old jeans
- Having normal blood pressure or blood sugar levels
- Climbing stairs without getting winded
- Getting double-takes from people you have worked with for years because they no longer recognize you
- Realizing that you aren’t automatically reaching for food to deal with stress or a difficult situation
- Signing up for your first 5k

As you continue losing weight and reaching your goals, don’t forget to set new milestones so that you always have something to look forward to. You may even want to keep track of your victories in a designated notebook to provide positivity and encouragement whenever you are feeling frustrated or discouraged in your weight-loss journey.

Tend to your emotional health

As you work to improve your physical health, it's important to tend to your emotional health as well. Many of us are accustomed to using food as a way to deal with stress or other unpleasant circumstances. Work on finding a new way to cope, whether it's exercise, engaging in a creative project, relaxing with a book, or whatever works for you other than eating. Learning how to distinguish genuine hunger from an emotional desire for food will be crucial to your long-term success.

Emotional eating is often a lifelong practice that takes time to correct. But by being mindful of your habits and proactive about your behavior, you can learn to change your attitude towards food. Practice the following habits to take control of any emotional eating patterns that may be holding you back.

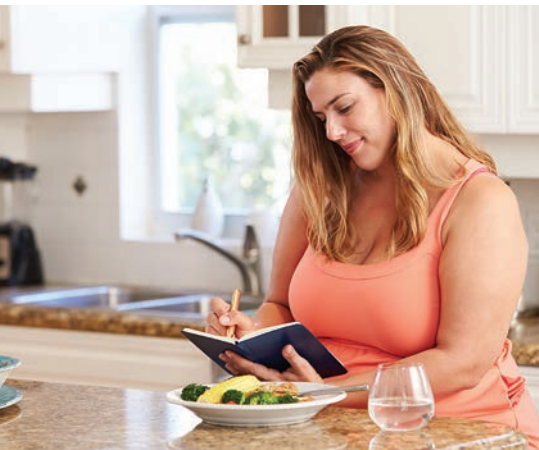




1. **Set small goals that help you feel in control.** Emotional eating is often a reactive behavior when we feel like things are beyond our control. Though it may be difficult, take a few minutes in the morning to plan your day or your week. Set goals — even if they are small at first — and allow yourself to take pride in their accomplishment. Take a class that does not involve food or pursue a new interest you have always wanted to explore.
2. **Get enough sleep.** Being sleep deprived can lead to overeating or making poor food choices. It can also disrupt your hormones and make it difficult for you to lose weight.
3. **Take time for yourself.** If you are constantly busy taking care of your family, work, or other demands, you may start to feel overwhelmed. Engage in a stress-relieving activity such as yoga, meditation, or a relaxing bath. Set aside time to pursue a hobby. If you feel like your emotional needs are being met, you may be less likely to seek comfort in food.



4. **Learn to recognize hunger.** When you are tempted to eat, drink a glass of water and wait ten minutes. Notice how your stomach feels. Are you really hungry, or are you bored or stressed? Often, the desire to eat will pass when you occupy yourself with another activity.
5. **Keep a journal.** Are there any issues in your life you are avoiding or trying to cover up with food? [Try working your emotions out on the page](#) rather than with food.
6. **Seek out psychological care.** Ongoing counseling can help with behavior modification and goal setting if you are prone to emotional eating or other destructive habits.



7. **Keep a success journal.** Write down any positive changes in your life after your surgery, no matter how small. As your health improves, you may find that you sleep better, think more clearly, have more energy, or have a better memory. Keep track of these successes so you have constant reminders that you are moving towards a healthier future.

8. **Don't expect your previous issues with food to go away overnight.** Remember you are on a journey and it will get easier to make healthy choices as time goes on.
9. **Don't beat yourself up if you slip up.** Everyone has days where they indulge in healthy foods, eat too much, or blow off their exercise routine – none of this means you have failed. Expecting yourself to be perfect in regards to your diet will only be a source of undue stress. Treat every day as an opportunity to make healthier choices.

Continued success with weight loss involves an ongoing journey to help you learn how to develop healthy habits and allow your body to adjust to the changes. Garcia Weight Loss offers personalized weight-loss programs along with the support of caring, professional staff who are here to help you reach your full potential. Contact us today to learn how we can make your weight-loss journey a successful and empowering experience.



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