

20 DIET & WEIGHT LOSS MISTAKES TO AVOID

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Contents

Introduction.....	3
Making the Most of This Book.....	3
1) Being Too Rigid with Your Food Rules.....	4
2) Not Cutting Out the Sugar	5
3) Not Planning for Snacks (Prevent Hunger)	6
4) Not Planning Your Meals	7
5) Keeping Tempting Items in Your Home.....	8
6) Not Cutting Yourself Some Slack (A Cheat Day)	9
7) Focusing Too Much on The Calories.....	10
8) Expecting Instant Results	11
9) Not Exercising	12
10) Giving Exercise Too Much Credit	13
11) Not Getting Enough Fruits and Veggies.....	14
12) Not Having a Reason (Motivation Matters)	15
13) Drinking Your Calories	16
14) Not Staying Hydrated	17
15) Not Tracking Your Intake	18
16) Eating When You're Hungry.....	19
17) Skipping Meals	20
18) Not Getting Enough Sleep	21
19) Setting Weight Loss Goals That Are Unrealistic.	22
20) Letting Your Food Get Boring.....	23
Conclusion.....	24

Introduction

Dieting is difficult. You want to lose weight, get healthy, and maintain your goal weight, yet everywhere you turn there are different diets telling you different “secrets” to lose weight. This abundance of misinformation is enough to make your head spin.

It also leads to a lot of dieting mistakes. The truth is that dieting and losing weight isn't so much about following a specific and secret process. Rather it's about making positive changes to how you think about, prepare, and consume your food.

As you'll see in this report, the best way to lose weight is to take a close look at what you're eating now, how you're eating it, and what you're really doing every day. Then, you can make adjustments and take manageable steps to start losing weight. In fact, after you read this report and begin to implement some of the advice, you will be able to start losing weight right away.

Making the Most of This Book

Read the book through first. Then go back and begin to integrate some of the tips and advice into your daily life. Start making positive changes and start losing weight. Ready? Okay, let's look at the first mistake; being too rigid with your food rules.

1) Being Too Rigid with Your Food Rules

There are different diet personalities. Some people thrive with rigid food rules that dictate what you can have, when you can have it, and how much you can consume. That group is a small group. Most people struggle with rigid food rules. They like food, they like variety, and they want to be able to lose weight without feeling deprived. Sound familiar?

Sure, it's possible to stick to a rigid diet for a few weeks or maybe even a month. But eventually those rules become tiresome and the dieter ends the process and returns to how they used to eat, thus gaining all their lost weight back.

A better approach is to make lifestyle changes that you can live with on a day-to-day basis. Lifestyle changes that support weight loss without deprivation.

If you have struggled with diets in the past, one of the reasons may have been because you made this very common mistake. Instead, try to look for diets or lifestyle changes that are manageable and support consistent weight loss and weight management.



2) Not Cutting Out the Sugar

One of the easiest ways to reduce your calorie intake while still being able to eat a large variety of foods, is to cut out sugar from your food. That means reading labels and buying foods that do not contain any added sugar.

For example, if you look at the label on a yogurt container you will see that there's usually a significant amount of added sugar. That added sugar not only depletes your health, it triggers your body to build its fat stores. Sugar calories are empty calories.

Sugar has also been shown to cause inflammation throughout your body. That inflammation leads to puffiness, insulin resistance, and eventually to diabetes. Many medical experts consider sugar to be one of the leading causes of chronic disease in this country, and eliminating sugar from your diet is fairly straightforward.

In fact, if you make one change your diet, eliminating sugar will lead to the most significant results. You'll have more energy. You'll lose weight. You'll be healthier. Your skin will clear up and you won't have cravings. There are tremendous benefits to reducing sugar.

When you cut sugar out of your diet, it is normal to go through a short period of withdrawal. Our bodies become addicted to sugar. In fact, the average American consumes more than 25 pounds of added sugar a year.

Once you're through with the short withdrawal period, you'll start feeling all the benefits. Your taste buds will change and you will not crave or even like the taste of added sugar. Simple things like a piece of fruit will suddenly taste so much better than they ever have before.

3) Not Planning for Snacks (Prevent Hunger)

Reducing calories and dieting often requires a person to reduce the amount of food that they consume. This may mean that you're eating three meals a day instead of five, or that the meals are much smaller than you're used to.

Regardless of your approach to dieting, it is important to plan ahead for your snacks. Snacking is one of the times when many people consume a large number of empty calories.

For example, a bag of chips and a diet soda are not healthy snack and they're not an effective way to lose weight, but that's what happens when people get hungry. They reach for the most convenient foods available – and convenient foods are often junk foods

The easy way to avoid making this mistake is to plan your snacks. Always have healthy snacks with you. That way, if you get hungry, you have something readily available to turn to that won't add on pounds.

Simple snacks include things like Greek yogurt and fresh fruit, a fruit and veggie smoothie, nuts and dried fruit, veggie chips, and even homemade energy bars. If making your own snacks just isn't your thing, check out energy bars made from fruit and nuts. Lara Bars, for example, are sweetened with dates and made from all natural ingredients. This type of bar is a quick, easy, and tasty snack that will keep hunger at bay.



4) Not Planning Your Meals

Forgetting about the power of meal planning is another mistake that people often make. Imagine coming home after a long day of work, looking around your house for something to have for dinner, and realizing nothing looks good to eat. You don't even have the energy to put something together.

To solve the problem, you pick up the phone and call for takeout or stop for food on the way home by going to a fast food drive-thru window. This approach generally means you're consuming foods with a lot of added sugar, salt, and saturated fat – instant weight gain.

Meal planning helps you avoid this problem. Meal planning helps you control what you're eating and it ensures that you're putting healthy, and tasty foods, into your body. It can seem a little bit overwhelming to plan your week's meals in advance, but it doesn't have to be complicated.

Sit down Saturday morning. Make a quick list of the meals you want to have for the week and then create a shopping list. Consider making some make ahead meals in a Crockpot or freeze some of the meals in advance. That way, when you get home from work, all you have to do is reheat your premade meal.

You can even do make ahead lunches to make eating healthy at work an easy matter. In fact, a growing number of households around the country are making their Sunday afternoon a meal prep time. You can too. Sunday can be when you chop your vegetables, make your sauces, partition your meals, and get everything ready for the work week.

5) Keeping Tempting Items in Your Home

Don't tempt fate. Don't keep foods that you're not supposed to have or that are not good for you in your home when you're trying to lose weight. Don't buy the cookies or the chips. Don't buy the ice cream. Why? Because they're too easy to eat and when you find yourself at the end of a stressful day. After diving into those foods and gaining some of the weight back that you've lost, you'll be disappointed in yourself and in the setback.

It is recommended, however, to keep some treats in your house that are healthy treats. For example, if you like the taste of ice cream, you might consider frozen bananas or all fruit Popsicles. If you like to just have something sweet after a meal then buy yourself a box of dates. These simple and healthy solutions can help you feel like you're not depriving yourself.



6) Not Cutting Yourself Some Slack (A Cheat Day)

One of the many ways that diet and nutrition experts recommend losing weight is to eat healthy six days a week. Those six days may be very restrictive days where you eat fruits and vegetables with every meal, you don't eat any added fat, and you consume zero added sugar. You might even weigh your food.

You are 100% focused on eating healthy those six days.

On the seventh day, you enjoy a scheduled cheat day or a free day. The key to making these cheat days successful is to actually use them to enjoy some foods that you're not allowing yourself to eat on other days.

For example, on the seventh day you let yourself have pizza or you enjoy your favorite ice cream or you go out to eat and don't worry about the calories or ingredients. It's important to embrace the cheat days and to enjoy the foods that you are not eating the rest of the week. However, it is also important to not go crazy.

For example, if you're limiting yourself to 1,500 calories a day during the week and on your cheat day you eat 5,000 calories, you lose everything you gained during the week. Or, to look at it another way, you're gaining everything you lost during the week. So enjoy a cheat day, but approach it with moderation



7) Focusing Too Much on The Calories

One of the challenges of trying to lose weight is the fact that you're focused on numbers. Chances are, one of the first things you probably do when you start a diet is get on the scale to get a starting point and to see how much you weigh.

In many ways, that makes a lot of sense. The only way to know if you're getting results is to get on the scale and see if you've lost weight, and of course you need a starting point. However, it's very easy to get too focused on the scale and your weight.

Weight loss can be a tricky thing. You may find that some weeks you lose weight quickly and easily and it's not a problem, but other weeks you're staying the same or you might even gain a little bit. There are a variety of environmental factors that can impact your weight loss.

For example, stress can make your body retain water and fat. Additionally, if you're exercising while you're trying to lose weight (which should be), then you may gain weight as you gain muscle mass. Muscle weighs more than fat.

You may be losing inches in your hips and waistline, but initially you might actually gain some weight. It can be frustrating. It's important to find moderation with the scale and weighing yourself. It's probably fine to weigh yourself weekly or monthly, but don't weigh yourself every day – and don't make the calories the focus of your weight loss. Instead, focus on how your clothes are fitting you, how you feel, and how your body is changing as you improve your diet and lifestyle.

8) Expecting Instant Results

Don't make the mistake of expecting instant results. Sometimes it happens, sometimes it doesn't. Fast weight loss programs don't always work and they're usually not healthy. Trying to lose weight for a summer party or special event is usually not going to result in positive results or lasting results.

Instead, commit to a longer process. If you have 50 pounds to lose, it may take a year. That's okay because when the year is up, you will have created lifestyle changes and health habits that you can stick with to keep the weight off.

While it's sometimes okay to jumpstart a diet by taking some more restrictive measures, it's healthier and more productive to focus on small steps toward a long-term goal.

For example, you might decide to go on a 30-day program where you don't eat any sugar, alcohol, or any premade foods for the entire month. You might then transition to a more realistic eating routine where those items are reduced from your diet, but not completely eliminated. Don't expect instant results. Instead commit to changing your eating habits. You'll enjoy lasting weight loss and, while it may be a more gradual process, it eliminates the yo-yo dieting problem.

9) Not Exercising

Exercise, whether you're trying to lose weight or not, is essential. If you are leading a sedentary lifestyle, you're cutting your life expectancy by at least five years. If you're living a sedentary life, you're on the fast track to chronic disease.

Start exercising today. That doesn't have to mean running a marathon or taking a Zumba class; you can put on your walking shoes, get outside and walk for 20 to 30 minutes a day. It's important for your health.

If you want to lose weight, exercise will help the process. When you exercise, you're not just burning calories during the exercise. You also burn calories as your body recovers from the exercise, and you're also changing your metabolism. Studies shown that people who exercise have more mitochondria in their cells.

Mitochondria are little systems that make energy, and the more mitochondria you have in your cells the more energy you have and the faster your metabolism is. That means you're burning more calories. These same studies have shown that people with more mitochondria in their cells live longer and have fewer chronic diseases as they age. Exercise helps you live a longer batter healthier life and it helps you lose weight. Start exercising!



10) Giving Exercise Too Much Credit

Yes, I know we just said you have to exercise, however don't give exercise too much credit for burning calories. For example, it's very easy to say that a cupcake that you just ate only has 150 calories and a quick jog around the block might burn 500 calories, but that's probably not the case.

The quick jog around the block probably burned about 50 calories and the cupcake that you justified probably had 250 calories. Bottom line, be realistic about the calories that you're eating and the calories that you're burning.

Many people fall into the trap of exercising for food. They might eat a piece of cake and then run an extra mile to make up for it. The problem is that the extra mile is probably not going to burn off that piece of cake and it's a bad habit to get into. Exercise because exercise is good for you, and eat that piece of cake on your cheat day

11) Not Getting Enough Fruits and Veggies

One of the best ways to feel like you're getting an abundance of food and to keep meals interesting is to eat a lot of fruits and vegetables. Try to consume a minimum of five servings a day. You can eat them at each snack and meal. You can enjoy vegetarian meals as well.

Vegetables are low in calories and high in nutrition. They make you feel full and satisfied. They are packed with fiber so your digestive system stays clean and healthy, with no bloating, and they reduce inflammation. If you want to lose weight, increase your intake of fruits and veggies.



12) Not Having a Reason (Motivation Matters)

Why do you want to lose weight? Are you losing weight because your doctor told you to? Are you losing weight because you think it will make you happier? Are you losing weight because you want to have more energy? You losing weight because you deserve to be healthy?

Understand why you want to lose weight. This is important. It's very difficult to stick to a diet or create new habits when you don't have a motivation that resonates with you.

For example, if you're losing weight because you think it will make you happier, then it's important to assess why you're unhappy right now and what's causing that unhappiness. If you're losing weight because you want to have more energy, then it's important to assess what you're eating right now that may be causing low energy – and take a look at changing those particular habits first.

It can be very difficult to stick to your diet if you don't have a clear and motivating reason. Identify why you want to lose weight, and what you expect to gain from your new lifestyle, and you'll be more committed to the process and more successful.

13) Drinking Your Calories

Think about the things you drink every day; the coffee, the tea, the sodas, the juice, and the smoothies. The calories add up. You may be surprised to find that you're drinking 1,000 or more calories a day. That makes it an easy task to start reducing the number of empty calories you're consuming by simply changing what you drink each day.

For example, instead of drinking a soda you might drink a carbonated water, and instead of adding cream and sugar to your coffee, you might start drinking your coffee black.

If you find that you have a very steadfast soda habit or coffee drink habit, then you can take small steps to change your habit. For example, if you normally drink three sodas a day then this week, instead of drinking three sodas a day, cut down to two sodas a day. The next week drink one soda a day, and then cut it down to one soda every other day until you're only drinking a soda on your cheat day.

You can apply that step-down approach with just about any unhealthy daily habit. Gradually cut back until it's no longer part of your life. Simple changes to what you drink every day can really cut back on the number of calories you consume.



14) Not Staying Hydrated

You've probably heard the rule that you should drink eight glasses of water every day. Now that rule has been busted as a myth. You do not have to have eight glasses of water every day because you're getting fluid in everything that you drink. You're getting fluid in the coffees and teas sodas that you drink as well.

However, drinking water is the best way to stay hydrated. Additionally, often one of the signs of dehydration is hunger pangs. Dehydration can make you feel hungry. It can make you feel sleepy and it can cause headaches, so before any snack or meal try drinking a glass of water first.

You may find they are not as hungry as you thought you were, or that your energy level perks up simply by drinking a glass of water. And there are no calories in water.

Here's a simple tip: if you find water to be boring, try adding a slice of lemon or lime or even some berries to your water. There are lovely diffusers that you can buy at the store that allow you to add fruit to your water that you can enjoy all day.

15) Not Tracking Your Intake

Most people eat more than they think they do. They consume more calories and more food than they are aware of. A simple way to get control and awareness over your food is to start tracking what you eat, when you eat it, and how many calories you're consuming. (Note there are great websites like myfitnesspal.com, calorielab.com, and calorieking.com, that tell you how many calories there are in most foods.)

Here's why tracking your intake is important. Let's say you eyeball your food every day and you figure you probably eat about 1,200 calories. You start tracking it and you might learn that not only do you eat about 1,600 calories every day, but every afternoon around 2 o'clock you also have a coffee drink and a bag of chips.

This information can tell you a couple things. The daily coffee drink is a clue that you're losing energy mid-day. You can adjust your lunch so that you don't have this slump. Tracking also lets you know that your daily coffee drink and chips are empty calories, which provides you with an opportunity to make a lifestyle change to lose weight and improve your health.

It also provides you with information and control over your caloric intake. Generally speaking, a pound is 3,500 calories. We say "generally speaking" because calories, despite common myth, are not created equal.

The calories that you get from a cookie are very different than the calories that you get from an apple. They are metabolized differently in your body and they are stored differently in your body.

So that if you are reducing your calorie intake by 500 calories a day, theoretically you will lose a pound a week. However, if the calories that you are consuming come from foods like cookies, chips, and hamburgers, then you will not see the same weight loss that you would see if your calories were coming from whole foods. Whole foods include fruits and vegetables and lean protein. Track what you eat, when you eat it, and how many calories you're consuming. It puts you in the driver seat of your diet and it gives you the information you need to know to make smart decisions for yourself.

16) Eating When You're Hungry

This mistake may surprise you. You're supposed to eat when you're hungry right? Actually, one of the biggest challenges for many people is avoiding overeating when they're hungry. You've probably felt as if you were "starving" at some point. You became super-hungry, your stomach was growling, and all you could think about was getting something to eat as quickly as possible.

When this happened, you probably consumed a lot of food very quickly and, honestly, you probably ate something that wasn't healthy for you. You also likely ate more of it than you actually needed.

Eating by the clock is a better approach than just waiting to eat until you're hungry. Pay attention to your body, note when you're hungry and try to eat half an hour before that time. For example, you may find that you're really hungry for food by one o'clock in the afternoon. If you have lunch at 12 or 12:30, then you're not going to feel those intense feelings of hunger. You're not likely to eat as much and you'll make smarter food choices.



17) Skipping Meals

Don't skip meals. Skipping meals causes a number of problems for weight loss. One, it ensures that you're very hungry and you make the mistake that we just talked about; you overeat and you probably make poor food decisions.

Two, skipping meals also puts your body into starvation mode, and that means that it begins to convert everything you eat to sugar and store it as fat. Your metabolism slows down as well. This means you gain weight – and that's not the goal, right?

Instead, eat small meals several times a day. You'll find that your metabolism increases, you don't get hungry, you lose weight and you make smarter food choices.



18) Not Getting Enough Sleep

Did you know that when you sleep your body releases hormones that impact hunger and weight loss? Additionally, when you don't get enough sleep your body does not handle stress as well, and that causes your system to release more cortisol.

Cortisol is a hormone that has been shown to cause weight gain in a number of different ways. It increases inflammation, and it causes you to crave foods that are high in fat, salt, and sugar – which of course all contribute to weight gain.

If you want to lose weight and keep it off, then it's important to make sure that you get enough sleep on a regular basis. Now "enough" sleep depends on you as a person. It could be anywhere from 7 to 9 hours of sleep a night.

If you're not getting that, look at ways you can change your habits so you're able to get at least seven hours of good sleep each night. Earlier we talked about exercise as one of the things that helps you lose weight. Exercise also helps improve the quality of sleep. If you're not exercising and you're not sleeping well, integrating an exercise program into your day may solve the problem.



Weight Loss, Nutrition and Fitness Motivation from www.HowToGetFlatAbsFast.org

19) Setting Weight Loss Goals That Are Unrealistic.

Many people find themselves on a weight loss roller coaster. This means that they start a diet, they lose some weight, they quit the diet, they gain the weight back. They start another diet, they lose some weight, quit the diet, and so on. The cycle repeats. This is destructive for your body and your mindset, and ultimately it can cause even more weight gain.

The straightforward way to get off this destructive cycle is to focus on lifestyle changes instead of dieting, and to set weight loss goals that are realistic.

Now a realistic weight loss goal generally means losing 1 to 2 pounds a week. That may not sound like a lot, but 52 weeks of losing 2 pounds a week is 104 pounds, and that's a lot of weight to lose in a year.

Additionally, losing 1 to 2 pounds a week is something that you can plan for, and it's much easier than some of the more common, and ineffective, weight loss goals like:

- I want to lose 100 pounds
- I'm going to lose 30 pounds this month
- I need to lose 10 pounds by next Tuesday

Setting goals like those generally leads to frustration and failure. However, when you set realistic goals that are attainable and manageable, you create a pattern of success – and that success snowballs into more success throughout your life.

20) Letting Your Food Get Boring

Finally, if you love food, don't make the dieting mistake of letting your food get boring. Don't eat the same thing every day. Don't eat things that make you sad or unhappy. There are so many different foods, recipes, and spice combinations to try – eating healthy and losing weight should never be boring.

Start looking at recipe websites and books that embrace whole foods. You might explore the Mediterranean Diet or the Paleo Diet as a way to cut out processed foods and eat only whole foods. These recipes are usually packed with spices and herbs. They are often packed with amazing vegetables, and can be quite creative and delicious. Remember dieting and losing weight isn't about restricting, it isn't about depriving, and it certainly shouldn't be boring.



Conclusion

You now have a lengthy list of 20 mistakes to avoid and, more importantly, 20 things that you can embrace right now to start losing weight. Grab a pen and paper, and start tracking what you eat. Become aware of your motivation, set new weight loss goals, and create new healthy habits. You now have the information you need to make a positive change in your weight and your life.

Don't forget that there's lots more info about weight loss, nutrition and fitness motivation on our website: www.HowToGetFlatAbsFast.org