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50 Little Ways to

Lose Big

Little things really do mean a lot.

BY JENNIFER GRAHAM

What's the best way to lose weight and keep it off? By changing your lifestyle and the way you relate to food. That isn't as hard as it sounds. You can make positive changes in your diet with a nip here and a tweak there. Follow just one or two of these tips and you'll shave calories from your diet; add more of these healthy habits to your routine and you'll likely see a noticeable weight loss.

Drinking Thin

1. The next time you get the urge to munch, grab a glass of water before reaching for a snack. Research shows that people sometimes crave food when it's actually water their bodies need. Try to drink as close to eight glasses a day as you can. Too boring? Add a twist of lemon and a packet of artificial sweetener. If you're very overweight, drink an extra glass for every 25 pounds over your ideal weight.

2. Cut your next glass of wine with seltzer and have a spritzer. Since alcohol sabotages the body's ability to burn fat, limit yourself to just one.

3. Ease into skim. Drink 2 percent milk for a week, then switch to 1 percent, then skim. And try evaporated skim milk instead of cream in your coffee.

Eating Thin

4. Lose the juice but eat the orange. Eating an orange is a quick and delicious way to eat fiber. The fruit provides 3 grams of dietary fiber, which is not available in the juice.

5. Get your roughage. Fiber-rich foods are bulky, which may give you that full feeling. Apples, oranges, apricots, oatmeal and beans are all good sources of fiber. Switch to bran



or another high-fiber breakfast cereal. If you dislike the taste, mix in some of your favorite cereal.

6. Eat lean protein. Protein-rich foods such as turkey, chicken or pork tenderloin, cheese, fish and beans are slowly digested. Just don't go overboard. Eat them in 3-ounce portions without fatty gravies, sauces or spreads.

7. Pass up the bacon-and-egg breakfast (32 grams fat, 412 calories in three scrambled eggs, three bacon slices) in favor of three pancakes with 2 tablespoons of syrup (3 grams fat, 230 calories). Instead of a bran muffin (7 grams fat, 200 calories), try an English muffin with 2 teaspoons of jelly (1 gram fat, 150 calories).

8. Don't overload on bread and

pasta. Even low-fat carbohydrates like these should be eaten in moderate portions. The Food Guide Pyramid may allow for six to 11 servings of pasta and grains per day, but a serving size is just a half-cup of cooked pasta or one slice of bread.

9. Swear off butter and margarine, America's number-one fat source. Substitute jelly or other fruit spreads on bagels and English muffins; fat-free sour cream or yogurt, salsa, steak sauce, grated nonfat cheese, low-fat salad dressing or barbecue sauce on potatoes; and a squirt of lemon, butter substitute or Parmesan cheese (2 grams fat, 20 calories in 1 tablespoon) on vegetables.

10. Become a smarter sandwich maker. Hold the mayo (12 grams

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 70

50 WAYS TO LOSE BIG

CONTINUED

fat, 100 calories per tablespoon) and switch to mustard (1 gram fat, 10 calories in 1 tablespoon) or salsa (0 fat, 10 calories in 2 tablespoons). Use three slices of low-fat turkey (3 grams fat, 90 calories) or one slice of low-fat cheese (3 grams fat, 70 calories)—and lots of lettuce, tomato and cucumber slices.

11. Don't get creamed. Opt for chicken noodle soup (4 grams fat, 120 calories in a can of Progresso Chicken Noodle soup) rather than cream of chicken soup (11 grams fat, 190 calories in a can of Progresso Cream of Chicken soup).

12. Trick your chocolate cravings. A glass of skim milk with a heaping tablespoon of Nestlé Quik contains about 0.5 gram of fat and 154 calories. Still not satisfied? An ounce of fudge, a good-sized cube, has only 3.4 grams of fat—10 fewer than in a Hershey's chocolate bar.

13. Instead of eating cake or ice cream, save fat and calories by satisfying your sweet tooth with low-calorie frozen yogurt. If you're unsure of the portion size, buy a box of individually wrapped yogurt bars (Yoplait Lowfat Frozen Yogurt Vanilla-Orange Creme Bar: 0.5 gram fat, 30 calories; or Häagen-Dazs Raspberry and Vanilla Frozen Yogurt Bars: 0 fat, 90 calories).

14. Ask your waiter for recommendations on diet-friendly menu items, or order half-portions. Request that oil not be used in preparing your food. If a dish comes with a sauce, ask for it without, or request that it be served on the side.

15. Order just one slice of thin-crust pizza and a salad. Pizza is actually not fattening if you don't eat too much (one slice of Little Caesars medium cheese pizza contains 5 grams fat and 154 calories). Dab the extra oil off the top with a napkin or paper towel.

16. Be a wise menu reader. Opt for dishes that are steamed or grilled instead of those that have been fried or sautéed. Order vinaigrette instead of creamy dressing and ask for it on the side. Choose rice or baked potato, not fries, and a tomato, not cream-based, pasta sauce. If you must have dessert, split it with your dining companion.

17. Leave the burger, take the shake. Stuck at McDonald's with the kids? A vanilla shake has only 5 grams of fat and

340 calories. If you want a meal, get a single hamburger (10 grams fat, 270 calories) instead of a McLean Deluxe (12 fat grams, 350 calories)—and certainly instead of a Big Mac (28 fat grams, 530 calories!). Better yet, try the Fajita Chicken Salad (6 grams fat, 160 calories).

Exercising Thin

18. Get fit in the morning. Put on your workout clothes as soon as you get up and don't take them off until you've exercised. Excuses not to do it are more likely to crop up as the day progresses.

19. Cut down on inactivity. Fold laundry or knit while watching television. Pace back and forth while talking on the phone. Walk around the station while waiting for your bus. Being a fidgety person can raise your metabolic rate—and you'll start to burn fat and calories more efficiently.

20. Don't worry about intensity. Exercising moderately for 45 minutes burns as much fat as exercising intensely for 30 minutes. The main goal is to stick with it.

21. Make stress an excuse to exercise. When angry or frustrated, go for a brisk walk. Even if it doesn't help (which is unlikely), you've just done something positive for yourself.

22. Jog with a partner. Researchers at Florida State University found that runners on a treadmill ran longer when encouraged with words like, "Keep it up. You're doing great." Also, being there for your partner is an added incentive to stick with it.

23. Take a dance class. Dances like the cha-cha, jitterbug and polka are an aerobic workout as well as a terrific social outlet. Studies show the average square dancer covers five miles a night.

24. Buy a stationary bike or a treadmill (secondhand if you're strapped). It will make exercise convenient despite any bad weather outside. Park it in front of the TV.

25. Exercise to music. Researchers at Ohio State University say music lowers your perception of fatigue. You'll be more likely to keep going if you're enjoying the tunes.

26. Go walking in the cold. This requires your body to burn more calories to maintain its normal temperature. Work out in the coolest room in your house (away from a window with bright rays), or run in a shady section of the park.

27. Have a well-timed workout. If you're more than 30 percent above your ideal weight, you'll burn more calories by exercising before you eat. If you're only slightly overweight, exercising after meals burns more calories.

28. Invest in hand weights. When you cut back on calories, you lose fat and muscle. Lift weights three times a week while watching TV or listening to music. It'll rev up your metabolism, helping you to burn more fat.

Cooking Thin

29. Take a cooking class or check out a new cookbook. Learn which flavorings complement which foods best. Then cook without relying on fatty oils, dressings or sauces to make meals taste good. Try these: Basil for tomatoes, potatoes, cucumbers and squash. Garlic for string beans, mushrooms and beans. Lemon juice for asparagus, broccoli, spinach and salads.

30. Halve serving sizes for everything except vegetables. Double those and prepare them by steaming (adds no fat), not sautéing in vegetable oil (adds 14 grams fat, 120 calories per tablespoon).

31. Experiment with chile peppers and Tabasco sauce. Eating spicy foods may curb your desire for sweets.

32. Sneak the fat out. Mix lean ground beef (18 grams fat in 3 ounces) with ground turkey (6 grams fat in 3 ounces). Blend cooking oil with chicken broth or juice, gradually decreasing the amount of oil each time. In pasta or potato salad, mix the mayonnaise with

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 73



50 WAYS TO LOSE BIG CONTINUED

mustard or plain, nonfat yogurt.

33. Put olive oil in a spray bottle. Spray—don't pour—it on salads and frying pans.

34. Microwave to lose fat. According to researchers at Texas A&M University, the best way to make low-fat burgers is to microwave them on paper towels. The burgers can then be browned on a grill or in a non-stick frying pan. Instead of sautéing fish and vegetables in oil, cook them in a microwave, adding herbs and spices to boost flavor.

35. Become a part-time vegetarian. Eliminating meat from a meal for even a few nights a week leaves room on your plate for less fattening foods. Or just take the meat off center stage. Make chili with twice as many beans and veggies, or grilled chicken salad with an emphasis on the salad.

36. Prepare seafood without the fat. Shrimp, clams, scallops and lobster all have less than 2 grams of fat per serving—if they're not fried or swimming in butter. Steam, bake or boil them, season with cocktail or hot-pepper sauce and eat in 3-ounce servings (about 150 calories).

37. When baking, substitute mashed bananas, applesauce or prune paste for some of the oil or shortening.

38. Make your pies crustless. Just use a very firm filling, like pumpkin. Or make a fat-free crust by combining $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of thawed apple juice concentrate and 1 cup of crushed Grape-Nuts cereal. Press the cereal-juice mixture into the pie pan and bake as you normally would.

Planning Thin

39. Brush your teeth. Do this when you're having a strong craving; you're more apt to fight it off if your mouth is minty and tingling.



Spray!



It will be easier to stop if you know you'll be eating again soon. Later, have a low-fat yogurt, a small bag of pretzels or a piece of fruit.

41. Diversify. An apple a day will quickly become tedious. Slice up some kiwi, strawberries or a mango. Try air-popped popcorn instead of pretzels or graham crackers and fig bars instead of the usual rice cake.

42. Plan ahead. Bring fruit or cut-up raw vegetables to the movies. Pack your own low-fat sandwiches for long car trips. Decide not to have the fried calamari before you arrive at the restaurant.

43. Act European. Eat your biggest meal at lunch, when you still have hours of the day left to burn calories. Set a deadline of 8 or 9 P.M., and make the kitchen off-limits after that.

44. Keep to an eating schedule. If you skip meals, you're more likely to be overhungry—and to overeat. While you're at it, have a routine exercise time too. It will become a habit faster if you always do it at the same time.

45. Get a massage. You're sacrificing fat and calories, so treat yourself in other ways, like taking a leisurely soak in the tub or going dancing.

46. Listen to Brahms, not Billy Joel, while eating. Upbeat music will make you rush. Some researchers say fat gets stored more readily when you eat quickly. And eating quickly usually leads to eating too much. Putting down your fork between each bite is another way to make sure you eat more slowly.

47. Don't keep bowls of food on the dinner table. Serve yourself before your meal and leave what's left on the stove or—better yet—put extra food away before eating. If you must have seconds, make it a vegetable.

48. Always leave some food on your plate, even if it's just a forkful. This will make you conscious of the amount you're eating before you reach for seconds.

49. Think up non-food-related social activities. If you usually meet friends for dinner or coffee and dessert, try new ways to socialize. Go shopping or to the theater, play pool, join an aerobics class together or go walking.

50. Diet with a partner. Promise to confess all dieting sins to each other as an incentive to stay on the wagon. **WD**



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April 23

Woman's Day

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