**Drink plenty of water or other calorie-free beverages.**

Before you tear into that bag of potato chips, drink a glass of water first. People sometimes confuse thirst with hunger, so you can end up eating extra calories when an ice-cold glass of water is really all you needed. If plain water doesn't cut it, try drinking flavored sparkling water or brewing a cup of fruit-infused herbal tea.

**Be choosy about nighttime snacks.**

Mindless eating occurs most frequently after dinner, when you finally sit down and relax. Snacking in front of the TV is one of the easiest ways to throw your diet off course. Either close down the kitchen after a certain hour, or allow yourself a low sugar treat such as sugar free popsicles, Jello, no sugar added pudding or a handful of grapes.

**Eat several mini-meals during the day.**

If you eat fewer calories than you burn, you'll lose weight. But when you're hungry all the time, eating fewer calories can be a challenge. "Studies show people who eat 4-5 meals or snacks per day are better able to control their appetite and weight," says obesity researcher Rebecca Reeves, Dr PH, RD. She recommends dividing your daily calories into smaller meals or snacks and enjoying most of them earlier in the day -- dinner should be the last time you eat.

**Eat protein at every meal.**

Protein is the ultimate fill-me-up food -- it's more satisfying than carbs and keeps you feeling full for longer. It also helps preserve muscle mass and encourages fat burning. So be sure to incorporate healthy proteins like seafood, lean meat, eggs, yogurt, cheese, soy, and nuts into your meals and snacks.

**Spice it up.**

Add spices or chilies to your food for a flavor boost that can help you feel satisfied. "Food that is loaded with flavor will stimulate your taste buds and be more satisfying, so you won’t eat as much," says American Dietetic Association spokeswoman Malena Perdomo, RD

**Stock your kitchen with healthy, convenient foods.**

Having ready-to-eat snacks and meals-in-minutes on hand sets you up for success. You'll be less likely to hit the drive-through or order a pizza if you can throw together a healthy meal in five or 10 minutes. Here are some essentials to keep on hand: frozen vegetables, whole-grain pasta, cheese, canned tomatoes, canned beans, pre-cooked grilled chicken breast, whole grain tortillas or pitas, and bags of salad greens

**Order children's portions at restaurants.**

Ordering a child-size entree is a great way to cut calories and keep your portions reasonable. This has become such a popular trend that most servers won't bat an eye when you order off the kids' menu. Another trick is to use smaller plates. This helps the portions look like more, and if your mind is satisfied, your stomach likely will be, too.

**Swap a cup of pasta for a cup of vegetables.**

Simply by eating less pasta or bread and more veggies, you could lose a dress or pants size in a year. "You can save from 100-200 calories if you reduce the portion of starch on your plate and increase the amount of vegetables," says Cynthia Sass, RD, a spokeswoman for the American Dietetic Association.

**Tip No. 11: Include fiber in your diet.**

Fiber aids digestion, prevents constipation, and lowers cholesterol -- and can help with weight loss. Most Americans get only half the fiber they need. To reap fiber's benefits, most women should get about 25 grams daily, while men need about 38 grams -- or 14 grams per 1,000 calories. Good fiber sources include oatmeal, beans, whole grain foods, and a variety of fruits and vegetables.

**Clean the cupboards of fattening foods.**

If you have chips in the pantry and ice cream in the freezer, you're making weight loss harder than it has to be. Reduce temptation by purging the cupboards of fattening foods. Want an occasional treat? Make sure you have to leave the house to get it -- preferably by walking.

**Lose weight slowly.**

If you're losing weight but not as fast as you'd like, don't get discouraged*.* Dropping pounds takes time, just like gaining them did. Experts suggest setting a realistic weight loss goal of about one to two pounds a week. If you set your expectations too high, you may give up when you don’t lose weight fast enough. Remember, you start seeing health benefits when you've lost just 5%-10% of your body weight.

**Weigh yourself once a week.**

People who weigh themselves regularly tend to have more weight loss success. But most experts suggest weighing yourself only once a week, so you're not derailed by daily fluctuations. When you weigh yourself, follow these tips: Weigh yourself at the same time of day, on the same day of the week, on the same scale, and in the same clothes.

**Get enough sleep.**

When you're sleep deprived, your body overproduces the appetite-stimulating hormone ghrelin but under-produces the hormone leptin, which tells you when you're full. Getting enough sleep may make you feel rested and full and keep you from doing unnecessary snacking.

**Eat more fruits and vegetables.**

The best "diet" is one where you get to eat *more* food, not less. If you eat more fruits and vegetables, you shouldn't feel as hungry because these nutrient-rich foods are also high in fiber and water, which can give you a feeling of fullness. Snacking can be a good thing as long as you choose smart snacks.

**Limit alcohol to weekends.**

Alcohol contains empty calories: a five-ounce glass of wine has 125, a bottle of beer about 153. Because our bodies don't use those calories well, they usually get converted directly into fat. If you enjoy an occasional drink, consider a compromise. Enjoy your favorite alcoholic beverage on weekends only, with just one drink for women per day, two for men.

**Chew sugarless gum.**

The next time you want to grab a fattening snack, reach for some sugar-free gum instead. Chewing some types of gum gives you fresh breath and can also help manage hunger, control snack cravings, and aid in weight loss. Although gum might make you eat less, it doesn't mean you can stop eating right. A good diet and exercise are still important.

**Lift weights.**

Pumping iron 2 times a week can help stave off muscle loss while dieting and increase metabolism. Plus you’ll get the added benefit of feeling great.

**Limit your sugar intake.**

Sugar, even natural sugar, can impede your weight loss efforts. Check your labels & ban any foods that contain more than 10 grams of sugar per serving. This means sodas and fruit juices are completely off limits as they are loaded with sugars.