

10 Simple Daily Diet & Lifestyle Hacks for Weight Loss & Wellness

1. Eat your carbs late in the day...and late on your plate

Eat protein early in the day and **punt your carbs** to later in the day. This might be contrary to what you have been told. But a high healthy fat, low-carb breakfast with a moderate amount of protein will reduce your appetite for the rest of the day. Having carbs early in your day will increase your insulin levels and stimulate appetite making it harder to control your eating. In one study, young men were given instant oatmeal for breakfast one day, and on another day, they were given eggs. On the day they had the oatmeal, they ate 80 percent more than on the day they had eggs and were still hungry, even though they were eating more. So skip the bagels and cereal for breakfast, and eat your carbs later in the day when they will have less effect on your appetite.

Order matters. Start each meal with the protein and vegetables and then have the carbohydrate. The worst thing you can do is to start a meal with bread. At any meal during which you plan to eat starchy food, hold off and eat it last. You will eat less if you fill up on vegetables and protein first. You will delay the response of insulin by changing the order in which the food is eaten. In another study, subjects were given bread to eat at the beginning of their meal (think bread basket before ordering your dinner). They then ate chicken and vegetables fifteen minutes later. On another day, the same people were given the same meal but this time ate the chicken and vegetables first, followed by the bread. On those days bread was eaten first, there was a greater rise in glucose levels and subsequent release of insulin versus only a slight rise in glucose in the bread last meal! The order in which you eat your food, even if you eat the same food, can affect your insulin levels! Louis Aronne. *The Change Your Biology Diet*

2. Shorten your "eating window"

Timing matters. **When** you eat may be just as important as **what** you eat. Traditionally we ate our 3 meals between 7am and 7pm and "fasted" for 12 hours. Over the years, we have shortened the fasting period to 7 hours or less (only as we slept). These increased number of hours eating has led to increased secretion of insulin (the hunger, craving and fat storage hormone). Intermittent fasting incorporates this concept of eating between a shortened range of time and thus decreasing our secretion of insulin.

Studies assigning the same number of calories to an 8-hour feeding window versus a 12-hour window showed that subjects following an 8-hour feed/16 hour fast regimen, lost more weight and had improved cholesterol and blood sugar levels. Fasting has been part of many cultures and religions for centuries. Start with a 12-hour fast. Eat all your meals between 7am and 7pm. For more magic, try a 10am to 6pm eating window. During your fasting hours, drink non-caloric beverages such as water, black tea or coffee. Avoid beverages that are artificially flavored as they still can raise your insulin. Jason Fung. *The Guide to Intermittent Fasting*.

3. Eat breakfast like a queen, lunch like a princess and dinner like a pauper

Try to eat when your body is ready to eat. In other words, try to align your meals with your circadian rhythm. Our bodies evolved to be primed for food during daylight hours. The changing light cycle that trains our circadian rhythms helps set the cycle of our hormones. As evening comes, cortisol starts to drop and melatonin starts to rise preparing our body for sleep. Also, our insulin resistance increases throughout the day and is at maximum capacity overnight when we are sleeping. It turns out that breakfast and lunch are the two most important meals—not necessarily one or the other. An important study examined the effect of meal timing in overweight women. Groups were assigned to either eat the largest proportion early in the day (at breakfast) or late in the day (at dinner). The group that consumed more of their calories for breakfast lost more weight and inches off their belly by the end of the 12-week study. The "eat early" group also had lower levels of fasting glucose, insulin, and ghrelin (the hunger hormone). Between lunch and dinner, try to get 3/4 of your daily calories before 2 pm. Michael Roizen and Michael Crupain. *What to Eat When*.

4. Cook your pasta al dente

When a carbohydrate is more easily digested, it will raise your blood sugar then your insulin more quickly. This will lead to fat storage, hunger and weight gain. Starches, such as pasta, are made up of strands of glucose connected to each other. Cooking time affects your body's ability to absorb these strands. The longer you cook a starch, it becomes almost like sugar and is very easy for the body to digest. Cook your pasta al dente, so it is "still firm when bitten". Raw vegetables will take longer to digest than cooked vegetables. When eating fruit, the riper the fruit is, the sugar content is more readily digestible. A green banana is more slowly digested (resistant starch) than a very ripe banana.

Add **resistant starch** to your diet. Resistant starch resists digestion (hence, the name) so it passes through the small intestine without being digested. Resistant starch feeds healthy gut bacteria, leading to prolonged feelings of fullness and more efficient fat oxidation. Some foods contain natural resistant starch such as beans and lentils. The best way is to create the starch in your kitchen by transforming your highly digestible starches like pasta, rice, and potatoes into resistant starch powerhouses. All you have to do is cook them (preferably boil) and let them cool before serving. The temperature change alters the chemical bonds and this causes some of the food's highly digestible starch to convert into resistant starch. But if you heat it back up again the starch is no longer resistant! Louis Aronne. *The Change Your Biology Diet*.

5. Eat fat to burn fat

Add a serving of healthy fat to each meal. These include coconut oil, olive oil, avocados, as well as grass-fed butter and ghee. Also nuts, seeds and nut butters are a healthy source of fat. But keep away from partially hydrogenated oil (trans fats) and refined oils such as vegetable, corn and even canola oil. Did you ever wonder why you can get so hungry when your body has plenty of fat stores (stored energy)? Why don't we have access to this stored energy? The answer is insulin. This is the hormone that takes the sugar (glucose) out of your blood stream and stores it as fat. When you ingest carbohydrates (broken down into glucose) your body releases insulin. Insulin effectively locks up your stored energy (fat) as it stores your newly ingested sugar (as fat). On the other hand, the healthy fats you ingest do not contain sugar and do not increase your insulin. This will unlock your stored fat to be converted back into energy. So add a serving of healthy fats to each meal. But, beware of "sweet fat"! When you eat bread with butter, French fries, fast food hamburgers, etc., this is a deadly combination of carbohydrates and fat. David Ludwig, *Always Hungry?*

6. Eat slowly

Give your body a chance to get the message you are full. Stretch receptors in the stomach are activated as it fills with food or water; these signal the brain directly through the vagus nerve that connects gut and brainstem. Hormonal signals are released as partially digested food enters the small intestine. The theory is that, by eating too quickly, people may not give this intricate hormonal cross-talk system enough time to work. Sit down at a table to eat your meal. No, NOT at your desk, NOT in front of a computer, and NOT in front of any other screen (i.e. your smart phone, tablet, or TV). Even if you are dining alone, set down a placemat and set your table. Make it a meal. Sit down. Taste your food. Chew it many times to aid in digestion. Drink water throughout your meal.

7. Move a little more throughout the day

We are all busy and often the reality of fitting an hour workout at the gym is not possible. Simply moving more and sitting less can boost your health because of the calorie burning called NEAT, or non-exercise activity thermogenesis. All the little movements throughout the day such as walking up the stairs, walking to our car, even fidgeting at our desk, they all add up. Breaking up a 30-minute exercise goal in to 3 separate 10-minute bouts of movement is helpful. Even standing more throughout the day is beneficial. In fact, sitting has been deemed the new smoking! The famous London Bus Study published in 1953 compared the rates of heart disease between the bus drivers and the conductors. "Men in physically active jobs [conductors] have a lower incidence of coronary heart-disease in middle age men than have men in physically inactive jobs [drivers]."

8. Brush your teeth after eating

After you eat, brush your teeth. Rinse your mouth with pre-brush mouthwash, brush your teeth, floss, and then use post-brush mouthwash. Make your mouth extra clean. Doing this serves two purposes: 1. You practice good hygiene and keep bacteria from getting too comfortable in their new home. 2. You deter further eating because of all the effort you have put into cleaning your mouth anything you eat after doing such a thorough cleaning will be minty fresh. Think of drinking orange juice after brushing your teeth!

9. Do not buy junk food

If you do not buy junk food, you cannot eat it. It does not matter how much you are craving chips, ice cream, or something that will make you feel guilty after eating, you cannot eat it if it is not physically in your house or within your reach. And if you do not pack it in your lunch, then you have to make a significant effort to get it from somewhere else. Clean out your cabinets and refrigerator at home. If the junk is there we are going to eat it. That is human nature. When you are shopping at the grocery store, always stick to the perimeter of the store; whereas the aisles contain all the processed sugary foods. Make a list ahead of time and stick to it.

10. Get enough sleep to avoid weight gain

Evidence shows that the less you sleep, the hungrier you get and the more weight you gain. Sleep deprivation causes changes to hormones that regulate hunger and appetite. The hormone leptin suppresses appetite and encourages the body to expend energy. Sleep deprivation reduces leptin. On the other hand, the hormone ghrelin triggers hunger and is increased when you are short on sleep. Lack of sleep also affects which foods you are interested in eating, creating more intense cravings for fat and sugar-laden foods. And it does not take a long time or a lot of sleep deprivation to bring on the pounds. A study from the University of Colorado found that simply one week of sleeping about 5 hours a night led participants to gain an average of 2 pounds.

Establish good sleep hygiene and try to get at least seven hours of restorative sleep per night. Go to bed at that the same time each night and wake up at the same time even on weekends. Remember that your bed is for sex and for sleeping. It is not for watching TV or checking your emails on your cell phone. The blue light from your screen inhibits the hormone melatonin, which signals the body that it is time to go to sleep, and disrupts the brain's natural sleep-wake cycles. Getting blue light (especially from the sun) is crucial in the daytime to keep us alert and improve performance and mood but is a complete disaster at night!