

Lose Weight Feel Great

FitnessFirst

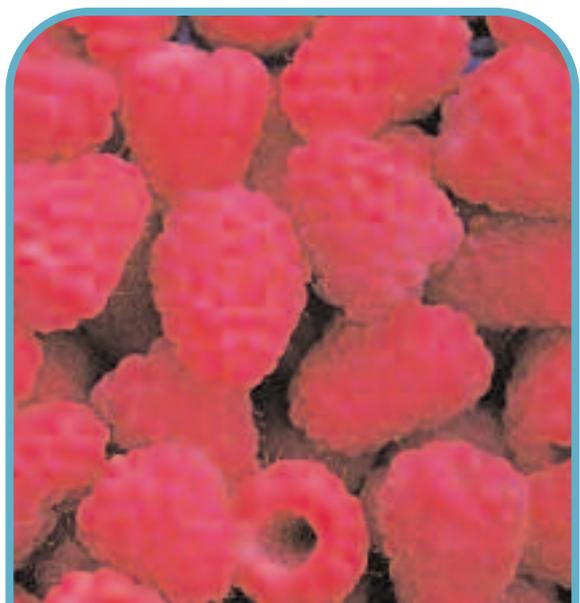
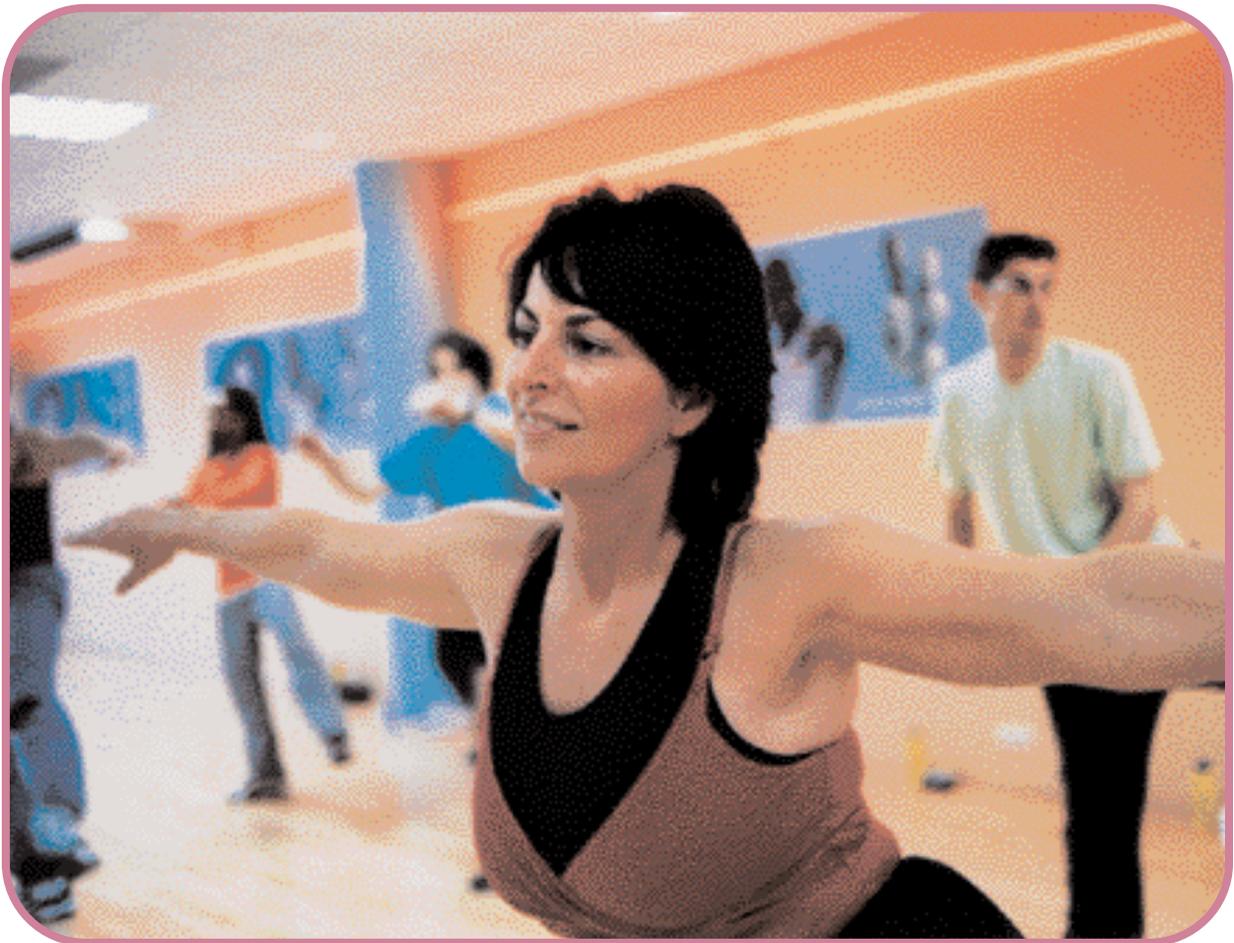
Exercise + Nutrition = Weight Loss

£4.50

Diet Pitfalls
Healthy Eating
Effective Exercise
Food Labels
Cuisine Guide

www.fitnessfirst.com

**‘Success is the sum of small efforts
repeated day in and day out.’**



Intro

Keen to lose weight and get in top shape?

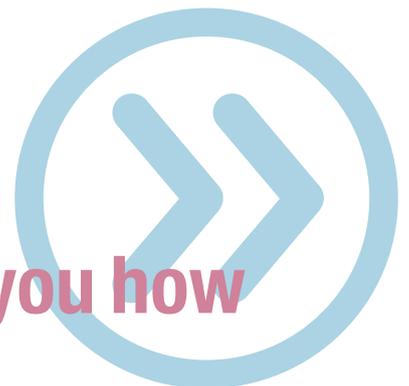
We've compiled this comprehensive weight management guide to help you do just that. It contains a host of practical information, tips and strategies on how to achieve the results you want (and keep them!).

A healthy diet combined with regular exercise still remains the most effective method for keeping weight off long term. Instead of aiming for a super-slim weight, you are much more likely to achieve success if you work towards a weight that you are comfortable with. Feeling good about your body shape and how your clothes fit is much more important than what the scales say.

Motivate yourself by focussing on all the benefits of losing weight, such as having more energy and improving your health. Reduced cholesterol and blood pressure, longer life expectancy and less risk of diabetes and cancer are just a few of the added bonuses of weight loss!

For added motivation and inspiration, try our popular personal training sessions. Having your own personal trainer is a sure way to get lasting results, and an incentive to stay on track with your healthy eating and fitness goals.

Go on, take the next step
We're here to show you how



**‘Effort only fully realises its reward
after a person refuses to quit.’**



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What Makes a Healthy Diet?

Forget about food deprivation, calorie counting or fad dieting, because balance and moderation are the keys to successful weight management. Make the following healthy eating strategies a part of your lifestyle and you'll soon be one step closer to achieving your weight loss goals.

Eat the right proportions

The 'What's on your plate' diagram opposite shows the best proportion of foods from the five food groups that you should be eating each day. Getting your proportions right ensures you are consuming the best balance of vitamins and minerals, while minimising your fat and sugar intake.

Cut your portion size

If your portion sizes are too big, you'll be consuming too many calories, regardless of whether the food you eat is low in fat. Carbohydrate and protein can be turned to fat if eaten in large quantities over an extended period, so think about reducing the amount you eat. As a general rule, one standard portion of anything is about the size of your palm. Refer to 'How much is a portion?' on page 30-31 for examples of portion sizes.

Know when to stop

You know that uncomfortable feeling you get when you eat too much, well that's what you need to avoid. There is a delay between your brain registering that your stomach is full, and your stomach actually being full. Stop eating before you reach that bloated, uncomfortable stage. A good way to avoid getting really hungry and over-eating at mealtimes is to graze on small meals/snacks throughout the day rather than eating three large meals a day. Refer to 'Snacks on the Run' on page 24 for healthy snack ideas.

Consume fewer calories than you burn each day

If the most exercise you've done all day is to walk from your front door to the car, then you don't need to eat as much as you would if you had done a gym workout. Remember, if you eat more calories (kcal) than you burn off, the excess calories must be stored somewhere – most commonly they are stored as fat. Refer to 'A Habit of Exercise' on page 12-13 for information about exercise for weight loss.



Reduce your fat intake

Not all calories are equal – there are more calories in fat (9 kcal/gram) than there are in protein (meat, poultry, dairy products) or carbohydrate (fruits, vegetables), which have 4 calories per gram. This means that fat calories are the most fattening, so should be eaten sparingly. There's no need to cut them out altogether, just cut them down. To find out more about how to reduce your fat intake, refer to 'Fat & Calories' on page 14-15.

Set Realistic Goals

Your weight loss goals need to be realistic so you can be happy with them on a long term basis. A slow and steady change in your eating habits will provide the results that last. Keep in mind that recommended weight loss is no more than one to two pounds per week. Refer to 'Goal Setting' on page 20-21 to find out the best way to achieve your goals.



What's on your plate?

Imagine this is your dinner plate – the size of the portion tells you how much of that type of food you should be eating.

Bread, other cereals & potatoes
30% of your plate (5 portions or more)

Meat, fish & alternatives
15% of your plate (2 to 3 portions)

Foods containing fat & sugar
10% of your plate (keep to a minimum)

Fruit & vegetables
30% of your plate (at least 5 portions)

Milk & dairy foods
15% of your plate (2 to 3 portions)

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the Food Standards Agency

Make friends with fruit & veg

Fruit and vegetables are great foods for filling your stomach without affecting your waistline. You'd need to eat a massive 300 grams of carrots to consume 70 kcal (300 kJ), which is the same number of calories in only three small squares of chocolate! And unlike chocolate, eating fruit and vegetables helps to protect against cancer, cardiovascular disease, stroke, Alzheimer disease and cataracts, to name just a few!

Bedtime Munchies

It's a common misconception that food eaten in the evening is more likely to be stored as body fat due to a slow-down in your metabolism during sleep. It's true that there's a dip in metabolism when snoozing, but those night-time munchies won't automatically end up as stored fat because your digestion continues to function the same whether or not you are asleep.

Don't let this news tempt you to order a double serving of steak and chips for tonight's meal, because you still need to watch that you don't overeat in the evening, just as you do for every other meal in the day.





TIP! To avoid getting really hungry and over-eating at meal times, try eating 5 or 6 small meals or snacks throughout the day. For healthy low-fat snack ideas, turn to 'Snacks on the Run' on page 24.

When a carrot won't do!

When you really, really want chocolate and nothing else will do, go for it! Have a small bar, enjoy every moment and skip the guilt trip afterwards. Include favourite foods like chocolate in your healthy eating plan because feeling deprived will only lead to cravings and overeating.

Drink Up

Drinking water won't make you lose weight, but it is an essential part of any healthy eating plan because water helps your body function at its best. Water is needed for growth and maintenance, to keep the body flushed of waste products, and to keep the skin, hair and body organs healthy. Aim to drink a minimum of eight glasses every day, not including tea, coffee and other caffeine-containing beverages.

Science Snippet

A recent study has confirmed that a healthy breakfast is not only a great way to kick-start your day, it also helps manage your weight! Researchers found that the majority of the study subjects who successfully lost weight and managed to keep it off, ate a daily healthy breakfast. It's believed that if you regularly skip breakfast there's more chance of hunger pains later in the day, which can lead to overeating.

Too busy or not hungry enough in the morning for breakfast? Try a cereal bar, healthy juice or smoothie, piece of fruit or packet of ready-prepared milk and cereal. If you have a weakness for fry-ups, turn to page 28 to find out how you can enjoy a healthy variation of the traditional English breakfast.

Does alcohol make you fat?

There's no need to become a teetotaler, but if you're trying to lose weight, it pays to limit your alcohol consumption. Each gram of alcohol provides 7 kcal (29 kJ) of energy, which is nearly as high as fat (9 kcal). Alcohol can also give you the 'munchies' and you may be tempted to eat more than you would do if you hadn't drunk. Just think about the last time you poured a drink, sat down to watch the TV and then grabbed a snack!

Check out the calorie (kcal) content of your favourite tipples:

285 ml glass of beer: 100 kcal / 430 kJ
100 ml glass of wine: 75 kcal / 315 kJ
60 ml glass of sherry: 70 kcal / 290 kJ
60 ml glass of port: 70 kcal / 290 kJ
30 ml nip of spirits: 66 kcal / 270 kJ

FAREHAM

MEMBER PROFILE: Suzie Dennett

'It's about changing your whole outlook on life.'

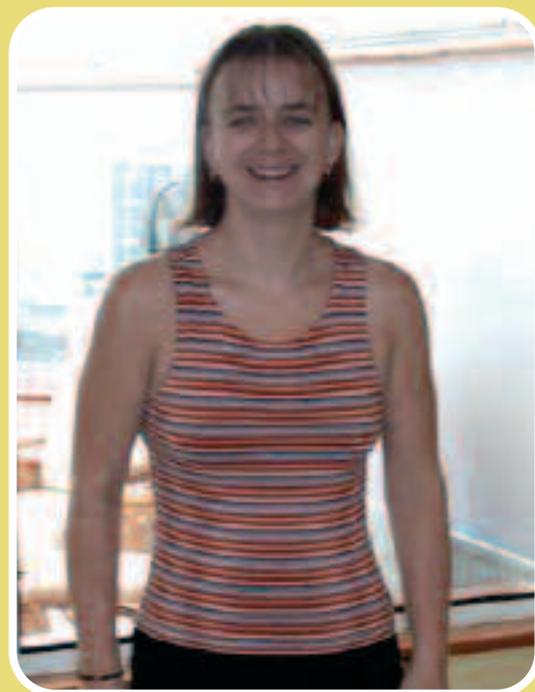
“Now that I've lost weight, I haven't had to take my asthma inhaler for months and I can run around with my kids without getting puffed. In fact it's hard to believe that when I started at the gym eight months ago I could only run four minutes before I was exhausted and now I've just done my first five mile run!

Suzie Dennett, 27, is a member of Fitness First Fareham.

I was a size 20 and 14.5 stone when I decided I needed to do something about my weight. I'd tried calorie counting in the past but found it really hard to stick to, so I knew that I needed to join a gym and get some exercise. When I first walked into Fitness First I felt really embarrassed that I was so big, but the personal trainer who gave me the induction put me at ease straight away. I decided to have personal training sessions because I find it is a much easier way to stay motivated rather than exercising on my own. The results speak for themselves – I've lost five stone since I joined the gym eight months ago and I'm now back to a size 10-12.

I've also switched to a lot of low fat food and I try to snack on fruit and raw vegetables rather than cakes and chocolate. I've always had a sweet tooth so it took willpower to change my eating habits, but now that I can see the results it has become easier not to eat the junk. I make myself look at the cakes and biscuits and tell myself I don't need them and instead go to the fridge and grab some healthy food.

My partner is so inspired from what I've managed to do that he's also trying to lose weight. I'm encouraging him to stick with it and to realise that it's about changing your whole outlook on life.”



Why Diets Don't Work

Crash diets may help you look lighter on the scales, but the sad truth is that they do more harm than good. With most diets you'll dump a few kilos of body fluid, which will account for a drop in weight on the scales, but you won't lose any significant amount of body fat that will stay off over the long term.

When you dump the diet and return to your normal eating habits, not only do you regain the fat stores you've lost, but you may even gain a bit extra! This is because whenever you cut back on energy intake you'll experience a drop in your metabolism, which reduces your body's ability to burn fat (metabolism refers to the chemical reaction that takes place in your body involving the use and generation of energy). This slow-down means that your pre-diet eating habits represent an excess in calories, so more of what you eat will be stored as fat. The more you keep 'yo-yo' dieting (staying on a diet until you lose weight, and then returning to your normal eating habits), the more weight you are likely to put on.

Even worse news...a lowered metabolic rate will increase your hunger signals, so you'll start to crave high energy foods loaded with fats and sugars – the exact foods you are trying to do without!

Lose 20 pounds in 2 weeks!

This is a common catch-cry of many fad diets, but it's usually far from the truth because early weight loss during a diet is generally from loss of water, not fat. A more realistic weight loss goal is 1 to 2 pounds (approximately 0.5-1.0 kg) a week.

A recent Gallop poll showed that in the UK alone, 12.8 million people are on a diet at any one time, and a staggering 1.7 million people claim they are never not dieting. The diet industry loves it – they rake in over £2 billion a year!

High Protein, Low Carb

High protein, low carbohydrate diets like Atkins are often touted as an effective way to lose weight, but nutritionists are concerned about the long term health consequences of eating too much saturated fat and protein. Kidney problems and high cholesterol are two possible side-effects, and the danger is there are no long-term studies to show what other health problems may occur.

Chances are you'll probably lose weight on a high protein, low carb diet, but because it's so restrictive in what foods you can and can't eat, it will be difficult to stick with for any length of time. Like any elimination diet, as soon as you re-introduce the old foods, the weight reappears. Losing weight for a couple of weeks or months and then putting it back on defeats the purpose of the diet in the first place!

TIP! Any diet that restricts the food groups you can eat, or is based around a handful of foods, is likely to be damaging to your health. Restricting the type of food you put in your mouth also limits the body's supply of nutrients, which means you could be depriving yourself of valuable vitamins and minerals.



TIP! Track your normal diet for a few days, and then cut out 200 calories a day. Eliminating a small number of calories from your daily diet is much more effective than crash dieting. Remember, a healthy weight loss plan needs to include at least 1,200 calories a day.



Pills & Diuretics: How effective are they?

There are countless over-the-counter weight-loss drugs that promise to keep the weight off by raising your metabolism or suppressing your appetite, but do they actually work?

The unfortunate reality is that while they may trick the body into thinking it is not hungry, weight loss only occurs while you are taking them, and long term use can lead to addiction and health problems.

Below are some commonly used over-the-counter weight loss drugs and appetite suppressants. Be sure to talk to your doctor before taking any, as they could be a waste of money or even downright dangerous.

Ephedrine (ma-huang): Ephedrine can slightly suppress your appetite, but no studies have shown it to be effective for weight loss. Worse still, it can cause high blood pressure, irregular heartbeat, insomnia, nervousness, tremors, seizures, heart attacks, strokes and even death. Ephedrine can also interact with many prescription and over-the-counter medications.

St. John's Wort: This herbal product is primarily used as an antidepressant and very few studies have evaluated its effectiveness for promoting weight loss. It interacts with many medications, including common cold remedies, and is considered potentially very dangerous to use for weight control.

Laxatives & diuretics: Most diuretics are derived from caffeine and cause you to lose water not fat. They can also lower your potassium levels, causing heart and muscle problems. Laxatives are also a less than ideal weight loss tool because if used too often your bowels become dependant on them.

Pyruvate: Formed in the body during digestion of carbohydrates and protein from food, pyruvate may have a slight effect in assisting weight loss. The drawback is that only a few studies have tested its safety and the long term effects are still not known.

A Habit of Exercise

Regular exercise is far more effective in keeping weight off in the long run than any diet. Cutting 250 calories from your daily diet can help you lose about half a pound a week, but add a 30-minute brisk walk four days a week and you can double your rate of weight loss.

So, what's the best type of exercise for weight loss?

It's a common misconception that you'll burn more fat if you exercise longer at a lower intensity, but the truth is that you'll burn more fat the more intensely you exercise. The faster you walk, step or run, for example, the more calories you use per minute.

Don't worry if you're just starting out and find high-intensity exercise difficult to sustain – simply begin at a lower intensity and slowly increase the level of difficulty as your fitness improves. Remember you're only competing with yourself, so lay down a personal challenge to do a bit more!

The bottom line is that any exercise routine you enjoy and can stick to is your best option for weight loss. Use your fitness program as a starting point, but also try a variety of classes and equipment to find out what works best for you.

Use exercise to rev up your metabolism

A slow metabolism is often blamed for lack of weight loss, but everyone can speed up their metabolism by exercising on a regular basis.

Your metabolism is the way your body burns up all the calories from the food you eat, so the faster your metabolism, the more calories you'll burn. Muscle is more metabolically active than fat, so replacing your fat stores with lean muscle allows you to maintain your weight much more easily. In fact, for each pound of muscle you gain, you'll burn 35 to 50 more calories daily. Even when you are sitting around or sleeping, your muscle will continue burning calories!

There's no need to become a body builder to reap the benefits of a fast metabolism – a simple 15-minute strength training program 2 to 3 times a week is sufficient to achieve gains in muscle growth and weight loss.

Burn calories with aerobic exercise

Any aerobic activity that elevates your heart rate – like cycling, running or group fitness classes – can help you burn fat. Aim to start with a minimum of 30 minutes aerobic exercise three to five times a week, and gradually increase the intensity and duration as your fitness improves. Joining a group fitness class is a great way to get your heart rate pumping and have lots of fun in the process! From Body Combat, Body First and Step First, to RPM, Disco Dancing and Latin Fever, we have classes that cater for all levels of interest and fitness.



Fuel up for best results

You're exercising hard to burn those calories, so you want to make sure you're giving your body the right kind of fuel for optimal performance. Here's what you should be eating before and after your exercise sessions:

Before exercise

To avoid feeling too hungry or too full when exercising, aim to have your last meal around three hours before your exercise session. Choose carbohydrate rich foods to maintain your blood sugar and glycogen levels, and avoid foods high in fat as these take longer to digest.

If you need a snack before exercise, try to have it at least 30 minutes before you start exercising, and choose a light, energy-rich food like fruit, plain crackers, bread, healthy muffin, banana, cereal bar or a small bowl of cereal. Avoid food high in sugar like soft drinks, sweet biscuits and confectionery as these release energy quickly but trigger the discharge of insulin, which can soon make you feel tired.

A common misconception is that if you want to lose weight you shouldn't eat before a workout (based on the logic that if the body doesn't have carbohydrate to burn, it will have to burn fat instead), but in fact the opposite is true. The body is very inefficient at burning fat as a supply of energy, so without carbohydrate to burn, you'll lack the energy to even do a workout!

After exercise

The body burns off large amounts of its stores of carbohydrates during exercise, so these stores need to be replaced once activity has finished. Because this happens at the rate of only 5% per hour, it can take up to 20 hours for your body to re-fuel. This means it is important to consume a carbohydrate food/drink as soon as you can after your workout, especially if you exercise every day.

Burning Calories

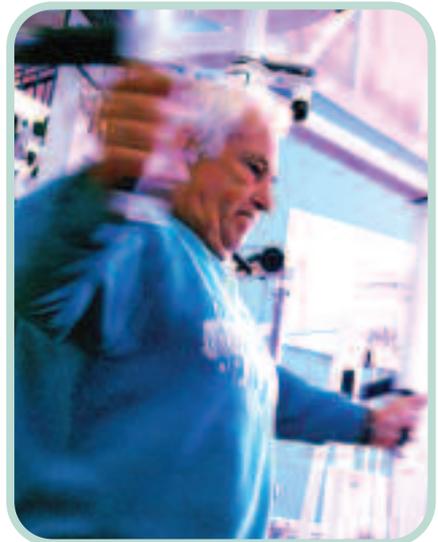
Here's a rough idea of how many calories (kcal) you can expect to burn from different activities in the gym. Keep in mind that these figures vary according to body weight, age, fitness level and workout intensity.

Aerobics	354 kcal/hour
Boxercise	450 kcal/class
Kickboxing	600 kcal/class
Cycling	330 kcal/hour
Walking	236 kcal/hour
Jogging 6pmh	590 kcal/hour
Weight training	360 kcal/hour
Sitting quietly	72 kcal/hour



For real success with your weight management goals, try a personal trainer. It's not expensive and a trainer can develop your very own training program. Sessions start from 30 minutes and you can even work out with a friend—imagine what your friends will say!

TIP! Exercises like stomach crunches and leg lifts improve the tone and endurance of your muscles, but they don't burn fat. The best way to shape up is a balanced exercise program that incorporates these sorts of exercises with strength and aerobic work.



TIP! Don't be discouraged if you're working out and not showing a significant drop on the bathroom scales, because it simply means your body fat weight is being converted into muscle weight. Pay attention to how you look in the mirror and how your clothes fit instead of what the scales say.

Fat & Calories

You've been religiously cutting your fat intake, and now you hear that it is not just fat you should be concerned about, but calories as well. The jury is still out about which is the greater evil – fat or calories – so until there is a clear answer, the most sensible option is to strike a balance between the two.

This means that if you are following a low-fat diet you still need to watch how many calories you consume. Too many calories from any source can lead to weigh gain, so that's why it is important to watch your portion sizes, make a habit of regular exercise, and consume foods that are filling but low in calories (refer to 'Think Volume' opposite). Equally, you need to keep an eye on your fat intake because a diet high in fat will also cause you to pile on the pounds, as well as increase your risk of heart disease, high blood cholesterol and diabetes.



Fats: the good & bad

Fat has long had a bad reputation, but the good news is that not all fats were created equal. Many foods contain several types of fat – including saturated, polyunsaturated, monounsaturated and trans fats – and some types are better for your health than others. You don't need to completely eliminate fat from your diet, you just need to choose the best types of fat and enjoy them in moderation.

The 'bad' fats

Saturated fat: found in lard, butter, hard margarine, cheese, whole milk and anything these ingredients are used in, such as cakes, chocolate, biscuits, pies and pastries. It's also the white fat you can see on red meat and underneath poultry skin. Too much of this kind of fat raises blood cholesterol and increases the risk of heart disease.

Trans fats: these occur naturally in animal and dairy products but have a similar cholesterol raising effect to saturated fat. Margarines, shortenings and commercial baked goods and fried foods (e.g., doughnuts, French fries) are usually high in these fats.

The 'good' fats

Monounsaturated fat: found in animal and plant fats, such as avocados, nuts, and olive, peanut and canola oils. These fats can reduce the risk of heart disease when they replace saturated fat intake, but they should still only be eaten in moderation.

Polyunsaturated fat: these include vegetable oils, such as safflower, corn, sunflower, soy and cottonseed oils.

Government guidelines recommend that fat makes up no more than 35% of your diet. For the average female, this means about 70 grams of fat a day, and for a male, it's roughly 95 grams.

Calorie intake for weight loss is recommended at between 1,500-1,800 calories, but no less than 1,200 calories a day.

Think Volume

Choose the right foods and you'll feel full on fewer calories. Some foods contain lots of calories in one small portion, so in order to feel full, you'll need to eat a large amount – hence a large number of calories! A half cup of mixed nuts, for example, has 438 calories, but is unlikely to leave you feeling full. By contrast, a half cup of cooked green beans has just 19 calories and a half cup of cooked whole wheat spaghetti has 87 calories. So, you'll get more food, consume fewer calories and still walk away from the table feeling full.

It's the water and fibre content that determines how filling and calorie-packed the food is. Many fruits and vegetables contain water, which provides volume but not calories. Carrots are about 88% water, for example, and have only 52 calories in one cup. High-fiber foods like vegetables, fruits and whole grains not only provide volume, but also take longer to digest, making you feel full longer. Refer to 'Filling Fibre' on page 25 to find out more about high-fibre foods.



Fish Fats

Did you know that eating oily fish reduces the risk of heart disease and improves circulation? This is thanks to a particularly protective type of polyunsaturated fat found in oily fish, known as omega-3 fatty acids.

Oily fish includes herring, kippers, mackerel, pilchards, trout, anchovies and fresh tuna (not canned). Nutritionists recommend we eat two portions of fish a week, one of which should be oily. Due to the mercury content of oily fish, it's advised you don't exceed the one portion a week recommendation, particularly if you are pregnant, breastfeeding or trying to conceive (in which case you should also avoid shark, swordfish and marlin).

Hidden Calories

It's the hidden calories – the ones that you don't even think about – that make weight loss harder. The sugar you put in your coffee, for example, or the can of soft drink you have with lunch, all add up to your daily calorie intake. To keep an eye on your hidden calories, try keeping a food diary – refer to page 17 to find out how.

TIP! When you see 'hydrogenated' on a food label it means that the product has hidden saturated fat. Hydrogenation adds hydrogen to an unsaturated (and less harmful) fat to give the product more texture, and in doing so creates a type of fat known as trans fats, which can raise cholesterol as much as animal fats.

Emotional Eating



Your healthy eating resolutions have been going exactly according to plan, when suddenly you go off the rails. Maybe it was because you were bored, tired, angry or depressed, but for whatever reason you lose all motivation and find it hard to get back on track again.

Sound familiar? If so, you're not alone because unwanted setbacks are a normal part of any new eating plan. The key is not to give up, but simply start afresh the next day and learn what triggered you to eat in the first place. To assess your eating behaviour, ask yourself why you over-eat – is it when you are stressed or sad, or when tempting food is within easy reach? Look at your eating style and shopping/cooking techniques. Do you eat while watching TV? Do you eat too fast? Do you eat more if you are socialising?

Once you know what causes you to over-eat, you can use strategies like the following to avoid these eating triggers.

- Keep unhealthy snacks out of sight.
- Store healthy food on the top shelf of the fridge within easy reach.
- Avoid shopping when hungry – take a shopping list and stick to it!
- Think about the consequences of giving in to a craving.
- Distract yourself with another activity like going to the gym or calling a friend.
- Let your real hunger cues – such as a rumbling stomach or decreased concentration – tell you when you're hungry.
- Learn how to cook quick and easy healthy meals.
- Fill yourself up with a healthy snack before you go to a social occasion where you'll be tempted to over-eat.
- Eat slowly and savour each mouthful.

Think Positive

If you catch yourself thinking 'I will never lose weight' or 'I feel fat', turn your thoughts around to focus on the positive. Everyone loses weight at different rates, so reassure yourself that you are working hard and remember that hard work pays off. Focus on the positives of your new eating plan, and your motivation to succeed will stay high.

Live it Up!

Losing weight is not just about shedding pounds, it's about looking good and feeling great! So instead of fixating on what the scales say, think about some of these benefits that are coming your way!

- A healthy heart
- Reduced blood pressure
- Less risk of diabetes, cancer and arthritis
- Longer life expectancy
- A better body shape
- Improved self-image
- More confidence under the covers!
- A long-lasting good mood
- Extra spring in your step
- More get-up and go!

TIP! There's a gap between the time you eat and the time your brain sends the 'I'm full' message, so go slowly! Give your brain time to catch up with your fork and avoid that bloated uncomfortable feeling that comes from eating too much.



Keep a food diary

One of the best ways to take control of your diet is to keep a food diary, in which you record all you eat and drink on a daily basis. Keeping a daily record helps make you more aware of your food habits and what areas are open for improvement.

Here's how to put pen to paper:

- Make a note of everything you eat and drink. Fill it in for a minimum of three days of the week – these days should reflect your normal week and include at least one week-day and one weekend day.
- Note the time you eat and drink.
- Write down what you consume immediately after you do it.
- Be as detailed as possible when noting down the type of food (for example, rather than 'tuna sandwich', write down 'tuna and mayonnaise sandwich with lettuce and cucumber on whole meal bread').
- Judge the amount carefully – if in doubt, compare the size to an everyday item (for example, 'about the size of a table tennis ball').
- Where possible, use your kitchen scales to get more accurate measurements.
- If your snack has a food label, note down the calories and grams of fat it contains.
- Be honest with yourself, otherwise, you won't get any benefit out of doing it.

Remember that food is an experience to be enjoyed. If you really enjoy a food that is high in fat or sugar, then have a small amount, but don't feel guilty about it afterwards. If you're eating a varied and healthy diet, a treat now and again is exactly that – a treat to be enjoyed. It only becomes a problem if you're eating too much of it too often.



Research shows that having social support significantly increases

your chances of slimming success. Losing weight with someone else is a great incentive to stick to your program because you don't want to let your partner down. What better place to find a weight loss buddy than the gym – it's full of people who have goals just like yours!

Science Snippet

It's official – stress can make you fat! A recent study found that people who suffer from stress tend to eat more sweets and sugary foods, increasing their levels of the hormone cortisol. This hormone is responsible for increasing insulin, which fuels the appetite.

So next time stress makes you reach for that packet of double-coated chocolate cookies, take a breath and ask yourself whether they'll really make you feel any better. A workout at the gym may be all you need to relieve your tension and take your mind off your worries.

CANNOCK

MEMBER PROFILE : KARL MORGAN

‘As soon as I started seeing results, it became like an addiction.’

Karl Morgan, 32, is a member of Fitness First Cannock.

‘The other day I managed to buy some clothes off the peg rather than going into a big person’s shop – it felt amazing! I’ve lost four stone since joining Fitness First, but the funny thing is that when I first walked in the door I thought it looked like a torture chamber!’

The personal trainers gave me a lot of encouragement and now I have two personal training sessions a week – I think it’s important to have a trainer because you’ve paid for the session so it’s an incentive to show up. What I’ve saved on food, the PT session more than pays for itself. I used to go to my local café every day for a fry-up, so this was one of the first things that went when I decided to lose weight. Now I eat lots of fish and vegetables, and I’ve cut out sugar in my coffee and drinks.

I’m a Cabaret singer and it was my agent who initially suggested I lose weight. My weight gain was actually caused by depression after the theft of all my singing equipment years before, but I knew that if I wanted to get work I needed to shed the pounds. Now I’ve picked up a lot more gigs and I’m sure it’s because I look better, feel better and move a lot better on stage.

My goal now is to get some muscle tone and basically just become a fit person. The incentive is the results, because as soon as I started seeing results it became like an addiction! At first it was the weight loss, but then it was the changes to my body shape – the fact that my trousers were getting looser and I had to keep tightening my belt!’



MEMBER PROFILE : JANICE FRANKLIN

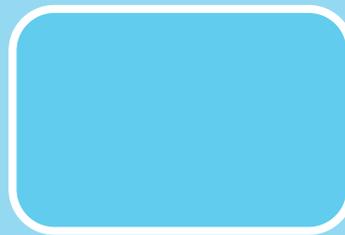
‘I actually feel like I’ve lost more than two stone because my figure is so good now.’

Janice Franklin, 68, is a member of Fitness First Uxbridge.

“When I’ve tried to lose weight in the past I’ve always just cut down on food, but this hasn’t worked for the last few years and obviously it was because I wasn’t exercising. Now that I go to the gym three times a week as well as watch my diet, I’ve lost 2 stone in 6 months. I used to be active but I’ve had serious problems with the tendons in my ankles and last year I had to have them operated on. The surgeon advised that I lose weight before the second operation, so that’s when I joined Fitness First. The fitness instructors there worked out a personalised program for strengthening my ankle so I could walk on it again, as well as for helping with my weight loss.

When I went to see my surgeon again I’d lost over a stone and he was very impressed. Lots of people have noticed my weight loss, and my daughter has even talked me into chucking out my old sloppy t-shirts and buying clothes that show off my new figure! I actually feel like I’ve lost more than two stone because my figure is so good now. The weight I’ve lost hasn’t turned to flab because I’ve been doing strength training, so my fat weight has been replaced by muscle weight. It doesn’t mean I’m all muscle, it just means I’ve got strength and tone.

I’m now 12 stone and I’d like to lose another, but I’m taking it at a steady pace because there’s no point setting stupid targets that are too hard to reach. I’ve just had the second operation on my ankle, so I’m wheelchair bound for a while, but I’m itching to get back to the gym.’ ”



Goal Setting

When you change the way you eat or exercise to lose weight, make sure it is a routine you can stick to. Start with one extra gym session and two less fatty meals per week and gradually work towards a lifelong plan for achieving your best weight.

Setting goals is an excellent way to keep yourself on track, but make sure your goals are specific and realistic. It's easy to write down a few goals, but what's harder is to set yourself goals that you can actually achieve in a busy lifestyle. Use the SMART principle below to ensure your goals last beyond next week!

Specific

Be specific about what you want to achieve. For example, if you want to get fit and lose weight, ask yourself what this means to you. It might mean being able to get through an aerobics class, or being able to run for a certain time at a certain speed.

Measurable

Set your goals in a way that lets you measure what you've achieved. A goal is pointless if you can't tell whether you've achieved it! For example, rather than making your goal 'to eat less fatty food' or 'to eat more fruit', make it something more precise and measurable, such as 'I will eat chips no more than once a week' or 'I will eat two pieces of fruit every day'. That way, it's easy to see if you're on track.

Achievable

Ask yourself honestly whether you will actually achieve the goal you've set. Goals should be challenging and should require you to make an effort, but they should not be unattainable dreams.

Realistic

Make sure your goal is realistic within your current lifestyle. If it is not you may need to make some changes in order to accommodate your new healthy lifestyle. Take this a step at a time and set yourself small goals towards achieving this over the next few weeks.

Time specific

Always review your goals on a regular basis (every 4-6 weeks).

TIP! Find an item of clothing in your wardrobe of your target size and use it as motivation to reach your target weight. If you can't find anything the right size, it's a perfect excuse to treat yourself to a shopping expedition!





Planning Ahead

When you're hungry, tired and busy it often seems much easier to grab a quick snack or TV dinner than it is to cook a healthy meal, but if you've planned your day's food in advance you won't be caught empty handed. Here's how to stay one step ahead of your stomach!

- Make healthy snacks ahead of time and carry them with you.
- Work out your daily meals the evening before, so this gives you time to buy or defrost the ingredients you need.
- Take a list to the supermarket of all the meals and snacks you need for the week.
- Keep emergency ready-made low fat / low calorie meals in the freezer that can be quickly heated in the microwave or oven.
- Keep healthy snacks on the top fridge shelf so that they're the easiest things to grab.
- If you have a social occasion coming up when you know it's likely you are going to eat and drink more than usual, compensate by consuming slightly less the day before and/or after.
- If you have a hectic lifestyle, and frequently have long gaps between meals, try carrying a meal replacement drink in your bag that will give you some energy and is usually rich in vitamins and minerals.
- Plan and discover easy cooking. Find meals you like that require minimal effort but mean you are eating, fresh, healthy foods. Refer to '5-minute Fish' on page 25 for a quick and healthy recipe idea.
- Buy packages of ready-prepared fresh vegetables, salad and diced meat, as this cuts down time and effort spent on preparation.

Getting back on track

You are more likely to stick to your goals if you aim for moderation. If you occasionally over-eat or eat foods that you shouldn't, don't let it derail your efforts. We can't always eat the right foods and do the right amount of physical activity, but aim to make the right choices 90% of the time.

There'll be times when you hit a plateau and feel like you're not getting results with your fitness and weight loss, so when this happens just keep in mind that maintenance is success. If it takes a year to reach a goal you are happy with, think about how many more years you'll have to enjoy it!

A Pat on the Back

You've worked hard to reach your goals, so reward yourself when you get there. Book in for a relaxing massage, treat yourself to a beauty therapy or simply lie in bed and watch your favourite movie! Do whatever makes you feel good, but choose a reward that's non-food based.

And when you're rewarding yourself, don't always link it to a drop on the scales. Instead give yourself recognition for positive changes you make in your behaviour, such as fitting in an additional gym workout each week or introducing an extra piece of fruit into your daily diet.

Measure success in terms of the realistic amounts of weight you have lost and the benefit this brings, rather than constantly trying to achieve a 'dream' weight.

A weight loss goal of 1 to 2 pounds a week is a lot more realistic than the huge weekly losses that many fad diets promote (and fail to deliver!).

Reading Food Labels



Reading food labels is a great way to make informed choices about the food you eat, but it's not always easy to know exactly what you should be looking for. Here's how to decipher label jargon and know what's in the food you put in your supermarket trolley.

Look under the heading 'Nutrition Information'

This is where you'll find how much fat, calories and other nutrients are in the product. Pay particular attention to the following:

■ **Fat:** Look at the total amount of fat in the food and whether the fat is saturated or unsaturated. Saturated fat raises blood cholesterol, increasing your risk of a heart attack, whereas unsaturated fat (made up of monounsaturates and polyunsaturates) can have a good effect on cholesterol level.

When deciding if the product is high in fat, keep in mind that the recommended daily fat intake for women is 70 g (20 g of which is saturates) and for men 95 g (30 g of which is saturates). It's a sure sign that the product is very high in fat if the label shows close to 20 grams of fat and 5 grams of saturates per 100 grams. A better figure to aim for is 3 grams of fat and 1 gram of saturates.

■ **Sugars:** The amount of sugar in a product is listed as a component of the carbohydrate content. Eating too many sugary foods doesn't help if you are trying to lose weight, so look for products that list the sugar content as around 2 grams per 100 grams, rather than 10 grams or more.

■ **Salt:** Eating too much salt (referred to as sodium on food labels) can cause high blood pressure, increasing your risk of heart disease. Look for products that have no added salt or as little as 0.3 grams per 100 grams. There's a lot of salt in the product if it listed as around 1.5 grams/100 grams.

■ **Calories:** The number of calories is shown as kcal. The recommended standard calorie intake is 2,500 kcals for men and 2,000 kcals for women, or 1,500-1,800 calories a day for weight loss. Excess calories will contribute to weight gain if you consume more than you burn off with exercise.

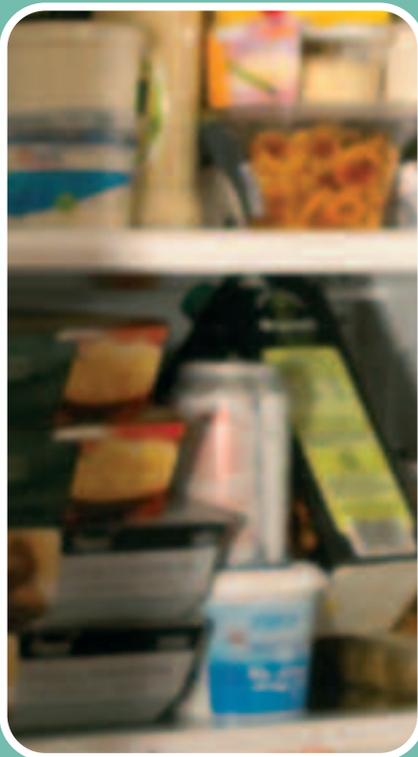
■ **Fibre:** Eating fibre fills you up and adds bulk to your diet, so the more fibre the better. A good intake is 3 grams per 100 grams.

Serving Size

Here's where you can find out what equals a serving and how many servings are in the product. Some products that look like single servings (juice, for example) will list servings per container as two, so if you drink the whole container you are consuming twice the amount of everything on the label.

Ingredients

Ingredients are listed in order of importance, so if sugar is the first ingredient you can be sure there is a significant amount of sugar in the product. You can also use the ingredient list to check what chemicals and preservatives the food contains.



Label Claims: fact or fiction?

Treat food label claims like 'low-fat', 'no added sugar' and 'lite' with care because they don't always mean what they say. Even though the law states that label claims should not be misleading, there are no regulations governing the meanings of different claims. Here's an explanation of some common claims.

Free from

'Free from' claims don't always mean there is none of the stated ingredient in the product. For example, if you see 'alcohol-free' on the label of a bottle of beer, this doesn't mean the beer contains no alcohol – by law, the level of alcohol must be very low (less than 0.05%). Levels for other similar claims (such as 'gluten free') have yet to be developed, and while a food may claim to be 'free from artificial preservatives', it may contain other ingredients that have a preserving effect (such as salt). To get a balanced picture of what's actually been used to make a food, it's always best to look at the ingredients list.

Light/Lite

The law doesn't say what 'light' or 'lite' means, and so manufacturers can use these terms to convey different qualities of a food, for example its texture, or to give the impression that it has less fat or calories than similar foods. The best way to get a true picture of the product is to look at the nutrient information per 100 grams and compare it to another similar product.

No added sugar/unsweetened

'No added sugar' usually means that the food has not had sugar added to it as an ingredient. This doesn't mean to say that the food will not taste sweet, or that it will have a low sugar content because it may contain an artificial sweetener or ingredients like fruit that have a naturally high sugar content.

'Unsweetened' usually means that no sugar or sweetener has been added, but it may still contain a sugar such as lactose that is less sweet than table sugar. Your best bet is to have a close look at the nutrient panel to find out how much sugar there is, or the ingredient list to find out what type of sugar has been added.

Low fat and fat free

The law states that these claims should not be misleading, but it doesn't say when they can be used, except on spreadable fats like margarine. Manufacturers are advised to only use the 'low fat' claim on foods that contain less than 3 grams of fat per 100 grams, and the 'fat free' claim on foods that contain less than 0.15 grams per 100 grams. 'Reduced fat' claims are only meant to be used with foods that contain less than three-quarters of the amount of fat in the standard product. However, these are recommendations only, so it's wise to check the nutrient panel to find out the actual amount of fat in the product.

Bio

The term 'Bio' is generally found on yoghurts, but there are no rules about when it may be used or what it means. Most yoghurts labeled with the word 'Bio' claim to contain 'live' bacteria (sometimes called 'cultures'), which manufacturers claim are beneficial to health, particularly digestion. Scientists disagree over exactly how beneficial such bacteria are, how many are needed to have the claimed effect, and whether the bacteria are still alive when you come to eat your yoghurt.

TIP! Look for the term RDA (recommended daily allowance) on the label to find out what percentage daily allowance of vitamin and minerals the product contains.

Eating In

Preparing your own healthy food doesn't mean you have to become a gourmet chef, it simply means learning a few tricks for knowing how to best capture the flavour and nutrients from your food. Whether you're cooking a family meal or preparing a quick snack, the emphasis should be on fresh, wholesome foods that fill you up without unnecessary calories from fat and sugar.

Here are some quick, simple strategies for preparing healthy home-cooked meals.

- Poach, stew, grill, bake, steam or microwave your food instead of frying.
- Trim fat off meat before cooking.
- Buy lean cuts of meat and reduced fat minces.
- Take the skin off chicken and turkey.
- Substitute full fat milk with skimmed or semi-skimmed milk.
- Steam or microwave vegetables instead of boiling them to retain their vitamin content.
- Use a small amount of oil (use oil-spray) instead of butter, margarine or lard to fry.
- When pan frying foods, keep a lid on the pan to prevent moisture escaping, thus reducing the need for more oil.
- Add low fat flavour to dishes with herbs, spices, lemon juice, garlic and soya, tomato or chilli sauce.
- Substitute chips with vegetables or a jacket potato.
- Use oven chips rather than fried chips.
- Save cream and fromage frais for special occasions.
- Use less fat and more vegetables in curries.
- Hold the batter and grill your fish.

Snacks on the Run

It's easy to give up on your health when you're too busy to cook healthy meals, but with a little effort it is still possible to watch your waistline even when you're eating on the run. Try these ideas for healthy pre-prepared food that you can stash in your bag at a moment's notice!

- Fresh fruit
- Fruit canned in juice or water (not sugar)
- Dried fruit (no more than a small bag or handful)
- Meal replacement formulas
- Cereal bars (check the fat content)
- Rice cakes with a low fat dip (e.g., salsa, low-fat Tzatsiki)
- Raw vegetable sticks with cottage cheese
- Rye crackers with low fat cheese
- Low fat yoghurt
- Packet of ready-to-go cereals
- Hommus and pita wedges
- Pretzels



Never go Hungry

It's better to plan a healthy snack than to wait until hunger makes you want to eat everything within site!

5-minute Fish

Here's a healthy low-fat meal that can be prepared in just five minutes!

Sprinkle a fish fillet with lemon juice, herbs and spices and cook in the microwave for four minutes. While the fish is cooking, chop up some fresh vegetables and when the fish is done, pop the vegetables in the microwave for a minute (the less you cook the veggies, the more vitamins and minerals they retain).

If you don't have a microwave, cook the fish in some foil in the oven (allow 10-15 minutes for cooking) and steam the vegetables on the stove.



A pinch of Salt

Ditch the salt shaker and resist the temptation to add a pinch of salt to your cooking, because many of us already consume twice the amount of salt that we should. Too much salt can raise blood pressure, leading to a greater risk of coronary heart disease and stroke, yet we often don't realise how much of it we're eating because so much salt is hidden in processed foods like bread, soup and cereals.

To reduce your salt intake, read the labels before you buy processed foods and avoid those with a high salt content, or simply cut down on processed foods altogether. If you're in the habit of adding salt to your food, try using herbs, spices and ground pepper for flavour instead – you'll be surprised at how quickly your taste buds will adjust!

Filling Fibre

You don't have to go hungry to lose weight, you simply need to know which foods will fill you up without a lot of calories. High fibre foods are your best bet because they not only provide volume, but also take more time to digest, making you feel fuller for longer.

The best way to boost your consumption of fibre is to eat a variety of whole grains, vegetables, legumes and fruit. When buying breads or grains, look for the word 'whole' on the label and check that they have at least 3 grams of fibre per slice/serving. Try whole wheat pasta, which has at least three times the amount of fibre as regular pasta, and avoid removing the skin from vegetables and fruit as this decreases their fibre content.

Eat whole grains on a regular basis and they will reduce your risk of diabetes, heart disease and certain cancers.

Did you know?

The deeper the colour of a fruit or vegetable the more nutritious it is.

If you like baked beans you're in luck because a small can of baked beans (choose the no added salt or sugar variety) counts as one portion towards your recommended daily five portions of fruit and vegetables.

TIP! Fill your fridge and cupboards with vegetables, fruits, cereals and grains. Keep high fat treats out of sight, or better still, out of the house.

Eating Out

Restaurant meals and take-away foods are often much higher in fat than the foods you would normally prepare at home, so it pays to be wary when you eat out. Portion sizes are also often oversized – not a good combination when it comes to watching your waistline!

So, is it all a hopeless downward spiral? Not necessarily. With a little careful planning, eating out can be as healthy as you wish it to be.

- Don't go to the restaurant famished. Eat a piece of fruit before you go to keep yourself from over-ordering.
- Ask the waiter how the dish is prepared and served to save any later surprise.
- Share an entrée or have it as a main course if portions are generous.
- Choose dishes that are lower in fat; beware of those that are fried, creamed, sautéed and battered.

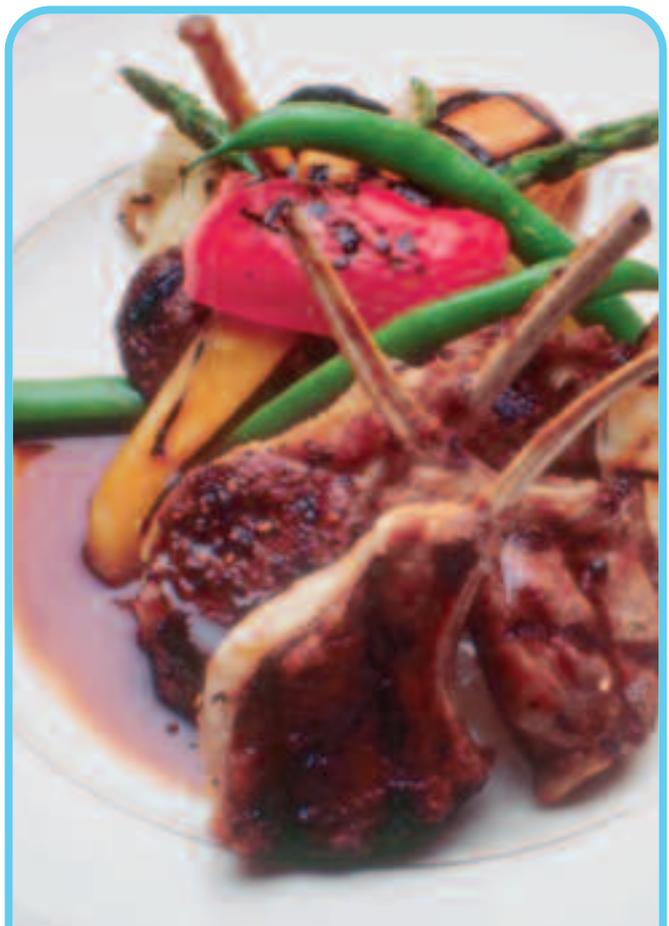
- Order sauces and salad dressings on the side, so that you choose how much to add for yourself.
- Mix and match. Order different dishes with your friends and share.
- Skip the basket of bread or chips.
- Request that your steak, fish, chicken and vegetables are not brushed with butter before serving.
- Satisfy your sweet tooth with fresh fruit salad or sorbet rather than double chocolate cream cake!
- Know when enough is enough. Don't be frightened to leave food on your plate.
- Enjoy the experience. In our busy stressful lives, eating out should be a real pleasure and a time to relax with family and friends

Restaurant meals contain an average of six grams more fat than home-cooked meals.

Don't Blow Your Budget

Just one restaurant dish can contain nearly your entire day's allowance of fat! Women are advised to eat no more than 70 grams of fat and men no more than 95 grams of fat a day. Here's how easy it is to blow your fat budget on one serving of a restaurant meal or take-away:

- Chinese battered sweet and sour pork with egg fried rice: 60 g fat
- Crispy Duck: 31 g fat
- Tikka masala with pilau rice: 47 g fat
- Vegetable biryani: 43 g fat
- Lasagna: 45 g fat
- McDonald's Big Mac and regular French fries: 32 g fat
- Pret a Manger Big BLT sandwich: 26 g fat
- Burger King Whopper Burger with cheese: 33 g fat
- Pizza Express Four Seasons pizza: 29 g fat
- Domino's Pepperoni Passion 9.5" pizza: 46 g fat





Tip! Frozen vegetables can be just as nutritious as fresh, especially if your 'fresh' vegetables have been sitting around in your vegetable rack for a few days.

Portion Distortion

A serve of French fries in a fast food outlet is 57% bigger today than it was 20 years ago, a dessert is 33% bigger, and a soft drink is 62% bigger. Given these statistics it's hardly surprising that most of us find it hard to actually figure out what is an appropriate serving size.

Larger portion sizes may be better value for money, but when you're watching your waistline they can cause you to unwittingly consume far more calories than you realise. A king-size Mars Bar, for example, is one-third bigger and packs around 96 kcal more than the standard 60 gram size.

To find out whether you're eating the appropriate portion sizes refer to 'How much is a portion?' on page 30-31. If you need to reduce your portion intake, follow these strategies for learning how not to clean your plate!

- Buy 'meals for one' rather than 'family value' packs at supermarkets and fast food outlets.
- Request the smallest portion on offer.
- Instead of finishing all your meal in a restaurant, ask if you can take home the leftovers.
- Serve meals on entrée or salad plates.
- Read food labels to find out the number of servings in a packet instead of assuming the whole packet is one serve.
- Eat slowly and savour each mouthful.
- Break jumbo packets into smaller individual size portions and freeze for later.
- Don't go back for seconds, even if it's an 'all you can eat' buffet!

Carob vs Chocolate

Carob is often mistakenly perceived as a less fattening alternative to chocolate, but carob and chocolate are equally high in fat and kilojoules. A single 100 g carob bar contains a startling 440 calories (1,760 kJ), 52% of which comes from fat. The only significant advantage that carob holds over chocolate is that carob is caffeine free and may contain a little less sugar.

Did you know? If you were to eat two digestive biscuits every day for a year, you'd gain ten pounds of body fat!

When going to a big dinner, wedding or other special occasion involving food, try to eat before you go so that you are not as hungry and able to resist the temptation for a big splurge!

Cuisine Guide

How to make healthy choices when you dine out.

The Fry Up

The traditional English breakfast is normally associated with fat and grease, but the good news is that there is such thing as a healthy fry-up. Here's how:

- Ask for your bacon grilled and with the fat cut off.
- Have your eggs poached or scrambled instead of fried.
- Order grilled, not fried, tomatoes and mushrooms.
- Replace fried bread with toast.
- Fill your plate with baked beans instead of hash browns or Black Pudding.



Burger Bars

When nothing else will satisfy but a trip to the nearest burger bar, here's how you can make sure you make a healthy choice:

- Have a plain burger without the cheese and add a little tomato ketchup to taste.
- If only a cheese burger will do, opt for a small portion, not a double.
- Only order a small portion of fries – and don't add extra salt.

Fast Food

We tend to equate 'fast food' with 'bad' food, but it doesn't have to be. Anything in moderation is okay and as long as you choose carefully, you can eat and enjoy fast food occasionally with no ill effects.

Indian

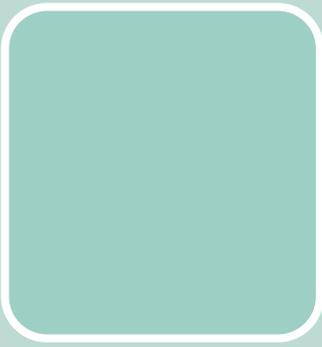
Indian might be our nation's favourite food, but it's also laden with calories. Most Indian dishes are cooked in ghee (clarified butter) and cream, which makes them high in both calories and saturated fats. But don't panic; this doesn't mean you have to avoid Indian food altogether – with a few simple changes you can slash the fat and calorie content and still have a tasty Indian meal.

- Order Chicken Tikka, Tandoori Chicken or kebabs for starters and skip the popadums and bahjis. Alternatively, stick to just one popadum and accompany it with a yoghurt and cucumber sauce (raita).
- Popadums are just as tasty if you have them grilled or microwaved – don't hesitate to ask the waiter.
- Naan bread is often quite high in fat, so switch to eating chapatis instead.
- Ask for plain boiled basmati rice instead of pilau rice (pilau tends to be fried in oil).
- Eat lentil soup (dhal), which is tasty and filling.
- If you choose a curry, eat the meat and vegetables but leave the sauce. Alternatively, try a tomato-based sauce rather than a cream-based one.
- Vegetarian dishes are sometimes higher in fat than the meat dishes, so choose carefully.

Pizza Houses

- Contrary to popular belief, you're better off ordering a thick-based pizza than a thin one (with a thick-based pizza, you fill up faster on fewer slices).
- Choose your pizza carefully – a margherita pizza (cheese and tomato), for example, has about half the fat of a pepperoni-based pizza.
- Ask if they'll 'go easy on the cheese'.
- Instead of garlic bread, order a bowl of mixed salad for a starter (with dressing 'on the side').





Chinese Food

When eating Chinese food, the more traditional Chinese restaurants usually offer less fatty dishes than their Western-influenced counterparts. Traditional Chinese cuisine is based on rice and noodles and is largely vegetarian, with only small amounts of meat and fish. Some good choices include:



- For starters, choose dishes like clear soup, chicken and sweetcorn, sweet and sour and won tons.
- Order dishes that are rice based (such as plain boiled rice and rice noodles) instead of egg noodles and fried rice (fried rice can be eaten as a dish on its own rather than an accompaniment to a meal).
- Order foods that have been steamed, such as steamed rice, vegetables and fish in ginger.
- Eat more rice and less of the meat and sauces.
- When eating Crispy Duck, avoid eating the skin and fill up the pancakes with a little lean meat, cucumber, spring onions and plum sauce.
- Choose sauces like plum, Hoi-sin, chilli, garlic and ginger, as they contain very little fat.
- Stir-fried dishes are usually prepared with a minimum of oil, but this is not always the case, so check with the waiter.
- Accompany your meal with a pot of green or jasmine tea – this is said to aid digestion and is completely calorie free.
- If you have a local takeaway you frequent, pick up a copy of the menu and pre-plan what you want.
- Choose fresh fruit for dessert.
- Buffets are cheap and cheerful, but the food options offered are usually high in fat. Why not create your own healthy buffet by ordering a variety of dishes when you eat out with friends.
- Use chopsticks to eat your meal, as this will probably reduce the speed at which you eat (and hence the amount!).

Italian food

Typical Italian fare is high in monounsaturated fats, low in saturated fats, and contain lots of fruit, vegetables, bread, rice, pasta, cereals, beans, nuts, olives and fish. Here are some of the many ways to enjoy a healthy Italian meal:

- For starters, order fresh salad, olives or minestrone soup. Eat plain, fresh bread and avoid dipping it into the olive oil.
- Try to choose pasta dishes that are tomato-based rather than cream or pesto-based.
- Avoid adding too much Parmesan cheese.
- Order half a portion or a pasta starter, as Italian meals tend to be very generous.
- Choose grilled and baked fish, chicken or veal, and order a side dish of roasted vegetables. Fish is a great source of omega 3 and 6 fatty acids, which are thought to help prevent heart disease.
- Tiramisu and other traditional Italian desserts are extremely tasty, but laden with calories. A better choice is fresh fruit and sorbet.



Sandwiches

- Choose 'healthy option' sandwiches – most supermarkets and stores have a range.
- Ask for more bread and less of the spread, or ask for them to be made without butter or mayonnaise.
- Choose fillings that are low in fat and add plenty of salad ingredients.
- Swap mayonnaise for mustard, horseradish or pickles – this ensures that the sandwich doesn't dry out, tastes good and is low in fat.
- Order granary or whole meal bread and baps.

How much is a portion?

Check out the following examples of standard portion sizes to find out how much you should be consuming from the different food groups each day.

Fruit and vegetables (have 7-8 portions per day)	Examples of one portion
Vegetables, e.g., cauliflower, cabbage, peas, carrots, mushrooms, tomatoes, leeks, swede, broccoli	2 large tablespoons
Salad – mixed green, e.g., lettuce, cucumber, onion	1 small bowl
Tomato	1 medium
Whole fresh fruit	e.g., 1 apple, 1 orange, 1 banana, 1 peach
Tinned fruit in natural juice e.g., peaches, pineapple, raspberries and pears	3 large tablespoons
Stewed fruit e.g., apple, rhubarb, cherries	4 large tablespoons
Large fruits	1 slice melon or pineapple, ½ grapefruit
Small fruits	12 grapes, 3 apricots, 2 plums, 2 kiwi fruits, 7 strawberries
Dried fruit e.g., raisins	1 baby box – matchbox size
Fruit juice (maximum one per day)	1 small glass or small carton
Bread, other cereals and potatoes (have 7-8 portions per day)	
Breakfast cereals e.g., flakes or crispies	3 tablespoons
Muesli	2 tablespoons
Shredded wheat	1
Weetabix	1
Bread or toast	1 large slice (medium thick)
Bread bun or roll	½ large
Pitta bread	1 mini or picnic size
Chapati	1 small
Crackers	3
Crispbreads	4
Plain nan bread	1 small
Rice, plain boiled	2 heaped tablespoons
Pasta, plain, boiled	3 heaped tablespoons
Egg noodles, boiled	half packet
Potatoes	2 egg size
Bagel, plain or cinnamon & raisin	½
Crumpet/pikelet	1
Muffin	1
Malt loaf	1 small slice
Muesli bar	1

Milk & dairy foods (have 2-3 portions per day)

Milk (preferably skimmed or semi-skimmed)	1 medium glass, 200 ml (½ pint)
Yoghurt, plain or flavoured, low fat & low sugar	1 small pot, 150 g (5 oz)
Cheese – preferably low fat (Brie, Camembert, Edam, reduced fat cheddar, Smoked Austrian are good). The mini portion size cheeses are handy.	1 matchbox size, 40 g (1½ oz)
Cream cheese – light	the size of 2 small matchboxes, 80 g (3 oz)
Cottage cheese	1 large pot, 200 g (8 oz)
Fromas frais – light	1 small pot, 150 g (5 oz)
Lean meat like beef, pork, ham, chicken (without skin) & fish (white or oily)	3 slices (an amount the size of a pack of playing cards)
Fish fingers	3
Eggs	2
Baked beans in tomato sauce (low salt & sugar)	5 tablespoons
Lentils	4 tablespoons cooked
Beans, e.g., red kidney beans, butter beans, chick peas	4 tablespoons cooked
Nuts or peanut butter	2 tablespoons

Fats (have 2 portions per day)

Butter or margarine	1 teaspoon
Oil (any type)	1 teaspoon
Mayonnaise	1 teaspoon
Low calorie mayonnaise	2 teaspoons
Blue cheese dressing	1 teaspoon
Salad cream	1 tablespoon
Low calorie salad cream	2 tablespoons

Occasional foods (have 1 portion per day or 7 per week)

Sugar	3 teaspoons
Jam or honey	1 heaped teaspoon
Crisps, preferably low fat	1 small packet
Cream	1 tablespoon
Biscuits, plain	2
Slice of cake	½
Doughnut	½
Danish pastry	½
Chocolate	1 small bar or 2 mini bars
Sweets	1 small tube/bag
Pastry in savoury item e.g. pork pie, sausage roll, Quiche Lorraine	½

Alcoholic drinks (Max 1-2 per day or 7-14 per week)

Ordinary strength beer or lager	1 small, 300 ml (½ pint)
Wine	1 glass, 100 ml (4 fl oz)
Spirits	1 tot (pub measure), 25 ml (1 fl oz)



The world's largest international health club operator.

In 1993 Fitness First started with one club in Bournemouth and has since grown to over 370 clubs and 900,000 members in 15 countries across Europe, Asia and Australia.

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