

Chapter 2

Losing weight

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1 Are you ready to lose weight for life?

By Dr David Haslam

Choosing your vehicle

1 You may have a multitude of reasons for wanting to lose weight. For example, you may have suddenly noticed your reflection in the mirror and decided to change your appearance, or you may have recently suffered a clinical warning signal such as shortness of breath or frequent tiredness.

2 Whatever your incentive, a weight-loss manoeuvre is usually an extremely sensible option.

3 This is because obesity (defined as having a body mass index (BMI) over 30; see Chapter 5 to work out how to calculate yours), is closely linked to a number of serious, life-threatening diseases. For example, compared to thin people, people who are obese are four times more likely to contract heart disease. They are also more likely to suffer a fatal course of cancer¹.

Fat facts

Being obese increases your chances of developing one or more of these serious medical conditions²:

- *Arthritis.*
- *Asthma.*
- *Back pain.*
- *Cancer.*
- *Cirrhosis.*
- *Depression.*
- *Diabetes.*
- *Gallstones.*
- *Gout.*
- *Haemorrhoids.*
- *Heart disease.*
- *Heart failure.*
- *Heartburn.*
- *High blood pressure.*
- *Increased surgical risk.*
- *Infertility.*
- *Stress urinary incontinence.*
- *Varicose veins.*
- *Wound infections.*

Understanding what’s under your bonnet

4 If you want to lose weight, it is important that you have realistic expectations.

5 If you feel that you have a lot of weight to lose, it is not a good idea to try to lose it all in one go. A much better idea is to break your overall target into smaller chunks and then aim to lose a small amount at a time. For example, if you would eventually like to lose 25 kg (4 stone), it would be sensible to set an initial target of losing 10 kg (22 lbs).

6 This is an excellent initial target to set yourself because research shows that this amount of weight loss can result in a substantial number of health benefits. Losing 10% of your body weight (eg, 10 kg in a 100 kg man) decreases your chances of dying from an obesity-related cause by around 20%³.

7 You should also aim to lose weight gradually, so that your metabolism remains high. If you try to lose weight too quickly (ie, by starving yourself), your metabolism may slow right down and go into “starvation mode”. This means that your body needs fewer calories to function, so although you have cut down your calorific intake, some calories will still be converted into body fat.

8 A weight reduction of 0.5-1 kg per week is a sensible average rate. To

2•2 Losing weight

achieve this, you should reduce your calorific intake by 500-600 kcal per day.

9 To lose weight healthily, you should also increase your daily exercise regime, and aim to take 30 minutes of exercise, five days a week.

10 Brisk walking, cycling or swimming are good examples of suitable fat-burning exercises. You should also revert to a low-fat diet.

How to improve your diet

- Do not shop for food when hungry.
- Store healthy foods where you can see them.
- Use smaller plates and utensils.
- Eat more slowly.
- Chew food thoroughly before swallowing.

Your weight-loss journey

11 Your willpower also plays an important part in your weight-loss attempts. If you want to lose weight successfully, you must be mentally ready for the challenge. Put simply, you must be totally dedicated to making the necessary changes to your lifestyle.

12 Making any major change involves

six key stages. These stages closely resemble a car journey. Using the list below, at what stage would you currently place yourself?

Leaving the car in the garage (the pre-contemplation stage)

13 At this stage, you have not yet decided that you want to lose any weight.

Getting in the driver's seat (the contemplation stage)

14 At this stage, you have thought about losing weight, but are not yet ready to start.

Starting the engine (the preparation stage)

15 You have decided that you want to lose weight, and are prepared to make the necessary lifestyle changes within the next few weeks. You may already have set a date to start dieting. You may also feel that you need some additional guidance and support to help with your weight loss attempts.

16 Your reasons for wanting to lose weight may be:

- To be able to walk upstairs without panting.
- To look better.

- To be able to wear off-the-peg clothes.
- To lower the strain on your knees.
- To put on shoes and socks more easily.
- To lower your blood pressure.
- To achieve long-term health benefits.

Releasing the handbrake (the action stage)

17 Well done. You have got over the first hurdle and have started to make the lifestyle changes which will help you to lose your excess weight.

Reaching your destination (the maintenance stage)

18 Congratulations, you have reached your target weight. You must now concentrate on maintaining your new reduced weight.

The return journey (the relapse stage)

19 For whatever reason, you have gone back to your old ways of eating too much and not exercising regularly. The weight that you initially lost has started to return. You must find the inner strength to turn your behaviour back around.

20 Whatever stage you find yourself at, your doctor can provide additional help and support. Some of the ways that he can help are listed in the following table.

| Stage of your weight-loss journey | How your doctor can help |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Pre-contemplation | At this stage, you will not yet have decided to visit your doctor because you have not yet accepted that your weight is a problem. However, if you are visiting your doctor for another ailment, he or she may proactively mention that you should lose some weight. |
| Contemplation | At this stage, your doctor may be able to help you develop a list of pros and cons associated with your weight loss. For example, you could discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What you will gain from losing weight. • The likely difficulties you will face. • The barriers that are stopping you from losing weight right now. |
| Preparation | At this stage, your doctor can help you develop a sensible weight loss plan. This could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of calories to aim for each day. • The types of foods to avoid. • A suitable exercise regime. • A valid start date. |
| Action | At this stage, your doctor can help you overcome any cravings to ensure that you do not lose sight of your weight-loss goals. In addition, if you are finding it increasingly difficult to stick to your original weight-loss plan, he or she may be able to help you regain your motivation and make the necessary modifications to put you back on track. |
| Maintenance | At this stage, you are unlikely to need any additional support, as you are managing quite nicely on your own. However, your doctor is always there if needed, and may be able to offer medications to complement your diet and exercise programme. |
| Relapse | At this stage, you are not likely to visit your doctor as a result of your weight problem because you have lost interest in maintaining your new, reduced weight. However, if you are visiting your doctor for another ailment, he or she will almost certainly ask about your weight, and may try to pursue the triggers that made you revert to your old behaviour. This may help to put you back on track with your weight-loss attempts. |

21 One type of weight-loss aid that you can only get from your doctor is medication (eg, sibutramine and orlistat).
 22 These two medications can help to boost your weight loss attempts. Both of these medications must be taken alongside a sensible diet and exercise programme, and are only suitable if your BMI is more than 27 and if you have other obesity-related conditions, or if your BMI is greater than 30.

References

- ¹ Haslam DW. Obesity - the scale of the problem. *General Practitioner* July 2001; p31-32.
- ² Haslam DW. Time to tackle obesity. *Family Medicine* February 2000; p25-31.
- ³ Colditz GA, Willett WC, Rotnitzky A et al. Weight gain as a risk factor for clinical diabetes mellitus in women. *Annals of Internal Medicine* 1995; 122: 481-486.

2 Slow down – the lazy man's way to lose weight

1 Men know Diets with a capital D don't work. So how do you build weight-loss into your daily routine?

2 A survey published by Mintel in 2004 claimed that record numbers of men are attempting to lose weight. Apparently one in four of us would like to shift a kilo or two – up from one in six in 1980.

3 Perhaps we've all been inspired by the recent Danish research showing that being overweight lowers your sperm count and makes you less fertile. The University of Southern Denmark found that, compared with men of normal weight, overweight men – defined as men with a body mass index over 25 – had a 24% lower sperm count. (See Chapter 2 to calculate your BMI.)

4 Anyway, regardless of its impact on your fertility, the general tone of the media coverage of the Mintel report was that men trying to lose weight must be a good thing at a time when two-thirds of the male population is overweight or obese. Maybe. But the trouble is that diets don't work. And the whole weight-loss obsession can be very damaging to the self-image. Fortunately, many men already know this. Twice as many men as women told the researchers that they would never diet and only 3% would even consider joining a slimming club.

5 The report found that men tend to want to lose weight for health reasons rather than to get into smaller clothes sizes. As a result we are more likely to cut out the booze or take more exercise than to resort to meal replacements or faddy diets.

6 So what do you do? If you want to lose weight without actually changing what you eat it comes down to two things: slower and fresher.

Go slow

7 To start, don't even think about what you eat. Think about how you eat it. Lots of us stuff our faces in front of the telly hardly noticing what we're shovelling in. No good.

8 Take it easy. Drink some water. Look at your food. Chew it. Savour the flavour. Drink some more water. You'll enjoy your food more and your body will know that it's actually eating. This is vital because when it comes to food your brain's a bit slow. It takes it a good 20 minutes to wise up that your stomach is full. This means that if you've been stuffing yourself, you'll have eaten tons more than you wanted. Good rule of thumb? The first belch. It's dear old mother nature's way of telling you've had enough. (And, of course, like all mothers she does it in the most publicly embarrassing way possible.)

Be a thin couch potato

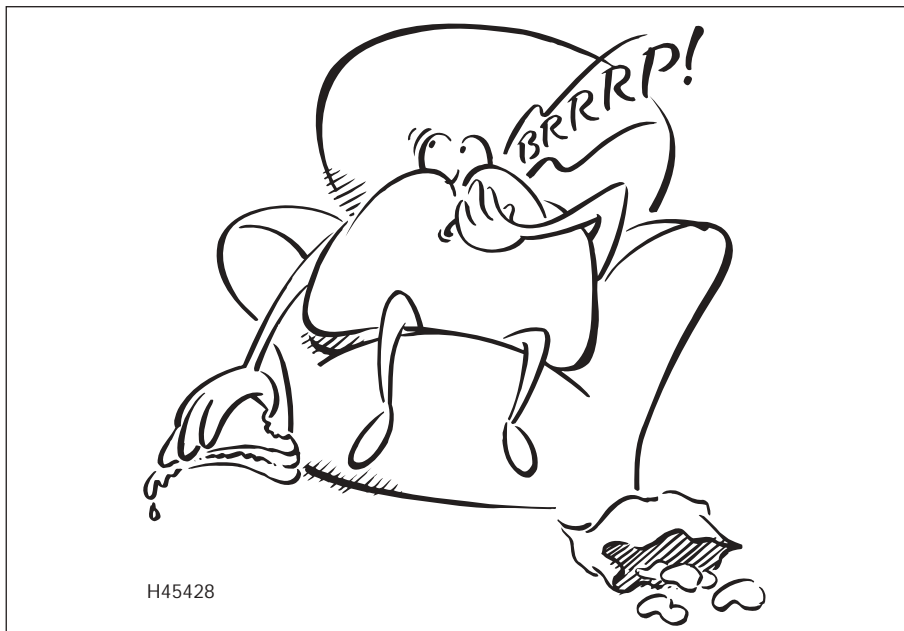
Don't just sit there. Think thin. Fidget. Sit up violently. Burn more energy by stretching while you yawn. Get up and walk to the TV.

What sorts the bone-idle thin from the most languid obese people? The answer is Neat or non-exercise activity thermogenesis. Neat is more powerful than pumping iron or running on the spot.

Low Neat means obese people sit down on average 150 more minutes each day than even the laziest lean people. Patients with low Neat have a biological need to sit more. The study shows that the calories people burn in their everyday activities – their Neat – are more important in obesity than previously imagined.

The decade-long study required volunteers to wear special underwear that recorded their every movement. They were also given special meals and gave up all unauthorised snacks. Then the scientists tried another regime. They made the thin volunteers consume an extra 1,000 calories a day, and underfed the larger ones by 1,000 calories. Even when they lost weight, the naturally obese moved less, while the naturally thin walked and fidgeted more.

US Journal Science Today



The first belch is Mother Nature's way of saying you've had enough

Get fresh

9 Once you're eating more slowly you'll taste your food better so the smart next step is to choose the tastiest version of it. Now, I'm no farmer but it's clear that the carrot that tastes most like a carrot will be the one you've pulled out of the ground yourself rather than the one that was picked weeks ago and has since been flown round the world, sliced up, salted, sugared and tinned. The good news is that this fresher version is also the most nutritional version with the most vitamins.

10 So don't change what you eat but choose the least-processed version of it. The more factories and other places your food has been through, the more likely it is to have had sugars, salts and fats added. Avoid ready-meals and convenience pre-packed options. Don't buy a chicken meal, buy a chicken. When it comes to fruit and veg, frozen is better than tinned. Fresh is better than frozen. Organic is better than supermarket.

11 Not that all fresh food is that fresh. If the item has been flown from the other side of the world it's likely to be less fresh than something produced down the road. Check out the country of origin on fruit and veg and buy local.

12 It's hardly brain surgery is it? Baked beans are a good example of the problem with processing. The beans themselves are pretty good for you but in

the tins we buy they're pumped up with salt and sugar. Nobody's suggesting you bake your own beans – though you could chose a reduced salt and sugar version – but you see the point.

13 Apart from the reduction in nutrients, processed foods – and fast foods like burgers and fries too by the way – have a high energy density. That means that each mouthful contains a lot of calories. More calories than your body is expecting. Human beings have evolved over thousand of years to guess how much we need to eat by the size of a portion but just an ordinary looking portion of a high-density food can contain double the calories your body expects. If you also have the habit of putting it away like a wolf in a meat factory, you can see how the calories can mount very quickly.

14 Worst of all, you can become dependent on the sweet, salty, fatty tastes because they give you an instant sugar hit. In tests, rats who are used to this sort of food get the shakes when they're deprived of it. Trouble is that the hit soon wears off and you're back starving again. Now, if only you'd eaten more slowly in the first place. Just like mamma used to say.

Get fresher

15 Talking of evolution, you can take that idea a little further and think about what food we've evolved to eat rather than what we actually do eat. Humans

have been on Earth for hundreds of thousands of years. In terms of our evolution, the cultivation of crops only began yesterday and the processing of food even more recently.

16 That's why you hear people going on about the raw food diet or the caveman diet. Sure, they're trying to sell diet books but the basic theory is sound. For most of our time on this planet, we would have been eating what we could hunt and what we could gather from the landscape around us. That means a diet of mainly fruit, nuts, vegetables and meat. Not that the meat would be much like today's meat. The meat on a hunted animal is different to the flab on a factory-farmed one that has never seen daylight and never walked more than a yard or two. Lean meat, free-range, organic or game gets a little nearer to what you're after.

17 This is not say you shouldn't eat cereals but that you should try to get the version that's closest to nature. That means whole grain or wild rice. Fresh, wholemeal bread rather than factory white. If you're having trouble eating the government's recommended five portions of fruit and vegetable a day, you'll find it a lot easier if you replace one serving of cereals, bread, pasta or rice with one of vegetables.

18 But sorry, as usual, chips don't count. **19** Why not? Well, since potatoes are pretty disgusting raw (most of their plant relatives are poisonous), we didn't start eating them in quantities until we learned to cook food. Again this happened relatively recently. There's that and the 50g of fat in a portion of fries!

3 Goal setting



The Obesity Awareness & Solutions Trust

What is in a thought?

1 The MOT and servicing that you give your car or bike keeps it:

- *Running to its optimum.*
- *Stops it from breaking down.*
- *Keeps it performing well.*
- *Ensures safety.*



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The MOT and servicing that you give your body keeps it running to its optimum

2 You will probably spend time, skill, effort, thought and energy looking after your car because you want it to be reliable, efficient and to perform well. You value your machine and your motivation will be to keep it in peak condition (or working at the very least.)

3 When you go to fill up with fuel do you ever put petrol instead of diesel in the fuel tank or visa versa? Unlikely because you think about what fuel your machine needs to keep it working well. It is something that you have done many times and seems automatic to go to the right pump. If you put the wrong fuel in the consequences would be undesirable: the engine would seize up, the machinery would not work and you would end up spending time and money in getting it fixed. Most likely you are also motivated to think about how you treat your vehicle so that it works properly and doesn't conk out.

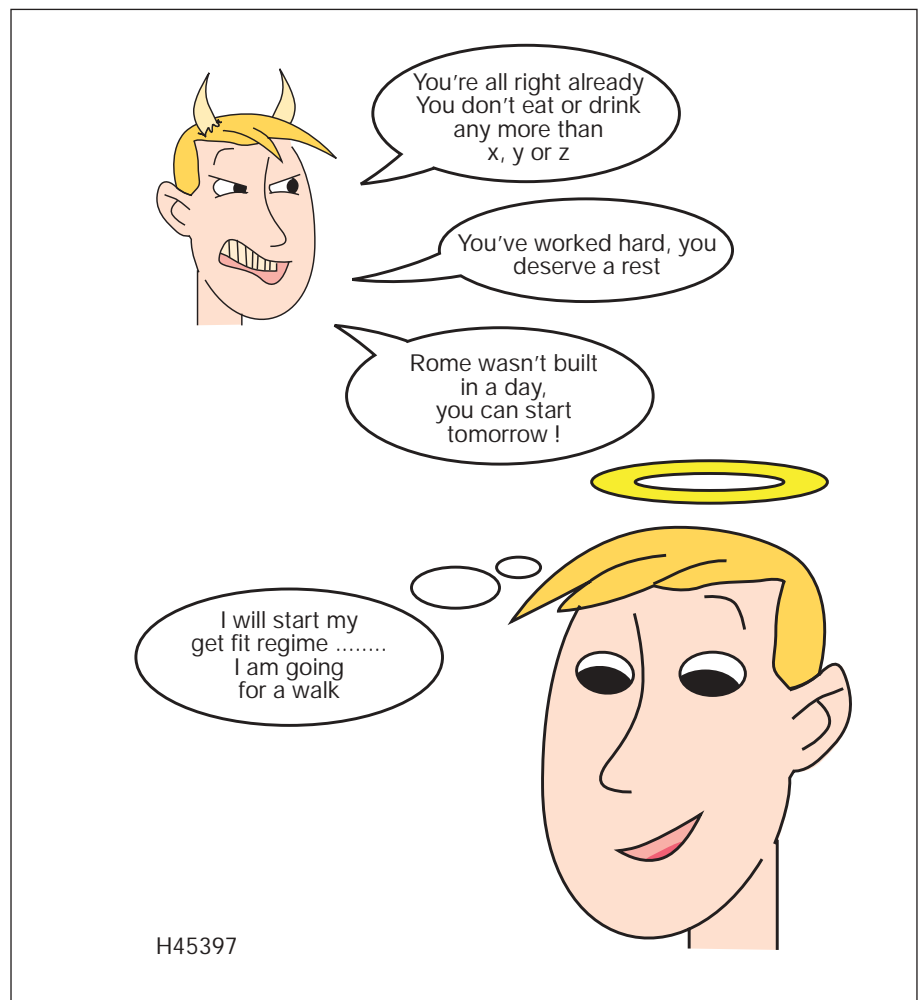
4 Although MOT and servicing bring with them some trepidation and a set of negative thought patterns about possible failure, for most of us it is also recognised as inevitable and necessary.

5 Do you spend as much time looking after yourself, thinking about what fuel you need to perform well and how best to recharge your batteries as you do on your vehicle?

6 Do you service and MOT your body and mind and consider what will keep you mentally and physically in peak condition? Or even what will keep you functioning well enough so that you can live life the way you want to?

7 Good intentions are often sabotaged by our own 'demons'. Think of all the times that you have been determined to do something like: go to the gym, take the dog for a walk, mow the lawn, walk to work, and take the stairs not the lift. Then the little voice on your shoulder persuades you that: "you'll to the gym and mow the lawn next week, take the dog for a walk/walk to work when it isn't raining and run up the stairs when you have more time." The demons always seem so rational and offer us the easy option.

8 The truth is that what we say to ourselves really does count. Our thoughts affect our feelings and how we feel effects the way that we act; it is the things that we say to ourselves that affect us.



Good intentions are often sabotaged by our own 'demons'

9 As a result, actions are more likely to include withdrawing from people and avoiding new situations, or perhaps acting on our hostility with sarcasm or blaming.

10 Believe it or not, these negative thoughts serve a purpose. If you are anxious about trying something new and your own thoughts say, "I can't do that! I'm a stupid fool to even think of it!" – you are likely to listen, not give it a try, and, sure enough, your anxiety is relieved. The critical voice protects you in a backward kind of way from fear of failure and rejection. Negative thinking may become automatic – ingrained in your self-image and you end up living your life that way.

11 Positive, encouraging interactions during childhood go a long way toward promoting positive self-talk when we are adults. But if that was not the case when

you were growing up, it doesn't mean you can't work to develop positive self-talk now.

12 Counter your negative self talk with something more reasoned. It is not always helpful to try to turn a negative thought into a positive one.

13 When you find that demon telling you things like, "I will never get the job..." "I'll never get the weight off..."

14 Ask yourself:

- *Where is the evidence for this?*
- *Is this always true?*
- *Am I looking at the whole picture?*
- *Am I being objective?*

15 Make your decisions based on logical discussion with yourself rather than allowing them to be a *fait accompli*.

16 Remind yourself of some of the successes that you have had in life and remember how good you felt when you achieved them. Did they involve a lot of

work along the way that you could easily have talked yourself out of? Sometimes it is not until you feel the pleasure of achievement that you can see that your efforts were worthwhile. When it all seems hard work without instant rewards, and a pie and a pint looks more attractive than a brisk walk or an hour at the gym, remember how good you'll feel when you have achieved what you set out to.

17 Looking after yourself, giving yourself a good service and MOT, and doing the work that you need to do to get you running well, is like that. There will be times that you wonder what you are doing it for. Other times that your demons try to convince you that something else or some other direction would be a better one. Knowing how powerful your thoughts are will give you another tool for your kit bag.

Do you know where you are going?

18 What is it that you think that you want? Are you the sort of person who looks with envy at the BMW your neighbour has and plans how you are going to get one, or are you more likely to look at it and be content with the fact



Planning a route and making sure that you know where you are going are useful

that your car is well maintained and reliable?. What do you want for your body, the super model, the perfect body or just one that works well that is well maintained and reliable?

19 When you go on a journey what are some of the things that you need to do before setting off? Planning a route and making sure that you know where you are going are useful. You might look at the map or use a route master. If you are going on holiday you may need to book in advance where you are going to stay and you will either need to save up the money or pay for it later.

20 Life is like that too it takes planning to look after yourself and to know what direction you need to go in but often we take our bodies for granted and forget to plan what we need to keep ourselves in good condition.

21 It is easy to take on board too many calories for a variety of reasons and we don't spend them because we are not active enough to use up the calories that we are eating. We end up in the red and our overdraft of excess calories will be turned into fat. Excess fat will clog up your arteries and put you at high risk of:

- Heart attack.
- Stroke.
- Cancer.
- Diabetes.
- High blood pressure.
- Joint problems.
- Breathing difficulties.

22 Is this what you want? Is this what you have but you want to do something about it?

23 In order to plan what you want for yourself and your body you need to know what you want. You need to work out where you are going to be able to know when you have reached your destination. You need to be clear about what you are trying to achieve.

The most important thing about motivation is goal setting

- 24** Consider these questions:
- What are your life time goals?
 - What are your goals for the next three to five years?
 - What are your goals for this year?
 - What are the things you need to do in order to accomplish this year's goals?

25 Now list the things you will do this week, and the things you will do today

that relate to your goals for this year. To this list then add anything else that you want to accomplish during the day or week.

26 You now have a 'to do' list!

27 Ask yourself which of these activities you really enjoy doing. Which do you find hard slog? Which do you avoid doing at all? How many of the things that are hard slog relate to your life time goals? If you find that you are not achieving things that you want to it may be because you are not able to see what the longer term rewards for you will be.

28 Think about the consequences of achieving these goals, and the consequences of not.

29 Some consequences are pleasurable and others are avoidance techniques. The consequences of avoiding something can be very motivating for escape and reinforcing the belief that by avoiding the situation you have protected yourself from:

- Criticism.
- Failure.

30 And feeding into the, "I knew it would be better not to... apply for the job/join the gym/cycle to work/etc".

31 Pleasurable ones are more helpful for building positive behaviours.

32 Consequences can be immediate or delayed. Consequences serve as more effective motivators if they are immediate. This is why it is easier to eat a pie from the garage, which gives instant gratification, than make a healthier option at home which will take time to prepare and time to see the positive results of looking and feeling healthier.

Immediate

- Satisfy hunger.
- Save time.

Delayed

- Eat healthily.
- Look after myself.
- Feel good.

33 Take some time to work out what keeps you ticking and make sure that you put yourself in the driving seat when it comes to determining what direction your life takes.

34 Remember the most powerful person in your life is you and you can achieve your goals in 1st or 5th gear depending on the speed that you decide to go.

4 Fad diets

Peanut Butter Diet

This diet allows helpings of 6 tablespoons of peanut butter per day, combined with a recommended 45 minutes of exercise per day. The total daily calorie intake on the diet is 1500 calories per day for women and 2200 calories per day for men but, because of the peanut butter content, a slightly higher percentage of calories are derived from fats than on traditional diets.

Advantages

The peanut butter diet combines sensible eating and an exercise program, with regular helpings of a popular comfort-food. Evidence suggests that it actually does successfully deliver slow and steady weight loss, although the weight loss might be a bit faster without the peanut butter.

Disadvantages

This diet may contain nuts!

Conclusion

Sounds a bit nutty, but it is at least an improvement on the doughnut and apple pie diet.

Cabbage Soup Diet

The Cabbage Soup Diet is a 7-day rapid weight loss program, that combines frequent helpings of cabbage soup with portions of fruit, vegetables and grains.

Advantages

A diet that includes home-made soup and other fresh ingredients is likely to be quite nutritious and healthy.

Disadvantages

Even if you start by absolutely loving cabbage soup you will hate it by the end of the week. Any diet plan will be more successful if it is varied, interesting and very tasty.

Conclusion

And the forecast is: it is going to be windy, very windy.

Raw Foods Diet

The Raw Foods Diet recommends eating mainly uncooked vegetarian food. This is a diet high in fruits and vegetables, seeds and nuts; and low in starch.

Advantages

Many foods that can be eaten raw are high in vitamins and nutrients.

Disadvantages

A diet composed exclusively of uncooked foods will not be balanced, easily tolerated, or healthy in the long term, but will at least save time cooking.

Conclusion

Probably best not to eat pork chops on this diet.

Cider Vinegar Diet

According to some, cider vinegar has fat-burning qualities and works to speed up metabolism. The diet involves taking several spoonfuls of cider vinegar with every meal.

Advantages

You can eat whatever else you like.

Disadvantages

The vinegar will taste so awful that you may be tempted to think twice before eating.

Conclusion

Vinegar is good for fish and chips, not losing weight.

Negative Calorie Diet

The Negative Calorie Diet claims that digesting some foods burns more calories than they contain, and that eating other foods actually speeds up your metabolism. In addition it claims that simple breathing exercises can 'turn your body into a fat burning machine'.

Advantages

A diet that is high in fruit and vegetables will be filling and really healthy, even if they are not actually 'negative' calories.

Disadvantages

If you really want to burn calories then start exercising.

Conclusion

Does this diet really work? Negative.

Caveman Diet

The Caveman Diet recommends a diet high in fruits, berries, nuts, vegetables, fish and meat. These are all foods that humans evolved on over millions of years. Other foods, such as grains (found in bread and pastas), beans, potatoes, dairy products and sugars have only recently appeared in the diet. Because we are not truly adapted to eating these 'new' types of food, it is suggested that they may contribute to health problems such as obesity, cancer or arthritis.

Advantages

A diet that contains plenty of fresh foods, fish and some meat is going to be very healthy.

Disadvantages

Getting eaten by Tyranosaurus Rex on the way to the supermarket.

Conclusion

"Wilma! I'll have the Brontosaurus steak!"

Grapefruit Diet

This diet suggests that grapefruit acts as a magical fat-burning catalyst when eaten with other foods. The diet plan therefore combines a low calorie diet with, you've guessed it, a grapefruit with every meal.

Advantages

Grapefruits, like any other fruit or vegetable, are a healthy food; and any low calorie diet will cause some weight loss, at least in the short term.

Disadvantages

Most individuals on a low calorie diet will give up after days or weeks because of hunger: on this diet you might be lucky to last that long.

Conclusion

You may never want to see, let alone eat, a grapefruit again.

Further information

If you would like to know more, look in the Contacts section at the back of the book, or contact:

Website: www.diet-i.com

Recipes



BBC Good Food magazine is a lifesaver for anyone who wants to create easy, tasty, family friendly-meals at home.

With around 100 recipes and meal tips every month, every issue includes simple midweek meals that are ready in half an hour, great ideas for relaxed entertaining, plus inspired dishes from

top chefs. Every recipe is foolproof, as they're all thoroughly tested in the Good Food kitchen. In addition, the magazine is packed with food tips, techniques and notes. If you want to enjoy great food at home, you can't go wrong with BBC Good Food.

Published monthly by BBC Worldwide.

Spicy vegetable chapati wraps

Curry can be deceptively high in fat but our version is packed with flavour and has only 5g of fat per serving.

Takes 20 to 35 minutes.

Serves 4.



Ingredients

300g/10oz sweet potatoes, peeled and roughly cubed

400g can peeled plum tomatoes

400g can chickpeas, drained

1/2 tsp dried chilli flakes

2 tbsp mild curry paste

100g/4oz baby spinach leaves

2 tbsp chopped fresh coriander

4 plain chapatis (Indian flatbreads)

4 tbsp 0% fat Greek yogurt

1 Tip the sweet potatoes into a large pan of boiling water and cook for 10-12 minutes until tender. Meanwhile, in another pan stir together the tomatoes, chickpeas, chilli flakes and curry paste, then simmer gently for about 5 minutes.

2 Drain the sweet potatoes and tip them into the tomato mixture. Stir in the

spinach and cook for a minute or until the leaves have just started to wilt. Stir in the coriander, season to taste and keep warm. Meanwhile, put the grill on to heat.

3 Sprinkle the chapatis with a little water and grill for 20-30 seconds on each side. Put each chapati on a warm plate and spoon the filling evenly between them. Top the mixture with a dollop of yogurt and fold the chapatis in half to serve.

Per serving

289 calories

Protein 12g

Carbohydrate 54g

Fat 5g

Saturated fat none

Fibre 5g

Added sugar none

Salt 1.08g

Herbed pork fillet with roast vegetables

Takes 1 hour 30 to 1 hour 45 minutes.
Serves 4.



Ingredients

4 medium parsnips, quartered lengthways
1 butternut squash (about 650g/1lb 7oz), peeled, seeded and cut into chunks
2 red onions, each cut into 8 wedges
1 tbsp olive oil
grated zest of 1 lemon
2 tbsp pork seasoning or dried mixed Italian herbs
500g/1lb 2oz lean pork tenderloin, in one or two pieces
1 medium cooking apple
400ml/14fl oz chicken stock

1 Preheat the oven to 200C/gas 6/fan 180C. Put the vegetables into a roasting pan. Drizzle with the olive oil, season with salt and pepper, then toss everything together.

2 On a plate, mix together the lemon zest and pork seasoning or herbs. Roll the pork in the mixture then put it on top of the vegetables. Roast for 40 minutes.

3 Peel and core the apple and cut it into chunks. Scatter it into the roasting tin, then pour in the stock and cook for a further 15-20 minutes. Slice the pork, arrange on a platter with the vegetables then spoon over the pan juices.

Per serving

397 calories
Protein 34g
Carbohydrate 45g
Fat 10g
Saturated fat 2g
Fibre 12g
Added sugar none
Salt 0.85g

Fish pie with swede and potato topping

Making fish pie can be a bit of a palaver. Not this one though, it's reassuringly simple, using a tub of low-fat soft cheese as the base for the sauce.
Takes 1 hour to 1 hour 15 minutes.
Serves 4.



Ingredients

1 medium swede (weighing about 600g/1lb 5oz), cut into chunks
500g/1lb 2oz floury potatoes, cut into chunks
200g tub low-fat soft cheese with garlic and herbs
150ml/1/4 pint vegetable stock
4 tsp cornflour, blended with 2 tbsp cold water
500g/1lb 2oz skinless, boneless cod, cut into large chunks
140g/5oz smoked haddock, skinned and cut into large chunks
85g/3oz cooked peeled prawns
1 tbsp chopped fresh parsley

1 Cook the swede and potatoes in boiling, lightly salted water until tender – about 20 minutes. Preheat the oven to 190C/gas 5/fan 170C.

2 Whilst the potatoes are cooking, put the soft cheese and stock into a large saucepan and heat gently, stirring with a wooden spoon, until blended and smooth. Now add the blended cornflour

and cook until thick. Gently stir the chunks of fish into the sauce with the prawns and parsley. Season with some pepper, but don't add any salt, as the smoked haddock and prawns add a salty taste.

3 Tip the mixture into a 1.5 litre/2³/₄ pint ovenproof baking dish. Drain the swede and potatoes and mash them well, seasoning with a few grindings of black pepper. Spoon the mash on top of the fish mixture to cover it completely. Bake for 25-30 minutes until piping hot, then transfer to a hot grill for a few minutes to brown the top. Serve with frozen, cooked peas or sweetcorn.

Per serving

354 calories
Protein 44g
Carbohydrate 36g
Fat 5g
Saturated fat none
Fibre 5g
Added sugar none
Salt 1.9g

Goulash in a dash

Takes 30 mins.
Serves 4.



Ingredients

1 tbsp vegetable oil
300g/10oz stir-fry beef strips or minute steak cut into strips
100g/4oz chestnut mushrooms, quartered
2 tsp paprika
500g/1lb 2oz potatoes, peeled and cut into smallish chunks
600ml/1pt hot beef stock (a cube is fine)
500g jar tomato-based cooking sauce
Handful parsley leaves, roughly chopped
Natural bio yogurt, to serve

1 Heat half the oil in a large non-stick pan and fry the beef for 2 mins, stirring once halfway through. If your pan is small, do this in two batches. Tip the meat onto a plate. Heat the remaining oil in the pan (no need to clean) and fry the

mushrooms for 2-3 mins until they start to colour.

2 Sprinkle the paprika over the mushrooms, fry briefly, then tip in potatoes, stock and tomato sauce. Give it all a good stir, cover and simmer for 20 mins until the potatoes are tender. Return the beef to the pan along with any juices, and warm through. Stir in the parsley and a swirl of yogurt, then serve straight from the pan.

Per serving

299 calories
Protein 23g
Carbohydrate 33g
Fat 9g
Saturated fat 2g
Fibre 3g
Added sugar 5g
Salt 1.59g

Healthy fish & chips with tartare sauce

Takes 40 to 45 minutes.
Serves 2.



Ingredients

450g/1lb potatoes, peeled and cut into chips
1 tbsp olive oil, plus a little extra for brushing
2 white fish fillets, about 140g/5oz each
Grated zest and juice 1 lemon
Small handful parsley leaves, chopped
1 tbsp capers, chopped
2 heaped tbsp 0% Greek yogurt
Lemon wedge, to serve

1 Heat the oven to 200C/fan 180C/gas 6. Toss chips in oil. Spread over a baking sheet in an even layer, bake for 40 mins until browned and crisp. Put the fish in a shallow dish, brush lightly with oil, salt and pepper. Sprinkle with half the

lemon juice, bake for 12-15 mins, after 10 mins sprinkle over a little parsley and lemon zest to finish cooking.

2 Meanwhile, mix the capers, yogurt, remaining parsley and lemon juice together, set aside and season if you wish. To serve, divide the chips between plates, lift the fish onto the plates and serve with a spoonful of yogurt mix.

Per serving

373 calories
Protein 35g
Carbohydrate 41g
Fat 9g
Saturated fat 1g
Fibre 3g
Added sugar none
Salt 0.96g

Vegetable balti

Takes 1 hour 20 to 1 hour 40 minutes.
Serves 4.



Ingredients

1 tbsp vegetable oil
1 large onion, thickly sliced
1 large garlic clove, crushed
1 apple, peeled, cored and cut into chunks
3 tbsp balti curry paste
1 medium butternut squash, peeled and cut into chunks
2 large carrots, thickly sliced
200g/8oz turnips, cut into chunks
1 medium cauliflower, weighing about 500g/1lb 2oz, broken into florets
400g can chopped tomatoes
425ml/3/4 pint hot vegetable stock
4 tbsp chopped fresh coriander, plus extra
150g pot low fat natural yogurt

1 Heat the oil in a large lidded pan, add the onion, garlic and apple and cook

gently, stirring, for 5-8 minutes or until softened. Stir in the curry paste.

2 Tip in the fresh vegetables, add the tomatoes, stock and 3 tbsp of the coriander. Bring to the boil, cover, and then simmer for half an hour.

3 Remove lid and cook for 20 minutes until the liquid has reduced. Season.

4 Mix remaining coriander with the yogurt. Ladle the curry into bowls, top with the yogurt mixture and extra coriander. Serve with warm naan bread.

Per serving

201 calories
Protein 11g
Carbohydrate 25g
Fat 7g
Saturated fat 1g
Fibre 7g
Added sugar none
Salt 1.13g

Spaghetti with lemon, parmesan and peas

Takes 20 to 30 minutes.
Serves 2.



Ingredients

140g/5oz spaghetti
100g/4oz frozen petits pois or garden peas
2 tsp olive oil
1 small onion, finely chopped
100g/4oz low-fat soft cheese with chives and onion
Finely grated zest of 1 lemon
3 tbsp finely grated parmesan
1 tbsp chopped fresh flatleaf parsley

1 Bring a large pan of lightly salted water to the boil. Feed in the spaghetti and cook for about 10-12 minutes, until just tender. (Check the pack instructions for timings – 'quick cook' spaghetti takes only 3 minutes.) Add the peas for the last 2-3 minutes.

2 At the same time, heat the olive oil in a saucepan and fry the onion gently until

softened and cooked, but not brown. Stir in the soft cheese and warm it through, adding 3 tbsp of the pasta cooking water to thin it down. Now stir in the lemon zest and 2 tbsp of the parmesan.

3 Drain the spaghetti and peas really well, return them to the pan and gently stir in the sauce. Season with salt and pepper, and then pile it into 2 serving bowls. Sprinkle the parsley and the remaining parmesan over the top and serve right away, with a mixed leaf salad.

Per serving

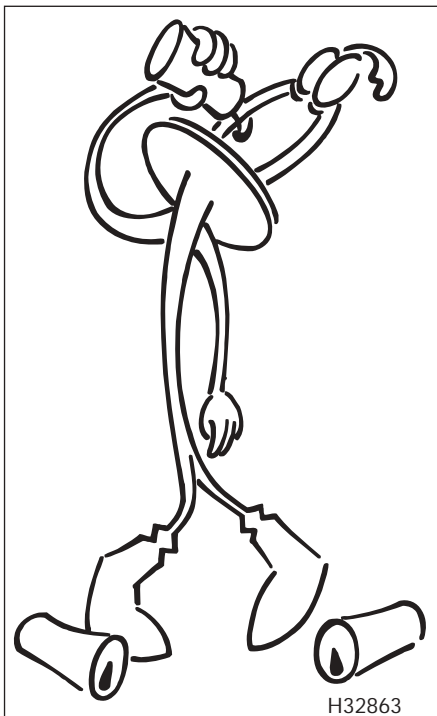
420 calories
Protein 22g
Carbohydrate 61g
Fat 11g
Saturated fat 3g
Fibre 5g
Added sugar none
Salt 0.83g

5 Alcohol and losing weight

1 With all the information about diet and exercise it is easy to forget about the role of alcohol in weight problems. All types of alcoholic drinks contain calories, and if you want to lose weight then it makes sense to think about your drinking.

2 The strength of different drinks can be compared using units of alcohol. A pint of beer (3.5% ABV) contains 2 units of alcohol, and a pint of stronger beer (5% ABV) nearly 3 units. A small glass of wine (12% ABV) contains about 1.5 units; and a bottle of wine 9-11 units, depending on strength.

3 Each unit of alcohol contains about 55 calories. However, because of its high carbohydrate content, beer contains significantly more calories than other drinks with about 91 calories per unit. A pint of beer (3.5% ABV) therefore contains 182 calories, or nearly one tenth of the total daily energy requirements for a man. Over a week, drinking 3 pints of beer a day adds up to a total of 3,350 calories, which equals the amount



Beer is full of calories which go straight to your waist

| Container | ABV | Units |
|---------------------------------|------|-------|
| Large glass of wine (175 mls) | 15% | 3 |
| Small glass of wine (125 mls) | 12% | 1 1/2 |
| Bottle of wine (750 mls) | 12% | 9 |
| Pint of beer | 5% | 3 |
| Pint of beer | 3.5% | 2 |
| Single measure spirits (25 mls) | 40% | 1 |
| Single measure spirits (35 mls) | 40% | 1 1/2 |

of calories needed to lose 1lb of weight. Therefore someone cutting their intake by 3 pints per day could expect to lose 1lb a week, without changing the amount that they eat or exercise. For you, this amount of beer may not be an issue, although cutting the amount of alcohol (particularly beer) that you drink will help you to reduce your calorie intake, and will always help you lose weight.

4 Alcohol is also important because it strongly affects hunger and appetite. It has a direct action on the stomach, stimulating it to relax and produce more gastric juices. Although there are a lot of calories present, particularly in beer, the stomach isn't able to tell this. Therefore it won't feel full in the way that it would after a meal, even if there is the same calorie content. Drinking, particularly on an empty stomach, makes blood sugar levels drop, which can sometimes cause almost uncontrollable feelings of hunger. Alcohol also affects areas of the brain that control behaviour, tending to cause a loss of inhibition and self-control. Put these factors together, and there is the risk of doing things when drunk that you'd never do when sober – as experienced by anyone who has ever eaten a dodgy late-night kebab after the pub.

5 However, in moderation, alcohol is safe and healthy, and can be an enjoyable part of a balanced lifestyle. Research has even shown that moderate drinkers have lower rates of illness than non-drinkers: the ideal intake for best health seems to be up to 10 units per week. The risk of health problems then steadily increases with increasing alcohol consumption. The recommended maximum intake for men is 3-4 units per day (for women 2-3 units per day). Major problems become much more likely with an intake of over 35 units per week for men (over 28 units for women).

6 It can be helpful to keep a drink diary. Keep a note of every alcoholic drink that you have, ideally over a two week period.

If you drink spirits, then use a measure to check the size of your drinks. If you drink wine, beer or cider, etc, make a note of the ABV%. Also make a note of where and when you have each drink – at the end of the fortnight you can check out the pattern of your drinking and work out your total intake in units.

7 In excess, alcohol can cause a wide range of physical problems such as poor erections, liver disease, high blood pressure, pancreatitis, diabetes, heart disease and cancer.

8 Drinking is also strongly linked to depression, anxiety and sleeping problems. Alcohol has a two-stage effect on the brain: the first effect is relaxation, loss of inhibition and a mild euphoria over a period of a few hours. However it then increases levels of stress, anxiety and depression the next day. Using alcohol to relieve these unpleasant feelings will steadily make them worse.

Safety is also an issue, as more than half of all fatal car accidents, falls or drownings are alcohol-related. Nearly half of all injuries seen in casualty departments are linked to alcohol, either as a result of accident or violence.

9 Alcohol can also cause work problems, financial worries and damage relationships with partners, friends and families.

10 Alcohol may be a problem if you feel annoyed by people criticising your drinking, if you feel bad or guilty about your drinking, or if you have a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves (or get rid of a hangover). If you are worried about your drinking, sources of further help and advice would include:

- Your GP, who should be able to advise you further, check out your physical health, and can put you in touch with local sources of help.
- Drinkline (contact details below) offers information and self-help materials, help to callers worried about their own

drinking, support to the family and friends of people who are drinking, and advice to callers on where to go for help.

• Alcohol Concern (contact details below) has a useful website, with a services directory for information on how to access local alcohol services across the UK.

• Alcoholics Anonymous (contact details below).

Finally, some suggestions

- Walk, or cycle, to the pub – burn off some of the extra calories on the way.
- If you're thirsty, you'll tend to drink more – drink plenty of water, both during the day and when drinking alcohol. Alcohol tends to cause dehydration – try alternating glasses of alcoholic drink with glasses of water.
- Try to drink after a meal rather than before – you won't feel so hungry when you're eating, and you won't feel like drinking so much after your meal.
- Try cutting down the strength of what you drink: for example if you drink beer that is 5% ABV, try reducing it to 3.5% ABV.
- Try to have at least one alcohol-free day per week – if you can manage this comfortably, then you could try to have two or more alcohol-free days per week.
- Look for alternative activities to do with friends, partners or family that don't involve drinking – for example, meet up for a sports session, or go out to the movies instead.

Further information

11 If you would like to know more, look in the Contacts section at the back of the book, or contact:

For an on-line alcohol unit calculator

Website: www.projects.ex.ac.uk/trol/scol/ccalcoh2.htm

Drinkline

Offers information and self-help materials, help to callers worried about their own drinking, support to the family and friends of people who are drinking,

and advice to callers on where to go for help.

Tel: 0800 917 8282 (freephone)

Alcohol Concern

Has a useful website, with a services directory for information on how to access local alcohol services across the UK.

Website: www.alcoholconcern.org.uk

Alcoholics Anonymous

Tel: 0845 769 7555 (local rate calls)

6 Surgery – the last resort



1 Sometimes it seems that nothing works, or if it does it's too little, or only a temporary fix. Sometimes a major overhaul is the only solution.

2 Weight loss surgery isn't for everyone; only around 500 operations are carried out in the UK each year, and only after other methods of losing weight, including diet, lifestyle advice, and usually drugs, have been exhausted. Individuals considering surgery have to undergo batteries of examinations, tests, medical and psychological screening before being deemed suitable to go under the knife. For these people the last voluntary act of weight control they will perform is signing the consent form, after which they hand over complete control of their weight to someone else for the first time ever; a team of surgeons, anaesthetists and nurses.

3 Surgery is indeed a drastic step to take, but sometimes desperate situations need desperate remedies, and so-called Bariatric surgery can be life

saving. It is normally available to people with a BMI of over 40, or 35 with severe illnesses related to obesity, and only those who have tried everything else first. Operations such as jaw wiring no longer exist, and liposuction doesn't count. These days surgery is so advanced that surgeons can use laparoscopic, or 'keyhole' techniques to avoid opening up the whole belly. There are two different types of operation:

- Restrictive, which restrict the size of the stomach using staples or bands, drastically reducing the amount of food it is possible to eat.
- Malabsorptive, in which a large part of the bowel is removed or by-passed, so although food can be eaten, it cannot be absorbed from the gut.

4 The two types of operation can also be combined.

5 Life after surgery is never the same again. It makes a big difference being unable to eat more than a couple of mouthfuls of soft, easily digestible food without suffering pain, bloating, vomiting and regurgitating. Mealtimes are completely different, and social evenings unrecognisable. But the advantage is that weight loss is dramatic, and permanent, as the operation is not reversed. Patients who have had surgery can expect to lose around 50% of their excess weight, and subsequent improvement in cholesterol, blood pressure, diabetes, etc.

6 Other procedures include placing an inflatable balloon in the stomach which gives the impression of fullness; and a gastric pacing device, which is implanted near the stomach, and stimulates the nerve supply, making the brain believe that a complete meal has been eaten.

7 Obese individuals undergoing any sort of surgery have increased risks under the anaesthetic, especially of lung problems and respiratory infections. It is advisable to be as fit as possible prior to undergoing an operation.

