

the all-star slimming guide

Forget dieting or depriving yourself. If you want to slim down (and stay there) the secret is on these pages.

Imagine the following: it's the night before you start on your weight-loss journey and a feeling of panic is setting in. What if it's too hard? What if you can't stick to your slim-down guns? Relax! Your healthier life starts now, with our comprehensive, three-part guide to shifting those extra kilos. Read on for the new rules of weight-loss – it's not half as hard as you think!

MYTH

“Losing less than 10 kilos won't make much difference”

FACT Just because you only have five or 10 kilos to lose, don't think that it's not worth the effort, says Dr Ronald McCoy, spokesperson for the Royal Australian College of GPs. “While

MYTH

“You put on more weight when you eat after 7pm”

FACT “This simply isn't true,” says Saleh. “Our metabolism doesn't just switch off at 7pm – it keeps working 24 hours a day, even while we're sleeping. So, while it doesn't matter if you have a late dinner, you should still make sure you're eating the right sort of foods so your body can burn them off. In the evening, have a lean piece of steak, chicken or fish with a large serve of salad or vegetables and a small serve of low-GI carbs, such as basmati rice, sweet potato or wholemeal pasta,” advises Saleh. “For evening snacks, stick to items that are 420 kilojoules or less, such as a piece of fruit, low-fat ice-cream or a few rice crackers.”

Part one: Getting started

Overwhelmed by the thought of having to follow a set of diet 'rules'? We bust five widely held slim-down myths, and explain why you definitely don't need to suffer to get the life and body you want.

MYTH

“The all-or-nothing approach will help shift weight faster”

FACT Swearing off the foods you love won't help you slim down faster or keep the weight off long term, explains Hanan Saleh, consultant dietitian at www.thefoodexpert.com.au. “Indulging occasionally helps keep you sane and allows you to stick to a healthy eating plan for the rest of the time. Knowing you can have the odd treat also keeps you motivated. A healthy diet allows for them in normal life, and depriving yourself means a binge is more likely.”

it may seem small, losing five kilos can have significant health benefits,” he adds. “It can improve your blood pressure, put less strain on your heart and dramatically reduce your risk of diabetes.” If you're currently sitting just over your healthy weight, losing five to 10 kilos can bring you back into your healthy BMI zone. Even if you're very overweight, the journey has to start somewhere, and losing a few kilos certainly shouldn't be sniffed at. “It's a great starting point,” assures Dr McCoy. “When you're overweight, any sort of weight loss is definitely a good thing and can make a big difference to your outlook and lifestyle in general.”

MYTH

“Going to the gym every day is the only way to shed kilos”

FACT “The body needs to rest and take time to adapt when it's in training,” says Matthew Fernandez, a Sydney-based chiropractor and exercise physiologist. “Ignoring recovery time can result in illness, injury and poor workout performances.” However, if you're keen to exercise every day, you can



**SLIM BY
EXAMPLE**

Families that eat together have children who are 24 per cent slimmer than those that eat separately at different times of the day, according to a 2011 US study.

– just vary your routine. “Doing the same thing every day single doesn’t give your muscles time to recover,” explains Fernandez. “Try mixing it up by swimming, running and doing spin, yoga, Pilates, Zumba, boxing and circuit classes for a well-rounded workout that doesn’t fatigue the same muscles. Switch between high- and low-intensity exercise so you don’t overdo it. And don’t forget, if you’re exercising frequently, sleep is a great way to rest, recuperate and recover for the next gym session.” Result? More energy, a stronger body and a positive outlook.

MYTH

“You have to weigh yourself every day to stay motivated and on track with weight loss”

FACT Despite some of the research pointing to the benefits of weighing yourself frequently when trying to lose weight, stepping on the scales every day can actually be psychologically detrimental for some people, according to Saleh. “Weighing yourself every day doesn’t give you a true account and can often be demotivating if you’re not noticing a big difference,” she adds. “The female body, in particular, changes constantly and, if you’re retaining more water than the previous day, then the scales will reflect that. To get a true gauge of how much weight you’re losing, weigh yourself once a week at the same time each day, wearing the same clothes. This will give you a much clearer picture of how your overall weight-loss journey is progressing.” Also, don’t forget to take into account the inches you’ve lost – even though the number on the scales may be moving slowly, your stomach, hip, waist and thigh measurements could still be shrinking, meaning that you’re becoming both slimmer and healthier in general.

Part two: How to keep the kilos off long term

You’ve started slimming down, but you’re a little unsure of how to maximise your weight-loss results. Try these expert-approved motivation, exercise and nutrition tips to stay on track.

MOTIVATION

Find a specific incentive to continue seeing results

“Knowing you can reward yourself when you reach a goal is an easy way to stay motivated,” says psychologist Sally-Anne McCormack. “Try giving yourself something to aim towards – a holiday or new shoes.” According to Pennsylvania University research, dieters who were promised money in exchange for reaching their goal weight lost three times as much as those who didn’t have the same cash incentive.

Set small, realistic goals

You’re far more likely to achieve your goals if you set small, regular targets, rather than large, impossible ones. For example, only 15 per cent of people who set overly ambitious fitness targets (such as wanting to run a marathon in their first month of exercising) were able to achieve them, according to the American College of Sports Medicine. “Setting achievable goals means you’re not overwhelmed when you think about the path you’re facing,” says McCormack. “Small goals that you can tick off the list gives you a big sense of satisfaction and spurs you on to achieve even more. But setting large, unrealistic goals can actually be demotivating because it’s so hard to achieve them. Being able to achieve small goals acts as positive reinforcement and encourages you to continue with your weight-loss efforts.”

Boost your feel-good factor

Need an excuse to cosy up to a loved one? University of Louisville researchers claim a passionate kiss can burn more than half the kilojoules you expend by jogging for the same amount of time! And it doesn’t just help burn kilojoules. “The sorts of endorphins this type of kiss generates relieve stress and depression,” says Dr McCoy. “It gets your heart pumping and makes you feel good about yourself.”

FITNESS

►MORNING: Wake up and make exercise a priority

Learn to be a morning person and you’ll get fitter, according to research from McMaster University in Ontario, Canada. The study showed that people who put off their workout until the end of the day are less likely to have the willpower to turn up. Don’t have time for the gym first thing? Walk to work instead, or get off the bus or train several stops earlier. “Walking is a great, gentle way to start the day,” advises Fernandez. Research from the Franklin Institute in Pennsylvania showed walking is especially good for kickstarting brain function. Since walking isn’t a strenuous activity, your leg muscles don’t take up extra oxygen and glucose the same way they do when running or swimming. The result? Your brain receives a huge hit of oxygen, which helps you think better.

► **EVENING: Wind down with a walk before dinner**

A neighbourhood stroll before eating in the evening not only burns kilojoules, but also curbs appetite, according to a study from the University of Glasgow. The study showed that just 20 minutes of gentle walking reduced appetite and increased the feeling of fullness just as effectively as eating a light meal. Plus, exercise boosts metabolism, helping to burn even more kilojoules, Saleh adds.

► **EVERY WORKOUT: Listen to upbeat music**

Why? People who listen to music while they exercise are 15 per cent more motivated to train harder and longer than those who don't, according to a joint study from Brunel University and Wolverhampton University in the UK. Women are also 30 per cent more likely to stick to a regular exercise regime if

happens, you can still feel hungry," he says. "Eating slowly helps your body send signals to your brain to indicate you're full. If you're still hungry, wait 20 minutes before tucking in again. Chances are your digestion will kick in and you'll realise you've eaten enough."

Make smart food swaps

Switching from full-fat to semi-skim milk cuts kilojoules by around 20 per cent, and swapping from semi-skim to skim gets rid of another 20 per cent. "This makes a significant difference to your kilojoule count without you noticing a change in taste," explains Saleh. "Skim milk, diet drinks, low-fat spreads, yoghurts and ice-cream are all good swaps from full-fat versions." But be careful not to overindulge. "These foods still contain kilojoules and can play havoc with your weight-loss goals if you start overdoing the portions."

BECOME A SPEED DEMON

People who walk briskly live longer than those who just amble along, according to a recent study published in the *Journal of the American Heart Association*.

they listen to music during a workout, according to the *International Journal of Sports Medicine*. Search iTunes for upbeat tunes to sweat to, then plug in your iPod and get that body moving.

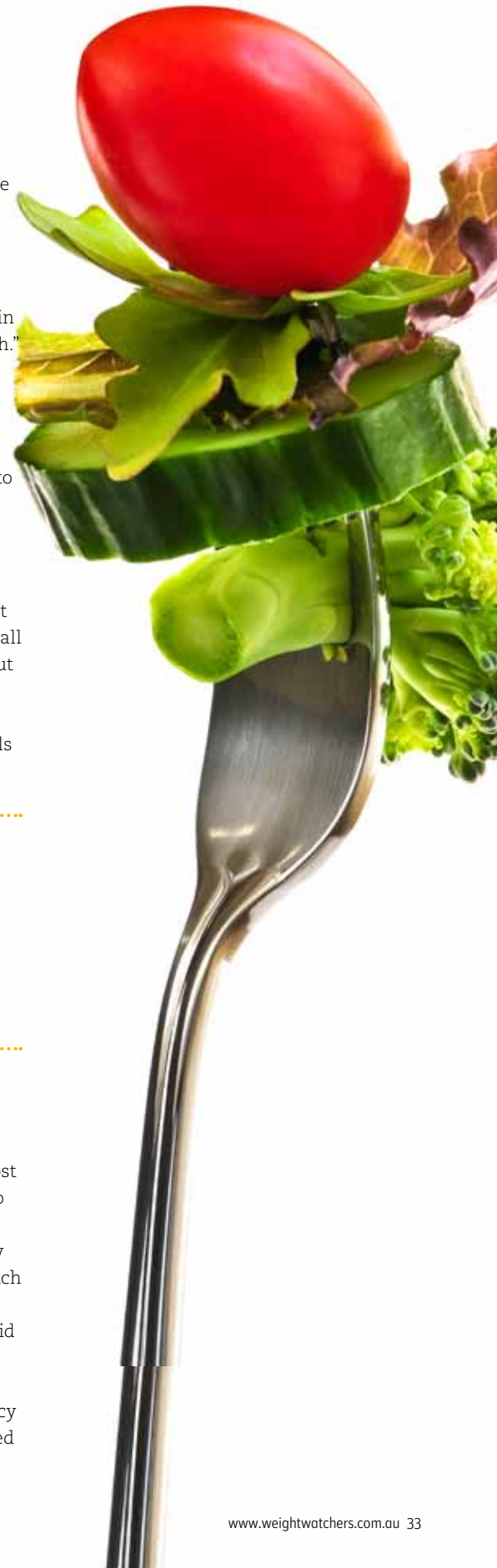
NUTRITION

Recognise real hunger

Forget about your mum telling you to eat up everything that's on your plate. "It's important to learn when to stop eating," stresses Dr McCoy. "Your body takes 20 minutes to digest the food you've eaten, so, until that

Snack on some seaweed

Seaweed might not be the first thing to pop into your mind when you're craving a snack, but it could help boost your weight-loss results. According to Japanese research, seaweed can help fight fat. Why? Because it's extremely high in antioxidants, vitamin B1 (which keeps muscles healthy) and vitamin B12, which encourages healthy thyroid function. And if your thyroid doesn't function properly, you could struggle to burn calories efficiently. Don't fancy nibbling kelp? "Eat sushi rolls wrapped in nori seaweed instead," Saleh says.



Part three: 20 expert weight-loss strategies

Put this stay-slim checklist (direct from leading experts) on your fridge door or office corkboard for an added dose of inspiration.



1 START YOUR WEIGHT-LOSS JOURNEY TODAY
“Many people are scared to take that first slim-down step because they just don’t know where to start,” says Dr McCoy. “Your GP can advise what your healthy weight is so you have something to work towards. Once you take that first step, you’re on your way.”

2 PUT PROTEIN ON YOUR PLATE
“To keep you feeling until lunchtime, make sure your breakfast combines high protein with low GI,” advises Saleh. “A good example is two poached eggs with spinach and mushroom, some baked beans, a slice of rye bread and a glass of skim milk.”

3 EXERCISE WHENEVER POSSIBLE
“Walking to the shops at lunchtime or sitting on an exercise ball at work are all really great (and easy) ways to increase your incidental exercise,” explains Fernandez. “This type of movement burns kilojoules, encourages the healthy movement of joints and also minimises stiffness.”

4 SWAP BUTTER FOR AVOCADO
“Avocados contain healthy fats, as well as vitamins, minerals and fibre,” says Saleh. “Butter

contains unhealthy fats that contribute to high cholesterol. However, try to limit your avocado intake to a quarter a day. Even though it’s a healthy fat, it’s a significant source of calories.”

5 FIGHT FOOD CRAVINGS WITH CROSSWORDS
Tempted by the biscuit tin?
“Use your brain to focus on something challenging, such as a crossword or sudoku puzzle. This immediately takes your focus away from thinking about those food cravings,” explains McCormack.

6 MOVE MORE
“A pedometer is a great way to educate yourself about how much physical activity you need to be doing,” says Dr McCoy. “Aim for 10,000 steps a day.”


7 KEEP TABS ON YOURSELF
“A food and exercise diary records and reflects your lifestyle,” says Dr McCoy. “It forces you to be honest with yourself about your habits, and identifies unhelpful traits.”

8 ENLIST A FRIEND
“The support of a friend is invaluable when losing weight,” says McCormack. “Knowing someone is there to encourage you when

you’re having a tough day means you’re much more likely to stick with it and achieve long-term weight-loss results.”

9 CREATE HEALTHY HABITS THAT LAST A LIFETIME
“Make a deal with yourself to do certain things every day,” suggests Dr McCoy. “That might be taking the stairs instead of the lift or eating a healthy breakfast every day. They’ll soon become ingrained habits.”

10 EMBRACE INTENSE EXERCISE
“To burn fat fast, think short bursts of high-intensity activity, alternated with lower-intensity activity,” says Fernandez. “Run for two minutes then jog for two and repeat over a 10-minute period. “If you haven’t exercised for a while, chat with your GP to make sure you don’t overdo things at the start.”



CHASING PERFECTION
Almost 90 per cent of women who are a normal, healthy weight would like to be thinner, according to Cornell University research.

11 **TURN OFF THE TV**
Avoid distractions. “Concentrating on what you’re doing at mealtimes gives you time to digest food and, more importantly, lets your brain realise you’re full,” says Dr McCoy.

12 **FILL YOUR FREEZER**
“Stocking healthy meals in the freezer means you won’t cave in to junk food when time is short,” says Saleh. “Stock up on single portions of curry or vegetable soup for easy-to-defrost meals in minutes.”

13 **AVOID FEELING GUILTY**
Don’t ever beat yourself up when you slip up. “Guilt doesn’t change anything,” McCormack says. “Draw a line under it and move on. Think of every day as a new one.”

14 **TAKE A BREAK**
Constantly putting yourself at the bottom of your priority list? Time for a re-think. “Many women put themselves second to family and work,” says McCormack. “But, if you don’t look after yourself, you won’t be any good to anyone. Schedule in regular ‘me-time’ every day, even if it’s just a soak in the bath. You’ll feel so much better and less stressed for it.”

15 **KEEP FRIENDS AND FAMILY IN THE LOOP**
“Telling other people what you’re aiming to achieve in terms of weight loss and living a healthier life makes you instantly accountable,” says McCormack. “It’s so much harder to give up when you know that loved ones are observing and supporting your progress.”

16 **DON’T GO WITHOUT**
Skipping meals or not eating for long periods of time slows down your metabolism, explains Saleh. “It’s essential to eat regular meals – and always breakfast,” she says. “This is a well-documented way to help with weight management.”

17 **BLITZ LIQUID KILOJOULES**
“Drinks can be serious diet-busters,” says Saleh. “A glass of juice is 630 kilojoules, equal to a 30-minute walk. Three milky coffees are 2400 kilojoules, the same as your evening meal. A few beers can add up 1680 kilojoules, equal to a 40-minute run.”

18 **SLEEP ON IT**
“Aim for eight hours a night,” says Dr McCoy. “People who get less than seven hours are heavier than those who get between eight and nine. A good sleep helps you deal with stress better, so you’re less likely to give in to emotional eating.”

19 **LISTEN TO YOUR BODY**
“Eat when you’re hungry, but not so much that you’re at risk of overeating,” says Saleh. “True hunger is when your stomach feels empty – once you feel this, don’t go more than an hour without eating or you’ll go from feeling hungry to totally ravenous.”

20 **CELEBRATE SUCCESSES (NO MATTER HOW SMALL)**
Even if you’re not at Goal, congratulate yourself on how far you’ve come, urges McCormack. “Understand that even making a start means you’re much better off than you were before.” [www](http://www.weightwatchers.com.au)