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Opening Extract from...

Good Housekeeping

Drop a Dress Size

Written by

Anita Bean BSc RNutr

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Good Housekeeping

Drop a Dress Size

Anita Bean BSc RNutr



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THE SCIENCE OF WEIGHT LOSS

Everyone talks about calories as if they are something contained in food. But what exactly are they? Calories are simply a measurement of energy, just as a kilogram is a measurement of weight and a mile is a measurement of distance.

If you take in more calories than your body uses, you'll gain weight as the body stores fat. If you use more calories than you take in, you'll lose weight.

Your calorie requirement depends on your genetic make-up, age, weight, body composition and activity level. It will differ from one day to the next, depending on how active you are, and also change as you grow older. As a rough guide, it's about 2,000 calories a day for an average woman and 2,500 calories for an average man. For a more accurate estimate of the number of calories you use during daily life and when exercising, go to http://nutritiondata.self.com/tools/calories-burned. Enter your gender, age, weight, height, lifestyle and daily exercise undertaken.

If you eat 3,500 more calories than you need, they will be stored and add 450g/0.5kg (1lb) to your weight. On the other hand, burn 3,500 more calories than you eat and you'll lose 450g/0.5kg (1lb). This isn't as daunting as it seems. By eating a little less and being more active, you can achieve a daily calorie deficit of 500; for example, you could cut out a packet of crisps and a glass of wine to save 300 calories, and walk an extra 40 minutes to burn 200 calories. Over a week, this would result in a calorie deficit of 3,500 and a weight loss of 450g/0.5kg (1lb). Losing 450g/0.5kg (1lb) a week amounts to 7kg (15½lb) in 14 weeks, or 26kg (4 stone 1lb) in a year.

Experts agree that a healthy and effective rate of weight loss is between 450g/0.5kg (1lb) and 1kg (2¼lb) per week. Don't try to lose more than this, otherwise you risk fatigue, excessive muscle loss and a significant drop in your metabolic rate, making weight loss harder. Drastically cutting calories can lead to insatiable hunger, making you more likely to binge on high-calorie foods and pile the weight back on. Worse, your body can end up hoarding, instead of burning, fat. Your body goes into survival mode and the rate at which you burn energy slows down. Your body adapts to survive on a lower calorie intake, which means that when you stop dieting, you're likely to put the weight back on.

The key is to find a plan that you can comfortably live with, rather than attempting to lose weight periodically with strict diets that are hard to maintain. This book will help you to drop a dress size in six weeks with ease, just in time for that special event.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK...

First, complete the **Diet Decoder Quiz** on the next page to find out what kind of eater you are. This will help you avoid the **dieting pitfalls.** Now, discover how to **change your eating habits.** You are then ready to work through the chapters that follow, covering eating at home and at work, in restaurants and when buying takeaways, as well as how to **shop wisely** and how to have **fun at parties** without affecting your weight-loss goals. The Drop a Dress Size way provides a **six-week plan**, giving you **weekday meal planners** that you will find at the end of each chapter. There are **recipes** in the chapters themselves as well as at the back of the book. At weekends, use the **portion sizes** and **substitution knowledge** from the book to eat wisely whether you're eating out at a restaurant or enjoying Sunday lunch at home – allow yourself a little **flexibility** without going overboard. Each chapter also includes **exercise workouts** (and Chapter 5 is devoted to **improving your fitness**), as it's an essential part of your **Drop a Dress Size plan.**

The exercise programmes in this book are intended for people in good health – if you have a medical condition or are pregnant, or have any other health concerns, always consult your doctor before starting out.



DIET DECODER QUIZ

By determining your personal diet pitfalls, you'll be primed to transform your bad habits into weight-loss success, one small and healthy change at a time. This quick quiz will help you do just that. Circle your answers and tally your results on page 8.

1. When I'm hungry, fast food is an easy option; I often stop and grab something – chips, a burger or perhaps a doughnut.
A. Rarely (0 points)
B. Sometimes (1 point)
C. Often (2 points)
D. Always (3 points)

2. Although I never think about crisps and never buy them, if they're in front of me (such as at a party), I'll automatically snack on them.
A. Rarely (0 points)
B. Sometimes (1 point)
C. Often (2 points)
D. Always (3 points)

3. I'm usually not hungry in the morning, so I tend to leave the house without eating breakfast.
A. Rarely (0 points)
B. Sometimes (1 point)
C. Often (2 points)
D. Always (3 points)

4. I drink 'energy' or 'health' drinks.
A. Rarely (0 points)
B. Sometimes (1 point)
C. Often (2 points)
D. Always (3 points)

5. I drink juice, fizzy drinks or other sugary drinks a few times every day.
A. Rarely (0 points)
B. Sometimes (1 point)
C. Often (2 points)
D. Always (3 points)

6. When I am upset, I can eat a whole pizza (or a packet of biscuits or a carton of ice cream) in one sitting and still want more.
A. Rarely (0 points)
B. Sometimes (1 point)
C. Often (2 points)
D. Always (3 points)

7. While cooking or preparing food, I'll have so many tastes that I'm not really hungry by the time I sit down to eat the meal.
A. Rarely (0 points)
B. Sometimes (1 point)
C. Often (2 points)
D. Always (3 points)

8. My hunger is often sudden and urgent, and, if I eat a large quantity of food, I feel guilty afterwards.
A. Rarely (0 points)
B. Sometimes (1 point)
C. Often (2 points)
D. Always (3 points)

9. Chips are my favourite vegetable.
A. Rarely (0 points)
B. Sometimes (1 point)
C. Often (2 points)
D. Always (3 points)

10. On very busy days, I may eat just once or twice a day.
A. Rarely (0 points)
B. Sometimes (1 point)
C. Often (2 points)
D. Always (3 points)

11. I often nibble on the foods my family/friends don't finish, even when I'm full.
A. Rarely (0 points)
B. Sometimes (1 point)
C. Often (2 points)
D. Always (3 points)

12. Low-fat cereal/snack bars and sugar-free sweets are staples in my diet.
A. Rarely (0 points)
B. Sometimes (1 point)
C. Often (2 points)
D. Always (3 points)

13. A bad day at work or a family argument can trigger a binge.
A. Rarely (0 points)
B. Sometimes (1 point)
C. Often (2 points)
D. Always (3 points)

14. After a stressful day, food provides a welcome distraction from my anxious feelings.
A. Rarely (0 points)
B. Sometimes (1 point)
C. Often (2 points)
D. Always (3 points)

15. I have takeaway a few times a week.
A. Rarely (0 points)
B. Sometimes (1 point)
C. Often (2 points)
D. Always (3 points)

16. I have at least two beers, glasses of wine, or other alcoholic drinks four or more times a week.
A. Rarely (0 points)
B. Sometimes (1 point)
C. Often (2 points)
D. Always (3 points)

17. I have several cups of coffee or tea with sugar and/or cream or milk every day.
A. Rarely (0 points)
B. Sometimes (1 point)
C. Often (2 points)
D. Always (3 points)

18. While watching TV or a film, I reach for snacks whether I'm hungry or not.
A. Rarely (0 points)
B. Sometimes (1 point)
C. Often (2 points)
D. Always (3 points)

19. At a certain time of day, I find myself ravenous and searching for something to quiet my growling stomach.
A. Rarely (0 points)
B. Sometimes (1 point)
C. Often (2 points)
D. Always (3 points)

20. I'm never sure where or when I'll have a real meal so I tend to eat on the go.
A. Rarely (0 points)
B. Sometimes (1 point)
C. Often (2 points)
D. Always (3 points)

ADD IT UP!

Add points from questions 1, 9, 12 and 15 for your

JUNK FOOD JUNKIE SCORE:

_____ + _____ + _____ + _____ = _____

TOTAL

Add points from questions 2, 7, 11 and 18 for your

MINDLESS MUNCHER SCORE:

_____ + _____ + _____ + _____ = _____

TOTAL

Add points from questions 3, 9, 10 and 20 for your

MEAL-SKIPPER SCORE:

_____ + _____ + _____ + _____ = _____

TOTAL

Add points from questions 6, 8, 13 and 14 for your

EMOTIONAL EATER SCORE:

_____ + _____ + _____ + _____ = _____

TOTAL

Add points from questions 4, 5, 16 and 17 for your

LIQUID CALORIE LOVER SCORE:

_____ + _____ + _____ + _____ = _____

TOTAL

You may find that you indulge in more than one (or even all five) of the behaviours indicated opposite. That's OK. If you have a score higher than six on any of them, just be sure to pay extra attention to the tips targeted at that habit. Throughout the book, the strategies have been tagged to identify the ones that will help you overcome your particular diet pitfalls.

Emotional eaters use food for more than fuel – it also serves as a friend and a comfort. Feelings such as sadness, loneliness, anger or frustration cause these eaters to turn to food for escape.

Junk food junkies fill up on nutrient-poor (empty-calorie) foods. Fast foods, sugary snacks, salty snacks and high-fat fare are the norm; vegetables, fruits, whole grains and other healthy foods are less frequent choices.

Liquid calorie lovers unwittingly load their diet with extra calories from drinks. Fizzy drinks, milkshakes, coffees, cocktails, smoothies, energy drinks and others spell trouble because of their calorific bottom line.

The highest total scores on the opposite page represent your principal eating behaviours or habits

Meal skippers tend to have unbalanced eating patterns and often wait too long between meals. As a result, their meals are not planned or thought out, but rather are last-minute choices made wherever and whenever hunger takes over. They often end up making poor diet choices and cave in on cravings because they're so famished.

Mindless munchers are all-day grazers and unconscious eaters who put food in their mouths out of habit or boredom, regardless of hunger. They'll eat in front of the TV or automatically snack at a party, for example, paying little attention to their hunger cues. When mindless munchers start to track what they consume, they're often surprised at how much they eat during the course of a day.

Remember, transforming just one or two of your daily diet habits can result in pounds lost and a slimmer, trimmer you – in just a few weeks!

CHANGE YOUR EATING HABITS FOREVER

To get you started, here are our top tips for slimming down and keeping the pounds off. Make these strategies your mantra, and you will drop that weight. Stick them on your wall, computer, dashboard – wherever you'll see them – to keep you motivated.

1 Believe you can do it

You've already taken the first step by picking up this book. But if your dieting will wavers along the way, don't give up. Think about what's important in your life, such as your family, your job or your home. Now place yourself and your weight-loss goals and health at the top of that list. And don't forget to acknowledge your successes, no matter how small. You avoided that chocolate bar from the vending machine today? Worth a secret inner high five at least! Dropped your first 1.4kg (3lb)? Surely justification for that new lipstick you've had your eye on.

2 Make the most of your calories

By selecting empty-calorie foods, you're spending a lot for something that offers very little – like some insanely expensive, very trendy shoes that give you blisters and are difficult to walk in. They might be fun to wear on occasions, but most of the time you'll want to wear something stylish and comfortable. If you're economising on calories to lose weight, it makes sense to pack a lot of nutrition into what you eat. A food that's loaded with fibre, vitamins and minerals but also low in calories is a nutritional bargain – it's a nutrient-dense food. On the other hand, foods such as fizzy drinks and sweets will load you with lots of calories and are low in vitamins and minerals, making them low-nutrient, calorie-dense foods. Such foods are often called 'empty-calorie' foods, but describing them as empty of nutrients would be more accurate. And remember, nutrient-dense foods will fill you up for far longer than calorie-dense foods.

This doesn't mean that chips, burgers, sweets and other less stellar choices are diet no-nos. The truth is that no food or drink is so high in calories, fat or sugar that including it on occasions in a diet that is healthy overall is going to sabotage your weight loss. Just be sure to keep your total calorie intake within the recommended limits (page 12), and you'll still drop a dress size. Here's what to look for:

- **Fruits and vegetables** Rich in nutrients and low in calories, fruit and veg are a dieter's best friend. There's no such thing as a bad fruit or vegetable, but the more variety you eat, the better.
- **Low-fat dairy** These versions of milk, cheese, yogurt, cottage cheese and so on, are packed with nutrition and have fewer calories than the regular versions.
- **Lean proteins** Lean meat, poultry and fish, as well as vegetarian choices such as beans and tofu, will help you feel full and stay that way.
- **Whole grains** Select fibre-rich, wholegrain foods such as oatmeal, wholemeal bread and wholegrain rice instead of refined grains such as white bread, white pasta and white rice.
- **Healthy fats** Choose olive and rapeseed oils, avocados, nuts and nut butters, seeds and olives – but remember, a little goes a long, long way. A drizzle of olive oil on your salad, a small handful of nuts with your cereal, or a few slices of avocado on your sandwich all add satiety and flavour.

Step on it!

Slow-cook to weight loss
A slow cooker will do all the work and give you all the credit for its warming suppers. Slow-cooked dishes are ideal for making ahead and reheating, and they can provide leftovers for several days' meals. A slow cooker also offers the potential for lower-calorie meals by stretching small amounts of meat with tasty sauces and generous amounts of vegetables.

3 Get the facts

Be your own food detective, online and off, and you'll not only uncover surprises about what's hiding in your food but you'll also set yourself up for success. Check out In the Supermarket (Chapter 4) for tips on how to fill your trolley with the right foods, and Eating Out (Chapter 3) for the insider info you need to make the best choices, no matter where you dine. Read food labels, gather nutrition brochures from your favourite dining spots and go online to restaurant and food manufacturers' websites to investigate. Also check out Good Housekeeping Calorie Counter for basic foods such as cereals, cheese and fruits, as well as popular brands.

Simple swaps

Swap this
132 calories per 200ml (7fl oz) cup whole milk
For this
68 calories per 200ml (7fl oz) cup skimmed milk
You save 64 calories

4 Start moving

Multiple studies show that weight-loss efforts are vastly more successful when dieters reduce calories and increase their physical activity. The secret is to find activities you enjoy so that you'll want to keep doing them. And don't forget that everyday activities like gardening and walking up the stairs burn calories too. See Fitness First (Chapter 5) for lots of ideas on how to get more movement into your daily routine.

5 Change for good

Drop a Dress Size is designed to reveal your personal diet traps so that you can change your habits and (finally) shake off those extra pounds; however, if you don't modify your habits for good, you won't be able to solve your weight problems in the long term. As soon as your old eating habits return, so will the weight. Think about adopting the strategies you learn here permanently. It will help you to maintain your ultimate goal, whether it's weight loss or healthier living.

Once you reach your desired weight, add about 100 calories to your daily intake. After a week, weigh yourself at your usual time, on your usual scales. If you have lost any weight, add another 100 calories to your daily total. Repeat until your weight remains stable – that's how much you need each day to stop losing weight and to sustain the weight loss you've accomplished.

So give it a try. Read on to learn how to overcome your weight-loss hurdles – whether they are junk-food cravings, bad exercise habits, skipping meals, emotional eating or a mixture of these or others. Once you do, you'll find that you will Drop a Dress Size in no time!

CALORIE TARGETS

The following daily calorie targets provide an easy outline for a diet. Although your exact calorie needs depend upon a variety of factors, including your height, weight and activity level, for most people, sticking to these targets will result in a steady rate of weight loss of 450g/0.5kg–1kg (1–2lb) a week.

Think of the total as your daily calorie-spending account – if you overdo it at breakfast, just have a lighter lunch. If you have an indulgent snack, cut back a bit at dinner, and so on. As long as you stay within the recommended total calories, you'll still drop pounds.

Daily calorie targets	
FOR WOMEN	
BREAKFAST	350
LUNCH	500
DINNER	500
SNACK	100
OPTIONAL TREAT	100
TOTAL	1,450–1,550
FOR MEN	
BREAKFAST	450
LUNCH	600
DINNER	600
SNACK	200
OPTIONAL TREAT	200
TOTAL	1,850–2,050

Keep it going

Go brown
Replacing white products with wholegrain versions could help you lose those pounds, say Danish scientists. Overweight women on a 1,250-calorie diet were asked to include either 480 calories of refined grain foods or the same amount of wholegrain foods. Those eating the diet with whole grains lost 3.6kg (8lb) – about 1kg (2¼lb) more weight and significantly more body fat after 12 weeks, compared to those eating refined grains.

Men have more lean tissue (muscle) than women, so they need more calories each day. The meals in this book fall within the calorie guidelines for women. Men will need to add about 100 calories to each meal or snack, either by eating larger portions or by rounding out meals with nutrient-dense foods. The chart on page 13 shows some easy ways to add 100 calories to any recipe or meal.

To keep your energy level up and to feel your best, fuel your body with nutrient-packed calories from foods such as fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, low-fat dairy, wholegrain breads and cereals, and judicious amounts of healthy fats such as avocado, olive oil, nuts and seeds

100-calorie options		
PRODUCE	GRAINS	PROTEIN
1 medium potato	1 thick slice wholemeal bread	200ml (7fl oz) semi-skimmed milk or 25g (1oz) cheese
2 handfuls, 160g (5½oz), grapes	1 small bowl, 25g (1oz), wholegrain cereal	1 tbsp peanut butter or 2 tbsp nuts
2 apples	3 tbsp cooked wholegrain rice	3 tbsp, 100g (3½oz), cooked beans
1 banana	3 tbsp cooked wholegrain pasta	Small, 75g (3oz), skinless chicken breast
Half a small avocado	Small portion noodles 25g (1oz) uncooked weight	Small fillet, 100g (3½oz), white fish or 75g (3oz) tuna in water

(see Make the Most of Your Calories, page 10). Have the optional 100-calorie treat (see page 30) once a day, or save up those calories for a larger treat every other day, or enjoy 350-calorie treats twice a week. If you want to cut calories a little more, skip the optional treat altogether.

There's no need to cut out all fats – studies have shown that people following a low-fat diet are no more successful than those on other diets. If anything, those who include more fat – in the healthy form of nuts, olive oil or oily fish – lose more weight. This is because fat helps to keep you feeling 'full' for longer, so you are not tempted to snack between meals. So don't avoid fat, but focus on eating the right kinds of fat: unsaturated fats found in plant and nut oils such as olive, groundnut and rapeseed; nuts such as almonds, walnuts, brazils, cashews and pistachios; avocados and oily fish.

Keep it going

Keep a food diary
While you may believe that you're eating correctly, memory is selective. Plus, it's easy to overlook bites, licked spoons and tastes of food while cooking, but each mouthful has 25 calories on average. Six little bites a day can add up to about an extra 6.8kg (15lb) of weight gained in a year. The solution is to write down what you eat. In a landmark Kaiser Permanente study of more than 2,000 dieters, the keeping of a food diary turned out to be the best predictor of whether people would lose weight. So buy a journal and use it every day.

Eating in

If you want to have a healthier diet, enjoy delicious and satisfying meals, and win the war against unwanted weight, eating at home is a key strategy. It gives you the most control over your diet, and you will avoid the tempting bread baskets, fat-laden dishes and calorie-dense desserts that you find in restaurants. Restaurant servings keep getting bigger, and so do dress sizes!

Food is one of life's great pleasures – especially sharing it with family and friends – and eating at home provides you with full command over food choices and portions. You can also experiment with ingredients and try good-for-your-waistline recipes and foods. With an abundance of tips and advice, this chapter shows you how to practise good eating habits at home.

Dining well at home doesn't require you to follow a strict set of rules or give up your favourite foods. Instead, it's about making healthy, common-sense choices.



TOP 5 EATING-IN HOW-TOS

1 Detox your kitchen

Clear your cupboards, fridge and freezer of the foods you know will get you into trouble, and instead stock up on healthy and tasty options you and your family will enjoy. Conduct your own in-house taste tests – ask your family to get involved, try new, lower-calorie recipes and new foods, and gain a new (and healthy!) weight-loss perspective.

Step on it!

Omelette makeover

A few subtle changes to the ingredients of a cheese omelette can cut 202 calories and 17g (½oz) fat – but none of the taste. Instead of using 2 whole eggs and 60g (2¼oz) cheese, make an omelette with 2 whole eggs and 1 egg white plus 25g (1oz) of cheese. You won't be able to tell the difference.

2 Recipe makeovers

Substitute ingredients used in everyday cooking with healthier options and you'll slash calories – and propel yourself to success. The cooking tricks below will not only help you maintain your desired weight once you get there, but are useful things for all the family to learn.

Here are some tips for trimming excess fat and calories from home-cooked meals:

- Choose lean cuts of meat and trim all visible fat before cooking. Remove the skin from poultry before or after cooking.
- Cut back on the fat in proper gravy – just pour most of the fat out of the used roasting tin before you make gravy. Alternatively, invest in a gravy separator, which will split the fat from the meat juices so that you can pour a sin-free version over your Sunday roast.
- If a roast chicken tops your Sunday wish-list, rather than slathering it with butter before cooking, squeeze some lemon juice over the bird and drizzle with 1 tbsp olive oil. And when the chicken's cooked, remember to get rid of the skin before eating, as it is very fatty.
- A classic fore-rib of beef is high in fat – an artery-clogging 20g (¾oz) fat per 100g (3½oz). So opt for a leaner topside joint. Before roasting, sit the meat on a rack to allow much of the fat to drip into the tin during cooking, rather than leaving the meat swimming in it.
- Make skinny chips by slicing 2 large potatoes into wedges, then put them on a non-stick baking tray. Pour ½ tbsp olive oil over them, season and cook at 200°C (180°C fan oven) mark 6 for 30 minutes.
- Substitute protein-packed canned pulses, such as beans and lentils, for meat in casseroles; the dish will have fewer calories and more filling fibre.
- Use skimmed milk in a cheese sauce rather than whole milk, and replace ordinary Cheddar cheese with fuller-flavoured mature or vintage Cheddar – this will allow you to cut the amount of cheese you use by half.
- Be sparing with fat. Use non-stick pans or a non-stick cooking spray with regular pans.
- Experiment with fat-free flavourings: squeeze orange or lemon juice into stews or over meats; add citrus zest, soy sauce, fresh ginger, chilli peppers, herbs or tomato purée to your favourite recipes.
- Before roasting fish or chicken, spritz with olive oil spray before seasoning and adding herbs or spices, to minimize fat and maximize the taste of the flavourings. Spray oil on vegetables (rather than brushing it on) to cut down on fat.
- Turn potato salad into a healthy energy booster by replacing ordinary mayonnaise with 2 tbsp reduced-calorie mayonnaise mixed with an equal amount of low-fat yogurt.
- For a healthier version of spag bol, swap regular minced beef, at 15g (½oz) fat per 100g (3½oz), for extra-lean mince, at 10g (¼oz) fat per 100g (3½oz), or turkey mince, at 7g (¼oz) fat per 100g (3½oz), then brown in a little oil. Add flavour with fresh herbs and boost the nutritional value with celery, mushrooms and carrots.
- Swap double cream in sauces for low-fat yogurt to dramatically lower the fat content of a dish. Take care not to let the sauce boil, though, as this might cause it to split.

3 Downsize your dishes

Use smaller plates and glasses for everyday meals. According to a Cornell University study, people tend to serve themselves 30 per cent more food when given large bowls and spoons. And research at the Food and Brand Lab at the University of Illinois found that people who used short, wide glasses poured 76 per cent more soda, milk or juice than when they used tall, slender ones.

No need to buy new, though: simply swap your dinner plate for a side plate or salad plate, or a large glass for a small glass. Or, if you have fashionably oversized dishes and glasses, use a measuring jug or measuring cups to familiarize yourself with calorie-controlled portions and keep these studies in mind as you ladle out the servings.

Emotion-related eating

Overeating can be a way of coping with stress, but you can conquer it. Work out what triggers your eating: do you munch when you are sad, lonely, angry, bored or guilt-ridden? Whatever your triggers, an important part of breaking the habit is finding out what's pushing you to turn to food. Eliminate stressors where possible and start using other means to cope. When you recognize an urge to eat, ask yourself if you are truly hungry. Physical hunger tends to be gradual, whereas an appetite caused by emotional reasons usually comes on suddenly.

4 Control cravings

Whether it's chocolate or chips, ice cream or whipped cream, the foods people crave have one thing in common – they are calorie-dense, a Tufts University study recently confirmed. But, in that study, the researchers also noted that while virtually everyone had cravings, the dieters in the group who successfully lost weight or kept it off gave in to their must-haves – but just less often.

5 Pay attention

A recent study showed that Americans (and the British are much the same) use external cues, such as waiting until their television programme is over, to stop eating, unlike the don't-get-fat French, who rely on internal messages, such as feeling full. We're also susceptible to social influences. Many of us keep eating until almost everyone at the table is finished. If you tend to finish before your family, keep the salad bowl in front of you to pick from, rather than having extra pasta and sauce.

KITCHEN CLEAN-UP

Here's a list of items to purge from your kitchen – and, following that, our favourite must-haves to stock up on. Donate unopened foods to a local charity, or use up what you have to hand and then replace with our picks.

Items to purge

Throw away high-calorie, nutrient-poor foods including:

- Crisps
- Salted nuts
- Chocolates and sweets
- Snacks (like breadsticks and crackers)
- Biscuits
- Sugary cereals
- Pastries
- Cakes
- White bread
- Dips
- Creamy salad dressing and sauces
- Mayonnaise
- Cream
- Sausages and burgers
- Bacon, pancetta and lardons
- Cured meats such as salami and chorizo
- Canned meats
- Squash, fizzy drinks and juice drinks

Must-haves for your fridge

Add these fridge essentials to your weekly shopping list so that they are always to hand:

- Seasonal fresh fruit and vegetables (page 82)
- Cheese – lower-fat cheeses such as Edam, feta and Gouda, or small amounts of full-fat strong cheeses such as mature Cheddar or Parmesan to provide a flavour lift (see page 86)
- Hummus
- Semi-skimmed or skimmed milk (or soya milk) and yogurt (page 86)
- Eggs (for more on cholesterol and eggs, see page 87)
- Fresh chicken, turkey and lean meat (see page 81)

Step on it!

Look for unsweetened choices
It's easy to pick up a jar of pasta sauce, a carton of soup or a packet of breakfast cereal without realizing that a lot of sugar has been added. One leading fresh soup, for example, has 6 tsp of sugar in a 600ml carton, while a pasta sauce from another manufacturer has 6½ tsp in a 500g jar. For foods like these, which often taste great without being sweetened, be sure to check the ingredients list and look for unsweetened or only slightly sweetened alternatives.

Step on it!

Spice up your meals
Research has shown that spicy flavours can have long-lasting weight-reduction benefits; for example capsaicin, a compound found in chillies and cayenne pepper, can be a powerful appetite suppressant, metabolism booster and fat burner. A Canadian study found that people who ate appetizers made with chillies consumed 189 fewer calories at their next meal. Not a fan of spicy foods? Zero-calorie herbs are also a great way to punch up the flavour in a dish.

Must-haves for your food cupboard

Once you've cleaned out the shelves, it's time to fill them with healthy options:

- Whole grains such as wholewheat pasta, wholegrain rice and noodles
- Low-fat sauces such as pasta sauce, salsa, soy sauce, etc.
- Wholemeal bread, wraps, rolls, pitta breads, tortillas, etc.
- Canned beans, salmon and tuna (in water, not oil), tomatoes, low-fat soups and fruit in juice
- Nuts, seeds and occasional treats (pages 30–31)

Must-have condiments

Add low-calorie flavour with these extras:

- Mustard (wholegrain, Dijon, etc.)
- Spray salad dressings
- Vinegar (balsamic, sherry, red wine, white wine, etc.)
- Oils (good options include olive, rapeseed, safflower and flaxseed oils)
- Herbs and spices, fresh and dried

Must-haves for your freezer

A quick, healthy meal or treat is always just minutes away:

- Healthy frozen ready meals
- Boneless, skinless chicken breasts and fish fillets are easy everyday dinner solutions when paired with a quick sauce
- Bags of frozen fruits (such as raspberries, mixed berries) and vegetables (such as spinach, peas)
- Portions of home-made, low-fat soups and casseroles
- Frozen yogurt

Keep it going

Say no to liquid calories
On average, we consume about 11 per cent of our daily calories through juices, soft drinks, pep-up lattes and after-work wines, but if you switch to minimal-calorie or calorie-free drinks such as tea, herbal tea and water, you could lose 3.2kg (7lb) in four months. So buy a journal and use it every day to keep a record of your intake.

COOKING A SMARTER DIET AT HOME

Home cooking is a healthier way of eating than using ready meals – and something we have long championed at Good Housekeeping – but sadly, some of the tastiest dishes are laden with fat. Here's how small tweaks to your family's favourite meals can give big results:

Chicken Korma

This curry tastes just as good if you swap the double cream for quark (a low-fat, soft, creamy cheese) and cut the amount of coconut cream – it contains 20g (¾oz) fat per 100ml (3½fl oz).

Marinate 4 chopped, skinless chicken breasts in 1 tbsp sunflower oil, a little grated ginger, 2 tsp garam masala, 1 tsp turmeric and 3 tbsp quark. Leave in the fridge for at least 20 minutes or preferably overnight. Spray a non-stick pan with oil and cook a chopped onion for 10 minutes, or until soft and golden. Add a crushed garlic clove and a finely chopped red chilli, and cook for 1 minute. Stir in the chicken and marinade. Cook, stirring, for 5 minutes or until lightly golden. Add 150ml (5fl oz) water, season, bring to the boil, then simmer, covered, for 15–20 minutes. Stir in 200g (7oz) quark, 1 tbsp coconut cream and 25g (1oz) ground almonds. Garnish with flaked almonds and fresh coriander. Serve with rice. (Serves 4, 324 calories per serving.)

Calories saved per portion = 160

Shepherd's Pie

You can really make a difference to the fat in your favourite shepherd's pie recipe by mashing the cooked potatoes with skimmed instead of whole milk and stirring in 1–2 tbsp reduced-fat soft cheese instead of butter (which adds only 4g (⅛oz) fat per tbsp rather than 25g (1oz) fat per tbsp). (Serves 4, 530 calories per serving.)

Calories saved per portion = 150

A Healthy Burger

Try making burgers with turkey mince. It's lean, tastes great and will cut the fat of a normal beefburger by more than half!

Pulse 450g (1lb) turkey mince, 2 shallots and a small handful of fresh parsley in a food processor. Stir in 3 tbsp spiced fruit chutney, 50g (2oz) dried breadcrumbs, the zest of 1 lemon, some seasoning and a beaten egg. Shape into four patties and chill for 20 minutes. Heat a non-stick frying pan over a medium heat, then spray with oil. Fry the burgers for 5 minutes each side or until cooked through. (Serves 4, 281 calories per serving.)

Calories saved per portion = 140

Keep it going

Buy small (blue) plates.
Research also shows that people consume fewer calories when eating from a blue plate. The theory is that very few foods are naturally blue, so seeing a blue plate sends a signal to the brain to be cautious when eating.

Step on it!

Make it with mushrooms
Replace beef with mushrooms in lasagne and spaghetti bolognese and you'll eat about 420 fewer calories. People in a 2008 US study said the mushroom makeovers tasted just as good and kept them feeling full for just as long as the beef versions did. And not only did the mushroom-based dish mean a lower-calorie meal, but the mushroom-eaters also ate fewer calories and less fat throughout the day than the beef-eaters.

Cauliflower Cheese

Put 4 tbsp flour into a pan with 600ml (1 pint) skimmed milk, a little grated nutmeg and ¼ tsp cayenne pepper. Bring to the boil, whisking, until thickened. Simmer for 3 minutes, then stir in ½ tsp each wholegrain and English mustard and 100g (3½oz) grated half-fat mature Cheddar cheese. Pour over cooked cauliflower. Mix 50g (2oz) cheese with 2 tbsp dried breadcrumbs; sprinkle over the cauliflower mixture. Grill for 3–4 minutes until golden. (Serves 4, 285 calories per serving.)

Calories saved per portion = 200

Lemon Tart

This delicious dessert makes a glorious tea-time treat or a sumptuous end to a dinner party.

For the pastry, whizz together 150g (5oz) flour and 60g (2¼oz) butter until it resembles fine breadcrumbs. (Alternatively, rub the butter into the flour in a large bowl by hand or using a pastry cutter, to resemble fine crumbs.) Add 1 tbsp oil, 2 tbsp icing sugar, 1 large egg yolk and 1 tbsp water and whizz again, or stir with a fork, until combined. Roll out on a lightly floured surface to make a circle large enough to fit a 20.5cm (8in) flan ring. Line with greaseproof paper and fill with baking beans. Bake at 200°C (180°C fan oven) mark 6 for 15 minutes. Remove from the oven and remove the beans and greaseproof paper, then return to the oven for 5 minutes. For the filling, mix together 1 egg, 4 egg yolks, 150g (5oz) sugar, 150ml (¼ pint) half-fat crème fraîche, and the grated zest and juice of 3 lemons. Reduce the temperature to 150°C (130°C fan oven) mark 2 and pour the lemon mixture into the tart case. Bake for 1 hour, or until the filling is just set and the pastry is golden brown. (Serves 4, 299 calories per serving – cuts into 8 slices.)

Calories saved per portion = 100

Chocolate Brownies

Here's how to make indulgent but low-fat brownies for an occasional treat:

Whisk 4 eggs, 50ml (2fl oz) sunflower oil, 150g (5oz) light muscovado sugar and 1 tsp vanilla extract. Fold in 250g (9oz) melted dark chocolate, 75g (3oz) plain flour, ¼ tsp baking powder and 1 tbsp cocoa powder. Pour into a lined 20cm (8in) square tin and bake at 200°C (180°C fan oven) mark 6 for 20 minutes. (Makes 20, 180 calories each.)

Calories saved per portion = 150

DECODING BREAKFAST

It's no secret that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. In fact, research shows that breakfast-eaters typically consume about 100 fewer calories during the course of the day – that's a 4.5kg (10lb) over a year – and weigh less than those who forgo food in the morning. Here's how to make it fit into your schedule – and how eating the right breakfast can help you to Drop a Dress Size.

These healthy ways to start your day are ready in under 10 minutes and add up to roughly 350 calories each.

Make-at-Home Muesli

Mix together 40g (1½oz) oats, 1 tbsp sultanas, 1 tbsp flaked almonds and 1 tbsp sunflower or pumpkin seeds. Serve with skimmed milk, a dollop of low-fat yogurt and some fresh sliced strawberries. (Serves 1.)

Eating a healthy breakfast boosts your memory and mood, helps you concentrate, reduces your cholesterol levels and cuts your chances of developing diabetes or having a heart attack.

Banana Cinnamon Porridge

Mix 50g (2oz) oats, ½ tsp ground cinnamon and 350ml (12fl oz) skimmed milk in a pan. Bring to the boil and simmer for about 5 minutes, stirring frequently. Serve topped with a sliced banana and a drizzle of honey. (Serves 1.)

Yogurt with Dried Fruit Compote

The day before, combine the zest and freshly squeezed juice of 1 orange with 2 tbsp honey and 300ml (½ pint) water in a pan. Bring the mixture to the boil, then add 250g (9oz) of dried fruit (such as ready-to-eat figs, apricots and prunes) and simmer, covered, for 5–10 minutes until they become plump and soft. Allow to cool and keep covered in the fridge until you are ready to serve. (Serves 4.) The next day, stir a portion of fruit compote into 150ml (¼ pint) fat-free Greek yogurt to make one serving.

Fruit Smoothie

In a smoothie-maker, blender or food processor, whizz together a small cupful of crushed ice, a 125ml pot of raspberry yogurt, 150ml (¼ pint) cranberry juice drink, 50g (2oz) raspberries and a little orange juice. (Serves 1.)

Scrambled Eggs on Wholemeal Toast

Using a fork, whisk 2 eggs in a microwave-proof bowl with a little milk, seasoning and 1 tsp oil. Put in the microwave and cook on full power for 1 minute. Remove and whisk lightly with a fork. Return to the microwave and cook for a further 30 seconds. Stir. The eggs should be lightly set. Leave to stand for 1 minute. Meanwhile, toast a thin slice of wholemeal bread. Put on a plate and pile the eggs on top.

Need to eat on the move? Make these tasty bars the day before – they'll fuel you through the morning.

Breakfast Bars

Put 175g (6oz) oats in a bowl and combine with 75g (3oz) plain flour, 150g (5oz) dried fruit mixture (such as raisins, dates, apricots, figs, apple and pineapple) and 3 heaped tbsp honey, warmed in a pan until runny, 1 egg and 175ml (6fl oz) apple juice. Press the mixture into a lightly oiled 18 × 28cm (7 × 11in) baking tin. Bake at 180°C (160°C fan oven) mark 4 for 20–25 minutes until golden. Cut into bars while still warm. (Makes 12.)

Simple swaps

Swap this
232 calories per bagel
For this
77 calories per crumpet

You save 155 calories

Step on it!

Add fruit to your cereal
Adding fresh sliced berries, bananas, peaches or whatever is in season to your bowl of wholegrain cereal is a wonderful way to sneak more fruit into your diet. It not only adds a sweet flavour but it also provides lots of satisfying fibre.

Still want that fry-up? Here's how:

Swap a fried pork sausage (139 calories) for a grilled Quorn sausage (69 calories)
Saves 70 calories

Swap a grilled streaky bacon rasher (67 calories) for a back bacon rasher (43 calories)
Saves 24 calories

Swap a fried egg (107 calories) for a poached egg (74 calories)
Saves 33 calories

Swap fried bread (274 calories) for wholemeal toast with a scraping of butter (116 calories)
Saves 158 calories

Total saving = 285 calories

DECODING LUNCH

What do you do when you find yourself at home at lunchtime? Do you make a quick sandwich? Or eat yesterday's leftovers? Or perhaps you skip lunch completely and end up snacking all afternoon. Here are some midday ideas for when you're at home and trying to keep a your calories in check.

The 450-calorie sandwich

A sandwich doesn't have to be loaded with fat and calories, especially when it's made at home. Here's how to construct the perfect sandwich:

Bread, 200 calories: Choose wholegrain or wholemeal bread for your sandwich – but watch the size. A big sub roll, for example, might contain up to 500 calories! Instead, choose two slices of wholemeal sandwich bread or one small roll equal to about 200 calories.

Butter/substitutes, 50 calories: A thin scraping of butter (around 1 teaspoon/5g per slice) stops a filling making the bread soggy. Want a healthier option? Swap butter for an olive oil spread for its heart-healthy monounsaturated fats. Alternatively, spread your bread with naturally low-fat mustard. For a creamier spread, mix low-fat yogurt with a little mustard.

Cheese, 50 calories: You can add cheese to your sandwich without breaking the calorie bank: 20g (¾oz) of feta, for example, is only 50 calories; 1 tbsp Philadelphia Light cream cheese has 47 calories. Other lower-fat options include mozzarella at 52 calories per 20g (¾oz) and Brie at 68 calories per 20g (¾oz). Look for any variety of reduced-fat cheese with about 250–300 calories per 100g (3½oz).

Meat/fish, 100 calories: Cured meats, such as ham and bacon, are high in calories and salt. Cured meat or sausage sandwiches should be occasional indulgences, not everyday fare. Look for lower-calorie alternatives such as lean beef, chicken breast, turkey breast and tuna. Aim for about 100 calories of lean protein, which is about five slices of meat (each deli slice is about 20 calories) or a 75g (3oz) serving of tuna in water.

Dressings, 50 calories: Instead of high-fat mayonnaise, use a reduced-fat variety and add some chopped fresh herbs for flavour. Chutney or relish, delicious by itself or when blended with light mayonnaise or mustard, adds a delectable sweet-and-spicy dimension to a sandwich.

Vegetables, no limit: Go wild – add spinach, lettuce, red pepper, onions, cucumber, mushrooms, tomato or any other fresh vegetable for extra flavour, fibre and virtually no calories. Avoid vegetables packed or roasted in oil, which pack unwanted calories.

Total calorie goal: about 450

Now, to finish your meal, add a piece of fruit (a banana, pear or nectarine, for example). Voilà – the perfect lunch to help you Drop a Dress Size!

Did you know?

The average person eats 230 sandwiches a year. That's a lot of bread and probably BLT too – make sure you stick to healthy options.

The low-down on sandwich spreads and dressings

Spread/dressing	Grams of fat	Calories per tbsp
Butter (10g)	8	74
Polyunsaturated margarine (10g)	8	75
Olive oil spread (10g)	6	54
Reduced fat spread (10g)	4	35
Mayonnaise 25g (1oz)	23	207
Pesto 25g (1oz)	11	138
Mango chutney 25g (1oz)	0	57
Light mayonnaise 25g (1oz)	9	88
French dressing 15g (½oz)	11	98
Branston pickle 25g (1oz)	0	33
Barbecue sauce 20g (¾oz)	0	19
Hummus 25g (1oz)	7	80
Ketchup 20g (¾oz)	0	23
Mustard 10g (¼oz)	1	11
Salsa 40g (1½oz)	0	13

DECODING DINNER

At about 500 calories each, the tempting dinners in this section will help you to lose weight and keep you satisfied too.

Crusted Cod with Grilled Tomatoes

Preheat the grill. Heat 1 tsp oil in a small frying pan that can be used under the grill. Fry a 150g (5oz) boneless fillet of cod, skin-side down in the pan for 3 minutes. Meanwhile, whizz a standard slice of stale white bread, about 25g (1oz), in a food processor until it forms breadcrumbs (or coarsely grate it instead). Put the breadcrumbs into a bowl with 1 tbsp freshly chopped parsley (or 1 tsp dried mixed herbs), the finely grated zest of ¼ lemon and 1 tsp olive oil. Carefully lift the part-cooked fish on to a baking sheet and top with the herby mixture. Next to the cod, put a 75g (3oz) bunch of cherry tomatoes on the vine. Grill for 5 minutes until the fish is cooked and the tomatoes have just burst. Serve immediately with 175g (6oz) boiled new potatoes and salad. (Serves 1, 460 calories.)

WRAP IT UP

Cooking 'en papillote' might have a fancy French name but it just means cooking in a parcel and is a great technique for making single servings. Simply put a portion of meat (chicken is ideal) or fish on a large square of foil or baking parchment, add some thinly sliced vegetables and aromatics (garlic/ginger/chilli/fresh herbs), fold up the edges of the foil or baking parchment and pour in a little water or stock. Seal, then cook in the oven at 180°C (160°C fan oven) mark 4, or steam in a steamer, for 15 minutes for fish or 30 minutes for chicken (depending on size) until ready.

Step on it!

Sample more seafood

Follow a low-cal diet that includes more fish than meat and the chances are that you'll drop more pounds than you would otherwise – at least, that's according to a study published in the *International Journal of Obesity*. One possible explanation is that, gram for gram, fish has fewer calories than almost all cuts of beef, pork and skin-on poultry. Researchers theorize that omega-3 fatty acids, the polyunsaturated fats abundant in cold-water fish such as salmon and mackerel, switch on the fat-burning process in cells – provided that you also exercise.

Keep it going

Turn off the TV

Eating in front of the TV causes people to consume about 150 more calories than in quieter, less distracting environments, according to a US Department of Agriculture study.

Gruyère and Watercress Omelette

Heat ½ tbsp vegetable oil over a low heat in a small frying pan. Lightly beat 2–3 large eggs (depending on hunger!), season and add to the pan. Use a spatula to move the eggs around for the first 30 seconds. Next, top the egg with a small handful of roughly chopped watercress and 25g (1oz) grated Gruyère cheese. Continue cooking until the base of the omelette is golden (check with the spatula) and the cheese is melting. Fold in half and serve with a medium baked potato, 175g (6oz), with 10g butter and a green salad. (Serves 1, 485 calories.)

Step on it!

Fancy a chip?

Make your own chips from fresh potatoes – frozen chips cool down in the hot oil during cooking, so they don't seal so quickly and will therefore absorb more fat. Per 100g (3½oz) cooked portion, frozen fried chips have 273 calories and 13.5g (½oz) fat, whereas home-made ones have only 189 calories and 5g (¼oz) fat.

Spiced Yogurt Chicken

In a large bowl, stir together 200g (7oz) fat-free Greek yogurt, 2 crushed garlic cloves, 1cm (½in) piece peeled and grated fresh root ginger, 1 tsp garam masala, ½ tsp each ground cinnamon and chilli powder, ¼ tsp ground turmeric, 1 tbsp vegetable oil, 1½ tsp lemon juice and some seasoning. Add 8 skinless and boneless chicken thigh fillets, 75g (3oz) each, and stir to coat. Cover and chill for 1 hour, if you have time. Preheat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan oven) mark 6. Tip the chicken and marinade into a roasting tin and cook for 20 minutes until the chicken is cooked. Meanwhile, in a small bowl stir together 100g (3½oz) fat-free Greek yogurt and 2 tbsp mango chutney. Serve the chicken with the mango yogurt and some plain boiled wholegrain rice. (Serves 4, 454 calories per serving.)

Risotto Verde

Heat 1 tbsp oil in a large pan over a medium heat. Fry 1 finely chopped onion for 10 minutes, then stir in 300g (11oz) risotto rice and cook for 1 minute, followed by 75ml (2½fl oz) white wine (optional). Starting with 1 litre (1¾ pints) hot vegetable stock, add a ladleful of stock to the rice pan and stir until the stock is absorbed. Continue adding the stock and stirring until the rice is tender – about 15–20 minutes. Add 150g (5oz) frozen soya beans and 1 chopped courgette 10 minutes before the risotto is due to be ready and 150g (5oz) frozen peas for the final 5 minutes of cooking. When the risotto is ready, stir in 3 tbsp mixed freshly chopped parsley, chives and mint. Serve topped with a little grated Parmesan (optional). (Serves 4, 412 calories per serving.)



NO MORE TEARS

Buy a few extra onions next time you go to the shops. Peel and finely chop as normal, then freeze in a freezer bag (lay as flat as possible). Next time a recipe calls for part of a chopped onion, simply use some from your frozen stash.

One-pan Creamy Spring Chicken Supper

Fry 1 skinless chicken breast in 1 tsp olive oil for 5 minutes on each side until golden. Add a little garlic, then stir in 100g (3½oz) new potatoes and 75ml (2½fl oz) stock. Cover and simmer for another 10 minutes. Add 50g (2oz) each of peas and broccoli, cover and cook for 5 minutes. Check whether the chicken is cooked before stirring in a little Dijon mustard and 1 tbsp yogurt and crumbling 20g (¾oz) goat's cheese over the top. (Serves 1, 422 calories.)

Chicken Traybake

Preheat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan oven) mark 6. Heat 1 tbsp oil in a large roasting tin, then fry 4 × 125g (4oz) skinless chicken breasts for 5 minutes until golden. Take off the heat and stir in 2 chopped sweet potatoes and 2 deseeded and chopped peppers. Season well. Roast for 20 minutes, then add 4 quartered tomatoes, 1 tbsp fresh (or ½ tbsp dried) oregano and 75g (3oz) each roughly chopped pitted black olives and sun-dried tomatoes. Return to oven for 10 minutes or until the tomatoes are softening. Serve with a crisp green salad. (Serves 4, 426 calories per serving.)

Dim lighting increases comfort levels and lowers inhibitions, which might encourage you to eat more, so keep the lights up when dining at home.

Creamy Chicken Pasta

Cook 350g (12oz) dried tagliatelle according to the pack instructions. Meanwhile, heat ½ tbsp oil in a large frying pan and fry 350g (12oz) chicken strips for 3–4 minutes until a light golden colour (do this in batches if necessary). Pour in 175ml (6fl oz) strong chicken stock, bring to a simmer and cook for 5 minutes until the chicken is cooked through. Stir in 5 tbsp half-fat crème fraîche, 1 tbsp dried sage and 1 deseeded and finely chopped red chilli. Drain the pasta and add to the chicken sauce, then stir in 50g (2oz) roughly chopped rocket. Check the seasoning and serve topped with a little grated Parmesan, if you like. (Serves 4, 448 calories per serving.)

Light Lamb Stew

Heat ½ tbsp vegetable oil over a high heat in a large pan. Brown 400g (14oz) lamb neck fillet cut into 2cm (¾in) dice (do this in batches if necessary). Add 4 halved shallots, 1 sliced leek and 1 chopped carrot and fry for 3–5 minutes. Stir in 50g (2oz) pearl barley and 750ml (1¼ pints) lamb or chicken stock. Simmer gently, covered, for 20 minutes or until the lamb is tender, adding ½ pointed cabbage, shredded, 5 minutes before the end of the cooking time. Stir in 100g (3½oz) frozen peas and a small handful of fresh mint. Heat through and check the seasoning. Serve with 4 small boiled new potatoes per person and salad. (Serves 4, 450 calories per serving.)



DECODING SNACKS

Think you need to give up snacking to lose weight? On the contrary, the Drop a Dress Size plan has two 100-calorie snacks/optional treats built in. Here are our favourites, both savoury and sweet, which will help you stay on track. (You'll also find more snacks in the weekday planners.)

50-calorie munchies

Savoury snacks These tasty snack ideas will help keep hunger at bay, and at about 50 calories each, you can have two to four per day:

- 1 rice cake with 1 tbsp mashed avocado
- 1½ tbsp low-fat hummus with ½ small red pepper, sliced for dipping
- 5 almonds
- 10 carrot sticks with 2 tbsp salsa for dipping
- 1 handful, 10g (¼oz), Tyrell's lightly salted popcorn

Sweet snacks Satisfy your sugar cravings with these quick, low-cal fixes:

- 1 Hartley's jelly pot (no added sugar; any flavour)
- 1 meringue nest
- 1 packet sugar-free Polo mints
- 2 dates
- 1 low-calorie hot chocolate drink

23 M&Ms	= 1 handful, 35g (1¼oz), raisins = a 125g pot low-fat fruit yogurt = 1 large punnet, 350g (12oz), strawberries

MAKE YOUR OWN CAFÉ AU LAIT

Mix 250ml (9fl oz) brewed coffee with 250ml (9fl oz) heated skimmed milk, and pour into a cup. Add a sprinkle of cinnamon or cocoa powder for a sweet flavour, if you like.

Or you can whip up a low-fat latte instead – even if you don't have an espresso machine at home. Combine 25–50g (1–2oz) powdered espresso, to taste, with 250ml (9fl oz) skimmed milk, then heat in the microwave for 1 minute. Serve.

Step on it!

Smarter snacks
Your twice-daily 100-calorie Drop a Dress Size snacks can be indulgent treats (biscuits, crisps) or a healthy way to stave off hunger (fruit, vegetables, yogurt, nuts, wholegrain snacks) until your next meal. If your favourite treat does not come in 100-calorie pre-packaged servings, divide it into 100-calorie portions yourself.

The 100-calorie comparison

Low-density foods have relatively few calories compared to their weight. These foods are high in water or fibre and add bulk to meals, allowing you to feel satisfied with fewer calories; for example, all the foods below can be diet-friendly snacks, but the strawberries will leave you feeling the fullest.

100-calorie munches

Each of these tasty nibbles has about 100 calories, so you can have one or two a day:

Sweet treats

- 25 Jelly Belly jelly beans
- 1 McVitie's chocolate digestive
- 1 Kellogg's Special K red berry bar
- 1 Müller Light strawberry yogurt
- 1 Alpen Light chocolate and orange bar
- 2 squares, 20g (¾oz), milk chocolate
- 2 Jaffa cakes
- 1 Skinny Cow mint double choc stick

Simple swaps

Swap this
364 calories for a Starbucks grande mocha
For this
90 calories for a home-made café au lait
You save 274 calories

Step on it!

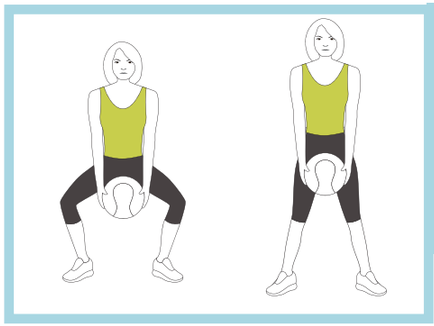
Stock your house with calorie-controlled snacks
You don't have to eliminate your favourite not-so-healthy snacks. Supermarket shelves are chock-full of 100-calorie packs of biscuits, crisps, crackers, cereal bars and more. Although they cost more than a larger pack of the same product, they make it easier for you to indulge without overeating.

You can also think of them as training wheels for dieting: 100-calorie snack packs can help you learn how to keep indulgences in check. In a study by the University of Colorado in Denver, 59 adults ate snack foods for two weeks. Half the group munched from 100-calorie packs for one week, followed by the same treats from larger packs for the next; for the other half, the order was reversed.

Outcome: the volunteers who were first 'trained' with small packs took 852 fewer calories from the big packs. You can learn to recognize the right amount, say the study's authors, who suggest buying the 100-calorie bags of snacks (or measuring out that amount of a favourite). Then, whenever you encounter that snack food, you'll know what a 'safe' portion is.

25-minute AT-HOME workout

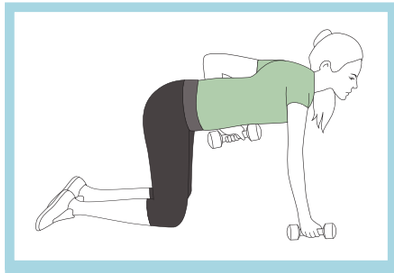
You can get fit without setting foot in a gym. These easy moves are designed to tone your body and can be done on a mat in the comfort of your own home.



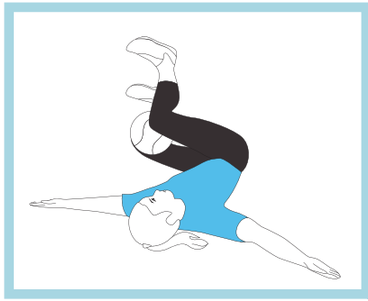
Plié squats
Stand with your feet a little wider than shoulder-width apart, and with toes and knees pointing out at a 45° angle. Hold a medicine ball (or a medium-sized ball) and squat down until your thighs are parallel to the floor. Keep your back straight and head looking forwards. Return to the starting position. Repeat 12–15 times.



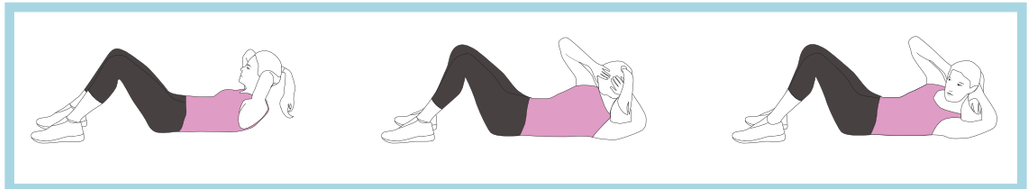
Squat thrusts
From a standing position, crouch down to a squat position with your hands on the ground shoulder-width apart, near your feet. From this position,jump back with your feet so you're in a press-up position. Then jump forwards, back to your squat position, with your hands still on the floor. Repeat 10 times.

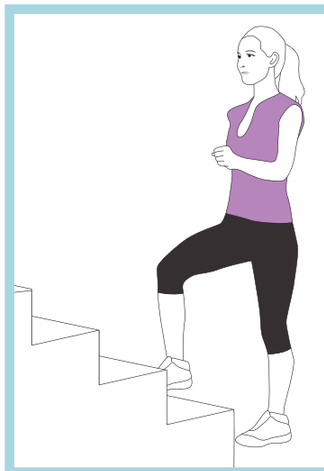


Kneeling row
Kneeling on all fours, hold a weight in your left hand and support your body weight on your right hand. Pull the weight up towards your armpit. Hold for a second before lowering the weight. Keep your back still and straight. Repeat 10–12 times.



Medicine ball hip roll
Lie on your back with a medicine ball (or medium-sized ball) between your knees. Lift your feet off the floor, forming a 90° angle at your hips and knees. Roll your hips over to the left until the leg touches the floor. Use your side muscles to lift the legs back up to the starting position. Repeat, rolling to the right side. Alternate to the right and left sides 8–10 times.

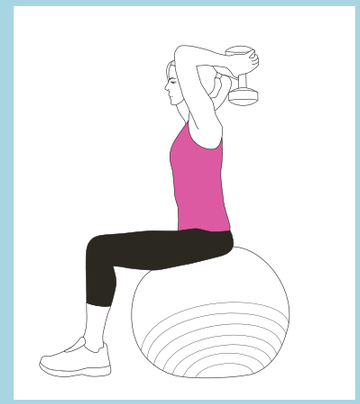




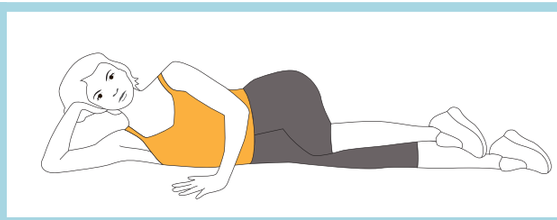
Step-ups
Stand up straight in front of a low bench or the first step of the stairs. Step up with one leg and then the other. Return to the starting position. Repeat 10–12 times with the right leg leading, then repeat 10–12 times with the left leg leading.

Ab crossover
Lie on your back with your hands by the side of your head and your legs raised, knees bent at a 90° angle. Bring your left elbow towards your right knee. Return to the starting position and then repeat on the other side. Alternate sides and repeat 12–15 times.

Seated overhead triceps extension
Sit on a stability/Swiss ball or chair and hold a weight with both hands. Extend your arms to the ceiling, keeping them close to your ears. This is the starting position. Lower the weight behind your head until it touches your shoulders. Straighten your arms back to the starting position. Repeat 12–15 times.



Leg lift
Lie on your right side and extend your left leg forwards to form a 45° angle, with your toes touching the floor. Lift your left leg up off the floor until it is level with your hips. Lower your leg back down to the floor. Repeat 12–15 times before changing sides.



FAT-BUSTING WEEKDAY MEAL PLANNER

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
BREAKFAST (about 350 calories)	Make-at-Home Muesli with skimmed milk (p. 22)	150ml (½ pint) fat-free Greek yogurt with 100g (3½oz) berries, 1 tbsp flaked almonds and 2 tsp honey	40g (1½oz) bran flakes with 150ml (¼ pint) skimmed milk and 1 banana	2 slices of wholemeal toast with 2 tsp butter and Marmite; café au lait (p. 30)	1 poached egg on 2 slices of wholemeal toast; 1 piece of fruit
LUNCH (about 500 calories)	Tuna Salad (p. 137) with a wholemeal roll and 2 tsp butter; 1 piece of fruit	Chicken and watercress sandwich with 2 tsp low-fat mayonnaise; 80g (3¼oz) fresh berries	Tomato, Pepper and Orange Soup (p. 141) with 1 wholemeal roll and 2 tsp butter; 1 x 125g pot low-fat yogurt	Smoked Mackerel Citrus Salad (p. 138) with 1 slice wholemeal bread and 1 tsp butter; 1 piece fresh fruit	Leafy salad with 1 sliced avocado, 1 hard-boiled egg and 1 tbsp low-fat mayonnaise
DINNER (about 500 calories)	Chicken Stir-fry with Noodles (p. 130); 75g (3oz) strawberries with 1 tbsp fat-free Greek yogurt	Tomato and Butter Bean Stew (p. 134) with a 175g (6oz) baked potato, 2 tsp butter and 1 tbsp grated cheese	Prawn and Vegetable Pilau (p. 134); 150g (5oz) fruit salad with 1 tbsp fat-free Greek yogurt	Chickpea Curry (p. 139) with 4 tbsp cooked wholegrain rice	Turkey and Broccoli Stir-fry (p. 141) with 4 tbsp cooked wholegrain noodles; 150g (5oz) fresh fruit
SNACK (about 100 calories)	½ mango and 1 apple	10 almonds	1 rice cake with 1 Dairylea slice	1 slice of wholemeal toast with a scrape of butter	1 Müller Light cherry yogurt

Step on it!

Add a dash of chilli sauce to your meal
In a 2010 study, scientists at the University of California found that people who consumed meals containing chilli burned up almost twice as much energy for several hours afterwards compared with the placebo group. Over a month, their bodies became more efficient at burning fat.

BE A LONG-TERM LOSER

Eat off the last few pounds with these long-term strategies:

- Keep a food diary. Sometimes there's a difference between what you think you're eating and what you're really putting into your mouth.
- Don't be a yo-yo dieter or crash-dieter. Consistent lifestyle changes are the key to permanent weight loss.
- Check your portion sizes. Plates piled high, even with healthy foods, will pile on the pounds. A protein portion, for example, should be no bigger than the size of an iPhone (see Practise Portion Control on page 56).
- Eat slowly, chewing every mouthful and allowing yourself to start feeling full rather than bolting food down and going for second helpings.
- Don't cut out food groups, unless you have a medical reason not to eat them. Aim for a mix of everything – just keep fats, sugar and refined carbohydrates to a minimum.