

How to Lose Weight the Healthy Way in 2019

By

Emily Abbate



If getting in shape is part of your New Year's resolutions, here are the expert-approved tips you need to do so in a sustainable manner. Also, you can keep your carbs!

It would be a little unusual if you were feeling unambiguously happy about your diet right now, since—no offense to gym evangelists—the holidays aren't the ideal time of year for anyone to count calories. After a slew of cookie-laden office parties and the booze-laden karaoke sessions that ensue, vocalizing the "I want to lose weight" resolution is pretty standard stuff. *Especially* since nearly 70 percent of U.S. adults are overweight or obese, and 45 percent put losing weight and getting in shape among their top New Year's

resolutions. (Comparable statistic: 60 percent of Americans use a streaming service like Netflix.)

If your first thought as a 2019 weight loss hopeful is "What diet am I going to go on," though? Folks, you're doing it wrong.

"Weight loss is a big thing. The problem is that fad diets—the extreme ones that limit a food source or completely cut things out—don't offer long-term results," says Dennis Cardone, DO, chief of primary care sports medicine at NYU Langone Health. "Research shows that we put more weight back on than when we started, so you have to ask yourself: What's the point of struggling through it in the first place?"

It's a grim prognosis. But to boost your odds of long-term success, which is the only type of success here that really matters, we offer six healthy weight-loss strategies to keep in mind as you run, perhaps literally, into 2019.

1. Set smart goals

Even LeBron knows that you don't win a title on opening night. If you set out on January 1 to drop 50 pounds, with no defined checkpoints in the interim, you'll lose sight of the meaningful-but-less-impressive-sounding victories that happen along the way. "You could be discouraged when that doesn't happen," says Cardone. "Instead, think smaller, like a pound a week. That's 50 pounds in a year! That can really add up."

Alternatively, don't tie your goals to weight loss itself. Instead, focus on actionable habits, like working out four times a week, or walking up the stairs to your third-floor office every day.

When you incorporate healthier tendencies as part of your lifestyle, you'll start to see numbers on the scale shift in the right direction. And if for any reason that result takes a little longer than you'd hoped, you're less likely to become discouraged in the meantime.

2. Don't count calories

Seriously! Instead, focus on the quality of the foods you're eating. Researchers at Stanford University recently monitored the diets of more than 600 overweight adults, sending them to health education classes in which they learned how to shop, cook, and eat smarter. (They were also encouraged to be physically active.) On their own, they reduced their daily calorie intake by about 500 calories, and lost an average 12 pounds over a year. This winter, spend more time educating yourself, and less time keeping a running calorie tally in your head. It's exhausting.

3. Avoid bright-line rules (probably)

The moment you tell yourself you "can't" have something, it's the only thing you're going to want. Thus, say it with us: "moderation."

"If you cut things out, you'll end up feeling that you lack willpower or self-control when you can't follow a set of rigid rules. In reality, the issue isn't your lack of self-control—it's the diet itself," says Alissa Rumsey, MS, RD, nutrition therapist and owner of Alissa Rumsey Nutrition and Wellness. "Instead, try to consume a variety of different foods from all food groups." Yes, even carbs.

Of course, there will be situations in which your willpower is tested. Rather than avoiding your co-worker's birthday cake altogether, settle on a small sliver. Doing this will help you avoid going to the bodega to buy Cheetos on the way home instead.