



Kale salads are a nutritional powerhouse. (*#7 below)

Slimming down: Smart swaps to stay on track

According to the folks over on NBC's The Today Show

Losing weight is tough, but maintaining your weight loss can be even more of a challenge. When you're focused dieting, there are rules to follow, but once you hit your goal weight, there's no handbook for how to stay on track.

Here are 8 Great Tips to Help You Stay on Track:

1. Use a food journal. – (yes, even *after* your diet)

Keeping a food log of everything you eat in a day holds you accountable to yourself and is also a reflection of your personal patterns over days and weeks, making it easier to find ways to optimize your food choices. Identifying and addressing your bad eating habits is the first step to finding a practical solution.

2. Be watchful of portion sizes.



Healthy food choices are the first step in a weight-loss plan, but all calories count, and if you're not aware of portion sizes you could wind up eating a lot more than you want. There are easy solutions! Buy single serving portions of chicken breasts, and extra lean ground meat. Look for a one pound total when buying ground turkey or poultry and divide into four equal parts for a quarter pound serving.

Purchase single serving containers of yogurt, or use a re-sealable 5-ounce container to portion out a single serving from a large container before eating. Look for 100-calorie packs of for "treat" foods, to limit portion and have the satisfaction of eating the "whole thing."

3. Don't cut out sweets entirely — find a way to fit them into your healthy meal plan.

A daily, calorie-controlled indulgence can be included in any weight-control plan. A smart choice can help avoid deprivation and getting off track. Some treats around 100 calories include a single serving calorie pack of cocoa-dusted almonds, chocolate leather (chewy chocolate snack from Manhattan Chocolates), chocolate-dipped fresh strawberries or pineapple, four milk or dark chocolate kisses, or one cup of frozen cherries (directly from the bag!).



4. Stay hydrated.

Hydration is key for weight-loss success because it's easy to confuse thirst and hunger. Write down your water intake in your food journal and carry a bottle of water with you throughout the day. While there is no official guideline for water intake — it's all based on "thirst," aim for at least 50 ounces a day. Sounds simple, and it is.

5. Never skip a meal.

Skipping meals can lead to overeating.

If you're someone who doesn't have time for breakfast, an easy and convenient solution is a calorie-controlled meal replacement bar or shake, along with a fresh fruit. Shakes like Pure Protein and Premier have about 35 grams of protein (more than a chicken breast), are low in sugar, and have just 200 calories. Paired with a fruit, it's a perfect meal on the run. Bars like Balance and Quest are also suitable options; although the protein content is lower — around 20 grams for the same calories — bars are a more convenient grab and go.

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6. Make sure you're eating enough protein.

While you might be eating more fruits and veggies now, you also need to focus on getting enough protein.

Adding protein to your diet will help you feel full and satisfied. Great options include hard-boiled eggs, grilled or shredded chicken (from a purchased rotisserie chicken or cooked), ready-to-eat frozen shrimp, or one cup of cannellini beans.



7. Get creative with your salads. *

Salads can get boring, adding color is the key to variety.

Purchase a variety of fresh vegetables, including red and yellow pepper strips, shredded carrots, grape tomatoes, red onions, and sliced mushrooms. No waste, and a lot of variety. You can also add water-packed canned artichoke hearts or slice up a fresh fennel bulb for a pop of licorice flavor.

8. All meals should be nutrient dense.

Iceberg and romaine lettuce taste great, but don't offer a lot of nutritional value.

For salads, choose darker greens like spinach and kale to support your body's needs. Other great greens are arugula, baby kale (much milder than original kale), and mixed spring greens. Because the taste is stronger, you can mix these with a small amount of romaine or iceberg. For breakfast, choose fresh fruit with plain yogurt, instead of eating a sugary flavored yogurt. When dining out, opt for steamed vegetables with a lean protein source.