



WEIGHT LOSS SUCCESS WITH FRUITS & VEGETABLES

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Another year has come and gone and if you're like many other Americans, you just might be ringing in the New Year with a resolution to shed a few extra pounds. But let's face it, weight loss is tough! If it were easy, the diet industry wouldn't be the multi-billion dollar industry that it is. In fact, it seems that not a week goes by without a new weight loss sensation hitting the newsstands and many weight loss hopefuls soon find themselves overwhelmed by not only the variety of plans, but also the conflicting claims as to which approach is best.



Fortunately, successful weight loss doesn't have to be complicated or confusing. In its simplest terms, losing weight is all about energy balance. That is, your weight is a balance between the calories you eat and the calories (or energy) you burn each and every day. If you consume more calories than your body requires, this extra energy is stored away as fat for later use. On the other hand, if you consume fewer calories than your body burns, your body will have to tap into these fat stores to make up the difference, which will ultimately result in weight loss. The trick, then, to successful weight loss is to create a calorie deficit. And, of course, what you choose to eat matters. When every calorie counts, it's important to really make the most of every bite. Thankfully, though the diet industry would complicate weight loss with gimmicks, quick fixes, and silver bullets, you just can't go wrong with time-tested, evidence-based, common sense nutrition.



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Our Recommendation

One particular recommendation that makes the cut time and time again is the need for more fruits and vegetables. Dietitians can hardly say it enough—and for good reason! Despite the oft-repeated message, the Center for Disease Control reports that only 14% of adults—and less than 10% of adolescents—manage to get in the recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables per day. And, with overweight and obesity statistics on the rise, strategies that combine good nutrition with simple ways to reduce calorie intake are in high demand. Though research is mixed when it comes to just how directly fruit and vegetable intake influences weight loss, we do know that these foods have a variety of attributes beneficial for creating the calorie deficit essential for shedding pounds. So whether you're looking for a detailed meal plan or just want to make a few simple—but meaningful—changes, adding more fruits and vegetables is an excellent way to both kick start your personal weight loss journey as well as give your plan legs for the long haul.

But why?

WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT FRUITS & VEGETABLES?

As it turns out, fresh produce enhances weight loss success in a variety of ways. From filling fiber and powerful nutrition to low-calorie crunch and good-for-you sweetness, fruits and vegetables bring it all to the table.



Filling Fiber

Foods high in fiber are an excellent addition to any eating plan, but offer particular benefits for weight loss. As nondigestible carbohydrate, fiber is filling and yet provides zero calories, an important attribute when the goal is to reduce calories whilst keeping hunger at bay. And, because fiber slows digestion, you'll feel fuller longer and enjoy more sustained energy throughout



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the day. Though that soda might give you a quick pick-me-up in the afternoon, snack on a **sweet pear instead—which offers almost 6 grams of fiber and just 100 calories**—and you’ll get the boost you need minus the dreaded “crash” that so often follows on the heels of a sugary drink. Plus, if you often find yourself combating the bloat of a sluggish GI tract, improved regularity is yet another benefit of a diet high in fiber.

To get your recommended 25-35 grams of fiber, reach for a colorful array of fruits and vegetables, such as blueberries, strawberries, apples, cherries, carrots, and broccoli, all of which provide 3-5 grams per serving and a wide range of vitamins and minerals. Whole grains, beans, and legumes are also excellent sources.

Rich in Nutrients

Most Americans know that fruits and vegetables are a gold mine when it comes to vitamins and minerals. And, with recent studies suggesting that multi-vitamin supplements may do little to protect against chronic disease, we have more reason than ever to visit the produce aisle. While it is not yet fully understood why fruits and veggies beat supplements when it comes to health-protective benefits, many researchers and nutritionists chalk it up to one of the many advantages of eating whole foods. In any particular piece of fruit or vegetable, there isn’t merely one or two nutrients but rather a whole host of vitamins, minerals, phytochemicals and other plant compounds that work together synergistically to create those much prized benefits. To isolate one would potentially weaken its functionality. Just as the saying goes, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts! Though we may not yet fully understand the why, dietitians agree: a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and other plant-based foods is the best way to get your daily dose of good nutrition.



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Nutrient Dense

We've established that fruits and vegetables are a good source of fiber and rich in nutrients; add to this the water content of fresh produce and now you've got one nutrient dense food! In other words, fruits and veggies are loaded with great nutritional value and, because of their fiber and water content, are also low in calories. Talk about a win-win! When hunger is one of the top reasons individuals give up on their weight loss goals, a strategy that can both lower caloric intake while increasing satiety is simply priceless. In addition, because many dieters face nutritional deficiencies while cutting calories, this makes fruits and vegetables a crucial part of any sensible weight loss plan. After all, what's the point of losing a few pounds if you sacrifice your health along the way? Finally, one often overlooked benefit of fresh produce is its contribution to daily hydration needs. With each crunchy or juicy bite, you not only get the perk of a low calorie snack, but your body is also receiving much needed fluid. Since thirst cues are often mistaken for hunger pangs, staying hydrated is just one more important—yet simple—weight loss strategy. From fiber to fluid, fruits and vegetables will keep your hunger and thirst satisfied.



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So how do I get started?

Studies have shown that one of the easiest ways to cut calories and lose weight is to simply begin each meal with a serving of fruit or vegetables. Why? Three reasons.

-  **First**, this little appetizer serves to **kick off the whole digestion** process. Because it takes about 20 minutes for the brain to recognize satiety cues from the stomach, many fast eaters manage to overeat before feelings of fullness can set in. Eating a crunchy apple or a bowl of vegetable soup slows you down and gives your body the chance to feel satisfied with less.
-  **Second**, that apple or veggie soup you just enjoyed also serves to **physically fill you up**, literally taking up space that might have otherwise been filled with higher calorie foods. For example, compare the difference between a cup of sliced strawberries and a cup of fettuccine alfredo. Though the volume may be the same, the strawberries clock in at a mere 45 calories while the fettuccine alfredo blows the budget at a whopping 600 calories!
-  **And third**, because your appetizer was low in calories, **you just managed to eat more while taking in fewer calories**. In the end, this is why studies have shown that people will eat an average of 150-200 fewer overall calories at a given meal when they begin with a serving fruit or vegetables. Do this simple trick at every meal and you could potentially shave off 400-600 calories per day—and about 3-4 pounds per month—without even counting calories!

So whether you're hoping for a new you in the New Year or want to improve the way you feel from the inside out, just be sure to fill your grocery cart with a variety of colorful fruits and veggies. Start with a few small changes—perhaps a serving of fruit with breakfast and a handful of raw veggies in the afternoon—and you'll be well on your way to a meaningful lifestyle transformation. **With a little planning and discipline, you'll soon see the pounds slip away and reap health benefits by the bushel!**



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1600 Calorie Sample Menu

Wondering how to fit in all those extra fruits and vegetables? Here's a menu loaded with variety and flavor that's perfect for your weight loss efforts. Simply modify the portions as needed for your calorie goals.

Breakfast

- Cooked oatmeal (1 cup) with blueberries (3/4 cup), brown sugar (2 teaspoons), and a dash of cinnamon

- Tall latte made with 2% milk

373 calories, 9 g fat, 62 g carbohydrate, 18 g protein

Lunch

- Apple
- Turkey sandwich on whole wheat made with roast turkey breast (2 ounces), Dijon mustard, lettuce, tomato, and red onion
- Triscuit Thin Crisps (1 serving)
- Smoked mozzarella cheese (1 ounce)

513 calories, 12 g fat, 79 g carbohydrate, 28 g protein

Afternoon Snack

- Baby carrots (1 cup) with hummus (2 tbs)

80 calories, 3 g fat, 12 g carbohydrate, 3 g protein

Dinner

- Mixed green salad (2 cups) with 1/2 sliced pear and 'lite' bleu cheese vinaigrette (2 tablespoons)

- Grilled or broiled top sirloin (4 ounces) topped with caramelized Walla Walla onions (1/4 cup sautéed with 1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil)

- Mashed Yukon Gold potatoes (1/2 cup with 1 teaspoon butter)

- Steamed asparagus (6 spears)

500 calories, 24 g fat, 47 g carbohydrate, 32 g protein

Evening Snack

- Sliced strawberries (1 cup) with Dove Dark Chocolate (2 squares or hearts)

130 calories, 6 g fat, 21 g carbohydrate, 2 g protein



Sources



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Daily Total

1594 calories | 54 g total fat (31% of calories)
19 g saturated fat (11% of calories) | 220 g carbohydrate
(48% of calories) | 32 g fiber | 82 g protein (21% of calories)



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