



No matter how much I (don't) eat I can't seem to lose any weight

This is one of the most common concerns that I come across with my clients, typically from women. With one diet after the next bombarding the media, it's no wonder that we always associate weight loss with calories and how much we eat. When I take a look at an individual's diet diary, where they record everything they have consumed in a day, two things almost always stand out. First, meals are consistently being skipped, especially breakfast. Second, it is not usually the amount of food being eaten but the kind of food being consumed that is more often the issue.

What happens when I skip meals?

Insulin is a hormone that is released to help regulate our blood sugar levels. As long as our blood sugar levels are steady then we are less likely to encounter cravings, fatigue, headaches, hunger, and weight gain. The best way to maintain your blood sugar levels is by eating small meals at regular intervals throughout the day. Ideally, every 2.5 to 3 hours. Naturally, what you eat will make the difference. Skipping meals and eating foods high in sugar and refined carbohydrates (white sugar, flour, pasta, breads...) will cause fluctuations in your blood sugar levels and lead you down the habitual path of constant cravings. Skipping breakfast in particular is not recommended. You have just gone all night without eating and missing your morning meal can put your body into starvation mode. When the body is unsure when you are going to eat next, it cleverly stores fat as its energy preserve. This is why weight gain is often an ironic side effect, over time, of a diet too low in calories.

What should I be eating?

Eating smaller meals at regular intervals throughout the day can be very easy to turn into habit and you should notice a difference in your weight, mood, and energy levels. Including a bit of protein, complex carbohydrates, and healthy fats with each meal is the most effective, well balanced approach. Morning snacks can include unsalted nuts/ seeds, veggies and/or whole grain or rice crackers with a healthy dip like hummus. Afternoon snacks are best eaten around 2pm or 3pm in the afternoon when blood sugar levels typically dip and sugar cravings set in. Fruit is ideal at this time and will hold you over until dinner.



HEALTHY LIVING

Here is an example of what a typical day should look like with times included:

7:30am	10:00am	12:30pm	3:00pm	6:00pm
Soft boiled eggs 100% Rye or whole grain toast	Handful of unsalted nuts and seeds	Grilled Chicken salad with home-made dressing	Mixed berries (strawberries, raspberries, blueberries etc)	Veggie stir-fry on quinoa or brown rice

Keep in mind that eating well may seem like a lot of effort at the beginning, but you get into the groove of things and find ways to organize it around your own schedule. Just like developing any new habit, it takes time. Start with one meal or snack at a time with a cup of clean filtered water before each meal then gradually move on to the next step. Perhaps try one day a week, then 2 etc.

Making an extra chicken breast or extra stir-fry the night before makes lunch easy the next day. Also, making big batches of chili or soups on the weekend to be frozen for easy, convenient meals later on can really come in handy when you are in a hurry. Also if you think about it, it doesn't take much longer to do it yourself, than it does to say leave the office at lunch, drive to a fast food joint, wait in line, eat it, and then drive back to work AND making it yourself means that you actually know what you are eating.

LET'S EAT

Most grocery store **salad dressings** are loaded with trans and saturated fats. The 'fat free' ones may not contain fat, but will likely have loads of sugar that will affect your blood sugar levels. Making your own at home is not only healthier and better tasting, but less expensive in the end. there are lots of different types of ingredients you can add to a simple oil and vinegar mixture to spruce it up a bit and give you a bit of variety.

Throwing them in the blender can give you a creamier consistency as well.

Base

- Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- Balsamic Vinegar
- Apple Cider Vinegar
- Fresh squeezed lemon



Enhancements

- Fresh ginger, pressed
- Fresh garlic, pressed
- Plain yogurt (for creamy)
- Fresh herbs, dill, cilantro, parsley, basil
- Tamari / Bragg's soy sauce
- Sesame seeds
- Dijon mustard

