

Healthy Weight Loss Success



Brought To You By

www.MenuPlanningCentral.com

Introduction

Healthy Weight Loss Success: Four little words, yet when we read them what are some of the thoughts that immediately enter our minds?

1. **Change** is usually one of the first thoughts; I'm going to have to change what I'm doing and what I'm eating. Ugh!
2. **Diet:** I've already tried every diet out there and nothing works, so what makes this any different? Uh huh, I'm thinking it right along with you, so don't feel like you're alone.
3. **Exercise:** Where and when am I going to find the time to exercise? I'm already wishing there were more hours in a day! How am I going to fit in something that I don't even WANT to do?!
4. **How am I going to feed my family and stick to a healthy eating plan?!**
Trust me, I use that excuse reason all the time too!

I'm sure there are many more thoughts that run through your mind when you hear the words "Healthy Weight Loss Success". But here at [Menu Planning Central](#), we are people just like you; with the same struggles, weight issues, lifestyles and families, so we are going to give you some *realistic* ideas and ways to help you reach your weight loss goals.

These are not overnight, get slim quick schemes or "diets"; these are tried and true things that have been done and worked by those of us at [Menu Planning Central](#), and our friends and families, who have lost the weight and kept it off!

We are here to help you along your journey to a skinnier you, so let's get started!

The Big First Step

You guessed it, stepping on the scale! I hate doing it too, but in order to set a goal, you need a starting point. So go ahead, right now, don't hesitate or you may never get there (trust me, I know!). Oh wait! Take a notebook or journal so you can log your progress. Enter today's date and your weight. I'll wait while you go. I weighed myself yesterday so you go right ahead.

Okay, got that lovely number down with today's date? Good. You're on your way to weight loss success!

Now, think about the big goal. Think about how much you want/need to lose. Of course this number should be realistic for your body type, height and age. This is your long term goal.

Now set some short term goals that will help you reach that long term goal. If you have a lot of weight to lose, say over 100 lbs., then your first short term goal could be as realistic as losing 2 to 7 lbs. the first week. With some real effort, this isn't unreasonable. But, remember, the big losses will slow down after the first couple of weeks, so your short term goals need to be in the 1 to 2 lbs. a week range. This type of weight loss is normal and healthy for anyone putting forth effort to lose weight.

If you have less weight to lose, then your short term goals should be that 1 to 2 lbs. a week range starting off, to stay healthy and keep it off. If you lose a lot of weight too fast, it's not healthy for you, and the chances of it staying off are pretty low.

Write these goals down, the long term, ultimate goal and the short term, weekly goals to help you get there. Put them in front of you, where you can see them at all times, like on your desktop, mirror or closet door.

The Next Step

Notice the trend: “step”? That’s right; the next step is to start walking! Okay, okay, I know it’s cold out there, or hot, or whatever other ~~excuse~~ reason you have for not wanting to get out there and walk. Plus it’s time consuming. I completely understand. But, here’s the deal. Walking is one of the *easiest* and **best** forms of exercise there is!

Start out by walking around the block. Do that for a week to build up your stamina. Then add another block and another until you are walking 20 minutes to half hour. You’ll be surprised how good you feel, how awesome the fresh air is and maybe even the friends you’ll make along the way.

Speaking of friends, get a friend or relative (that you like ☺) to walk with you. The time goes by much faster when you have someone to talk to. However, if you prefer, fill your MP3 player with your favorite songs, ones that will motivate you and pump you up, and get out there and start steppin’ to the tunes (a little exercise lingo for you).

If walking really and truly isn’t your thing then get one of those DVD’s or get to exercising with one of the programs on TV. The point is to find something that works for you. I’ve tried several different television exercise programs and have bought numerous DVD’s, but walking is really the best for me, plus my hubby likes to walk so it works for us.

Let’s Talk About Food

I love food, which is why I have a weight issue in the first place. I was thinking of naming my favorite foods just now but figured it would just make you hungry and defeat the purpose of this article. ;)

So, since weight loss is 80 to 90% diet (why oh why do they call it “*diet*?”) let’s explore some yummy ways to lose weight! Yes, there are some **yummy** foods out there that you can eat and still lose weight.

Raw vegetables: Doesn’t sound very appetizing does it?! But, have you tried them recently? Not only are carrots and celery awesome, wholesome and healthy, they are crunchy and juicy! If you have the need to eat something crunchy, instead of grabbing for that bag of greasy, salt laden chips, grab a carrot or some celery. Other raw veggies that taste yummy are broccoli, cauliflower and green peppers.

Fruit: Fruits contain natural sugar, so you want to limit your fruit to 2 servings a day. A serving would be an orange or small apple, or a small banana. But, when you're craving something sweet (all the time???) grab a wonderful, juicy sweet piece of fruit. Try some new fruit too, like cantaloupe or honey dew melon. Watermelon is a great, naturally sweet fruit, and because it has lots of water, is very low in calories and helps shed some water weight! Try fancier fruits too, like star fruit, kiwi, mango and papaya. Now I'm getting hungry.



Nuts: Nuts are a great snack! They are crunchy and salty and yet they have lots of protein. Try to get salt free nuts if you can, because we all know that too much salt is bad for you, plus salt makes you retain water, and when you retain water, the scale isn't very friendly. But, when you're dying for something crunchy, reach for the nuts instead of the chips. A small handful will do. Obviously you can't eat a whole can of nuts in one sitting and expect to lose weight!

Protein Foods: These are your meats, cheeses, eggs, beans and nuts. There is so much controversy about high protein diets it drives me nuts (no pun intended). Should you or shouldn't you eat more protein than carbohydrates? I say consult your doctor who knows your medical history. My doctor recommends I eat a high protein, low fat diet because of my blood sugar issues (hypoglycemia) and the fact I gain weight in the tummy area the most. And it has worked in the past for me, but I have trouble eating all that meat all the time. So, check with your doctor before choosing to eat mostly protein foods. If you do decide to go high protein, make sure the foods you are choosing are low in fat as well.

Whole Grains: Whole grains are wheat, rice, rye and such. When choosing bread products like cereal, be sure you are choosing whole grain products. The packages will indicate when they are made with whole grains. Whole grains are easier for your body to break down, resulting in easier digestion.

Dairy Products: These are your milk products. Dairy products can be high in fat, so when you can, choose skim milk based products. They are important in your diet because they have Vitamin D and calcium which are important for building strong bones and muscle.

Okay, those are the basic food groups, and are important in any diet. Now we will talk about **why** eating healthy is important and not just for weight loss.

Why Eating Healthy Is Important

When you eat foods that are actually good for you, your body gets all the nutrition it needs to function properly. I believe that a lot of the diseases out there today can be reduced or eradicated by eating healthy. Our joints need certain lubricants to work properly; our brain needs certain nutrients to function properly; our bones need calcium and other vitamins to stay strong and our muscles need oxygen and other nutrients to stay strong as well. We can get all of the things our bodies need from food.

When you eat the right food, food that is natural and healthy, you will get sick less often and feel better overall. You will have more energy, because you avoid those sugar rushes (and the crash in blood sugar that follows), if you skip that doughnut for breakfast or the candy bar for snack.

Healthy food is just plain good for you and we'll show you that it can taste delicious too. In the end you will find it much more satisfying than any fast food, fatty microwave meal or snack foods that can be found in a vending machine... and your body will thank you for it.



A Diet Journal:

Why would I want to write about what I eat?! A diet journal will help you stay on track. It will help keep you motivated and it will help you see where you've been and where you're going. It can be as simple or complex as you like, so do what works for YOU. Use the same notebook or journal you wrote your initial weight and set your long term and short term goals.

If you're a detailed person, you may want to write everything you eat including how many calories, fat content, sugar or carb information, vitamins and minerals, etc. If you're not so detailed, just write down what you ate, calories, fat and sugar, to keep track of the amounts you're taking in.

Decreasing fat, calories and sugar is the key to weight loss.

In your journal you may also want to write about how you were feeling before you ate, while you were eating and after you ate. This may help you see any "emotional" eating habits you have. I know I tend to eat more when I'm bored or stressed.

Why is it that we think food will help us feel less bored or less stressed?

I think once we answer *that* question, we will be on the way to true weight loss success.

Daily Eating Tips:

Here are some easy tips to follow that you can use every day to help you on your way to weight loss success.

Breakfast: A Great Start to any Day

Eating a healthy breakfast gets you off to a great nutritional start to your day. Studies have shown that women who eat breakfast consume an average of 100 calories less than those who skip this first meal. Over time, this one little change can make quite a difference. Not only will you start losing weight, you will have more energy throughout the day and feel better by giving your body the nutrients it needs.

Of course with our hectic lives, it isn't always easy to find time to sit down to a breakfast meal, let alone cook it in the first place. Don't let that discourage you though. If you are in a rush, grab a bowl of whole-grain cereal topped with some fresh fruit and a little low-fat or skim milk. Or prepare some boiled eggs ahead of time. In the morning, just slice one of them and put it on a whole-grain bagel for a quick and easy bagel breakfast sandwich.

Our personal favorite is breakfast smoothies. Smoothies are quick and easy to put them together, the kids love them and if you pour them into a travel mug you have breakfast to go.

Give it a try – here's a free mini-ebook full of all kinds of breakfast smoothie recipes that are good for you.

<http://www.menuplanningcentral.com/breakfast-smoothies.pdf>

Print the recipes and keep them next to your blender on the kitchen counter. Try some of the recipes that sound yummy to you and before you know it, drinking your breakfast every morning will become a healthy habit for you and everyone in your family.

Lunch: Keeps You Going Throughout The Rest Of Your Day:

Do you feel like you need a nap sometime in the afternoon, or do you get home so starved that you head straight over to the junk food cabinet for some snacking before you get dinner ready? I know I do! Both of these situations could be caused by the lunch you do or don't eat.

So, what should you eat that will help overcome this feeling? You don't want to eat anything too heavy or it will make you sleepy. If you eat something with a lot of meat, fat and high in carbs, your body will be burning energy digesting instead of giving you energy, and you'll feel like taking a nap. The extreme of this happens on Thanksgiving, but even regular restaurant food can cause this afternoon sleepiness. Also keep in mind that most restaurant meals are actually up to 3 servings of food – making it much too easy to overeat. So, choose a

yummy salad filled with lots of raw veggies. You can even spruce your salad up with some nuts or grilled chicken.

Oh, but be careful with the dressing. If you're like me and HATE low fat dressing, choose a balsamic vinaigrette or Italian. I'm getting hungry just thinking about it!

You don't want to skip lunch.

Well, you may want to, but you shouldn't! You need some food in the middle of the day to keep your energy up and to keep you going the rest of the day. This also keeps you from being completely starved when late afternoon rolls around.

Here's a small report we created with some delicious and very healthy salad recipes. As with the healthy breakfast smoothie ebook you are welcome to print it and pass it along to family and friends.

<http://www.menuplanningcentral.com/healthy-salad-recipes.pdf>

The ever dreaded question: What's for dinner?

I hear it all the time! As mentioned above, **how do we feed our family stuff they like and still eat healthy and stick to our weight loss plan ourselves without breaking the budget?**

Good question, but one that is easily answered. Feed your family healthy dinners too! I know, easier said than done. But, look at some of these suggestions and see if you're family won't love them!

Spaghetti: What?! This crazy person is suggesting spaghetti as a weight loss meal? Sure am! Using whole grain pasta, my family loves it, and ground turkey you cut a huge amount of fat and calories from the meal! Also, remember, you don't have to eat ½ the pot either! A small serving, the size of your fist and a yummy salad will fill you up nicely! You're family will still get the meal they love and it will be healthier for all of you. I bet your kids won't even notice it's made with ground turkey.

When making other pasta dishes, replacing regular pasta with whole-grain pasta is a great way to cut down the carbs and increase the fiber in any meal.

The same for dishes calling for ground beef; substitute ground turkey whenever possible.

Grilled Chicken or Steak Salad: This is one of our family favorites to make. Grill some boneless, skinless chicken breasts or some yummy sirloin steaks. Season them to your liking. Cut them in strips and place on a bed of baby spinach leaves with your other favorite veggies. Top with a low fat dressing or vinaigrette. Filling

and yummy. My kids don't complain when we make this and I bet yours won't either!

Another way to ensure a healthy dinner is by planning your dinners ahead of time. If you have everything you need to cook in your fridge and pantry, and a recipe handy, fixing a healthy dinner will take less time than picking up a pizza and it will be much healthier (and cheaper) as well.

Take a little time each week to plan your dinners for the following week. Keep the recipes you need handy and make your grocery list. You can get most of the groceries at once and will have everything ready to cook when you get home.

If you want this to be even easier, you can subscribe Menu Planning Central and get all your recipes along with a grocery list emailed to you each week.



Just click here: <http://www.menuplanningcentral.com>

Other Tips for Weight Loss Success:

Avoid Sugar Substitutes

Did you know that some artificial sweeteners can actually cause sugar cravings?

A natural sweetener called stevia is growing in popularity. It allows you to sweeten your food and beverages without extra calories and without the sugar cravings. My hubby and I use it. It's sweeter than sugar too, so you use less.

Drink More Water

My mom's remedy for everything is, "drink more water". I used to tease her about this all the time, until I learned how important it is and how TRUE!

Did you know that we often feel hungry when we are actually thirsty? The two sensations (hunger and thirst) come from two areas in the brain that lay right next to each other, making it easy for us to confuse one with the other. Often times when you think you are hungry, what you actually need is a big glass of water.

Get filled up faster by drinking a full 8 oz. glass of water before you eat and another with your meal. You'll be surprised how full you feel, resulting in eating less. It is recommended to drink at least eight glasses of water per day, but hardly any of us drink that much. Instead we quench our thirst on sugary sodas or coffee. By drinking water before and with your meals, there's 6 glasses right there. Get the other two in by drinking one when your first get up in the morning and one at bed time.

Here's a great article on the health benefits of drinking enough water. It's a real eye-opener to see just how important water is for our body to function properly. You may even recognize some of the early signs of dehydration mentioned as symptoms you often experience without realizing you could easily cure them just by drinking more water.

<http://www.menuplanningcentral.com/articles/drinking-enough-water.html>

Dealing With and Avoiding Cravings

Do you often crave a certain food like potato chips or ice cream (Oh wait, those are mine ☺)

One of the biggest tripping stones when it comes to weight loss, are food cravings. It's hard to resist that urge when you feel like you just have to have that piece of chocolate. There's a lot more to cravings than just wanting to eat a particular food. Real food cravings can be caused by anything from habit to nutritional deficiencies that need to be addressed. Thankfully there are quite a few ways to successfully deal with food cravings. They allow you to control your cravings instead of the other way around.

Our good friend Diana Walker – The Craving Coach – has put together an excellent e-book on the topic.

Learn more about her and what she has to say about food cravings on her website at <http://www.cravingsecrets.com/>

Vitamins and Why We Need Them

Yes, I said *need* them. We've already mentioned that nutritional deficiencies can cause cravings of foods that aren't exactly good for us and make our bodies malfunction. One way to make sure you get most of the vitamins and minerals your body needs is to take a daily multi-vitamin.

If you find yourself craving a particular food (like chocolate or red meat), you may be lacking a particular nutrient. In that case you may want to check with your physician if you feel like you need some additional supplements.

Incorporating Exercise in Your Weight Loss Plan

I know, we already talked about exercise in the beginning, but I just want to touch on it a little more because the key to successful weight loss comes down to consuming fewer calories than you burn. We can either eat fewer calories than our body needs for what we already do every day, or we can exercise to burn more calories than we consume. The best approach will be to combine the two.

Eat healthy foods, without too many calories + burn a few extra calories by exercising about 30 minutes a day. Using this combined approach, you will lose weight much faster and the exercise will also help you feel better and make sure your body stays in shape.

If you are serious about the amount and type of exercise you are getting, you may want to join a gym. A gym will have plenty of workout equipment for you to try, and many of them also offer fun classes on anything from Pilates to Kickboxing. Paying that membership every month can also be a motivator to get you to go in to work out.

Exercising At Home

We already talked about walking, my favorite form of exercise. There are many things you can do right at home to keep you in great shape. There's plenty of workout equipment available for you to use at home, but you don't even have to go that far.

Some fun exercise DVDs can be found here, www.FunExerciseVideos.com including belly dancing, ballet, and hip hop!

Of course you can always just do some stretches, pushups and squats. The point is exercise will help you reach your weight loss goals much quicker! So get off the couch (talking to myself here too) and start moving that body to a slimmer you!

Working on a Computer Does NOT Mean You Can't Be Fit

If you're a working mom (either at home or out of the house), you know that finding time to exercise can seem impossible.

Our friend, Nicole Dean, coined the term "Computer Butt". Oh, that's what I have!?!? ☺

Check out her site for information about how to stay
"Mostly-Sane" like she does at:
www.ShowMomtheMoney.com

A Few More Tips to Help You Succeed

Last, but not least, we wanted to share a few more quick tips with you to help you on your journey to healthy weight loss.

Here we go:

Step on That Scale ONLY Once a Week

When you've set your weight loss goals I know it's hard to resist stepping on the scale; you can't wait to see the results. This makes it tempting to hop on the scale every morning. Do yourself a favor and limit weigh-ins to once weekly. Our body weight can fluctuate a good 3 pounds throughout the day, giving you inaccurate results. Plus you really don't want to obsess about how much you weigh. Weighing yourself once a week will show you your progress and confirm you are on track to a slimmer, lighter you.

Keep an Exercise Log

This can be in your journal I know you already started☺. Exercising every day can be a bit of a challenge, so keep an exercise log or journal to chart your progress. It's a great way to see how much you are accomplishing and just having that little bit of accountability of having to write down what you did can be a great motivator to keep going.

Here's one you can check out!

<http://www.homebasedworkouts.com/exercise-log-or-journal.html>

Get a Weight Loss Buddy or Accountability Partner

Do you have a friend who is also working on losing weight? Get together every once in awhile and report each other's progress. Having a weight loss buddy is a great way to get the support you need and have someone check up on you. If you don't have anyone you would like to buddy up with, ask your spouse or a close friend to be your accountability partner. Report your progress to them and ask them to help you stay motivated in your weight loss efforts. This is the biggest motivating factor for me. I am competitive in nature, so when I have someone who will be seeing my progress or lack thereof, it helps keep me on track. I don't want to have to report a gain to them!

Grocery Shopping Tips

Grocery shopping isn't exactly one of our favorite activities. That's why we've come up with some tips on how to make it easier and faster. There are also some great tips here on how to make sure what you buy is healthy.

<http://www.menuplanningcentral.com/articles/grocery-shopping-tips.html>

What happens when you get off track?

Oops, you tripped and have filled up on junk food, or went to a dinner party and indulged in way too much food (and dessert on top of it). Now what? Don't worry, we all slip in our good eating habits every once in a while. Don't beat yourself up over it or get depressed, instead get back on track with a few healthy meals the next day. The important thing is that you don't give up! Tell your accountability partner you got off track too, but remember, ONE slip up won't cause you to gain weight, but several in a row will. So try to get back on track right away. If you struggle getting back on track, and we all do, call your accountability partner. Make a nice salad that will help you want to eat healthy again, and go for a walk. Write down what you're feeling in your journal. Sometimes we just need to stop and think about why we're off track; did we have an incident arise that caused us to feel depressed or stressed? Figuring that out will help us pinpoint when and why we get off track.

Now that we've covered the how's and why's and to's of weight loss success, there's nothing stopping you from becoming the slimmer, healthier you you want to be!

Healthy Eating Made Simple – Menu Planning Central

This report is sponsored by [Menu Planning Central](http://www.MenuPlanningCentral.com) - the **Healthy Eating Experts**. Enjoy Healthy Eating Quickly and Easily with Weekly Menus Along with Family Friendly and Vegetarian Menus along with plenty of other cooking resources.

Along with your weekly dinner menu, you will also receive access to monthly resources and culinary reports, our team of experts who write monthly columns on their topic of expertise, as well as additional help and support in the exclusive members-only forum.

You even get access to our custom-built meal planning software that makes creating personalized meal plans that fit your taste and dietary requirements a breeze.

Start by grabbing your free meal planning basics report and worksheets today at

www.MenuPlanningCentral.com