

Keep a ~~Weight~~ Food Log for Weight Loss

Weighing ourselves regularly is a helpful weight loss strategy, but if you want to truly promote a healthy weight, it's time to go beyond the scale and focus on your food choices, changing your daily habits.

If you read any list of the top 10 strategies to lose weight, every one will include keeping a food diary. Research tells us that keeping track of our food intake leads to weight loss because it increases our awareness of what we're eating and in what quantities (1).

A food diary isn't a report card, where you're "bad" or "good" depending on the foods you eat. Use your food diary as a method to objectively solve a puzzle: how to change your eating habits in order to lose weight.

Try these 3 strategies to develop a food log that fits your individual needs:

Strategy #1: If you have no set eating schedule, write down the time of day every time you eat. Going without food for long periods often leads to overeating because we've allowed ourselves to become too hungry. On the flipside, eating every 30 minutes most likely means that we're not paying attention to hunger or fullness, and are eating due to stress, habit, or emotions.

Strategy #2: If you find yourself snacking, note why you're eating. Ask yourself what you really need right at the moment when you're staring into the refrigerator or searching through the cupboards. You might be bored,

tired, or even hungry. Or perhaps someone else is eating and it sounds like a good idea. Understanding the reasons why you want to eat will help you find non-food ways to deal with those situations. For example, you might call a friend if you're lonely, work on a craft if you're bored, or go to bed if you're tired.



Strategy #3: If water isn't your primary beverage choice, focus on what you're drinking. You might be surprised to discover that your morning 16-oz flavored latte contains 250 calories, or that your juice glass holds 12 ounces (170 calories). Healthful-sounding

flavored beverages like fruit drinks can provide around 200 calories per 16 ounces. Even lightly-sweetened beverages contain calories. Remember, calories in beverages don't satisfy our hunger, and it's easy to drink many more calories than we realize throughout the day (2).

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References:

1. Dear food diary. Recording what you eat can help with weight and blood glucose control. Neithercott T. Diabetes Forecast. 2011 Dec;64(12):29-32,34.
2. Caloric beverages consumed freely at meal-time add calories to an ad libitum meal. Panahi S, El Khoury D, Luhovvy BL, Goff HD, Anderson GH. Appetite. 2013 Jun;65:75-82.

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