There’s no doubt that losing weight takes effort, however, when it comes energy balance it typically is important to take in slightly less energy than your body burns through its normal daily body. This energy deficit will force your body to use its own reserves (body fat) to fuel. Cutting calories than your body needs each day will lead to excess energy and eventually storage in body fat. If your goal is healthy weight loss, understanding how much you need each day; try estimating based on BMI

**BMI WEIGHT STATUS**

**BODY MASS INDEX CATEGORIES**

- **Underweight**: BMI < 18.5
- **Normal**: 18.5 ≤ BMI < 25.0
- **Overweight**: 25.0 ≤ BMI < 30.0
- **Obese**: BMI ≥ 30.0

### Understanding Weight Loss

If you are overweight, healthfully shedding pounds is a great way to improve your overall health and quality of life. Americans have access to more unhealthy food and are exercising less than ever before. Research from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows that approximately 36.5% of adults in America are obese, and 69% are overweight.

Losing weight will help you achieve both physical and mental health because mind and body are interlinked. Studies show that people who lose weight are less prone to mental problems like depression, insomnia, and anxiety. Losing weight can seem like a near impossible task, but the reality is that there are several simple steps you can take to lose weight and keep it off.

### For More Information

American College of Sports Medicine

www.acsm.org

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**A PUBLICATION OF**

WELCOA

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The information contained in this brochure has been carefully reviewed for accuracy. It is not intended to replace the advice of your physician or health care provider.
Preparing to Lose Weight...

Managing Your Eating Habits

If you are looking for a sensible and sustainable eating plan to help you with your weight loss, make sure the plan uses a balanced nutritional approach. The following are healthy diet guidelines.

FRUITS, VEGETABLES, GRAINS AND DAIRY

- Try to fill half of your plate with fruits and vegetables. Also aim for a wide variety of these food items.
- Choose whole grain bread, pasta, and rice. Look for “whole” before the grain name on the list of ingredients.
- If you consume dairy, choose the low-fat varieties like low-fat cottage cheese or skim milk.

FATS

- Make most of your fat come from fish, nuts, avocados and vegetable oils.
- Limit solid fats like butter, stick margarine, shortening, and lard.
- Select meat, poultry, dry beans, and milk products low in fat or fat-free.

CARBOHYDRATES

- Select fruits and vegetables, and whole grains high in fiber.
- Limit or eliminate processed foods like chips and cookies. They are usually loaded with calories, sugar, and fat, yet provide little nutritional value.

SALT

- If you have high blood pressure, diabetes or chronic kidney disease, limit salt intake to 2,300 mg/day or less.
- Select foods with less sodium and eat foods with potassium—like fruits and vegetables.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

- Drink sensibly and in moderation.
- If you do drink, it’s recommended that women have no more than one drink per day and men no more than two drinks per day.

Checklist for Successful Weight Loss

Ask yourself the following questions to see if you are on the right path to safe and healthy weight loss:

- Have you checked with your doctor to let him/her know you were beginning a weight-loss program? Have you asked your doctor to help you develop a safe and effective weight-loss plan?
- Do you eat at all meal times?
- Do you eat a variety of foods, such as whole grains, vegetables, and fruits?
- Are you getting your daily nutrients?
- Are you limiting saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium?
- Are you limiting the amount of sugar in your diet? Remember, unnatural foods high in sugar are often higher in calories and lower in nutrients.
- Have you reduced the number of calories you drink? Think about eating whole fruits, rather than drinking juices, and avoid soft drinks and alcohol as they are high in sugar.
- Are you watching your portion sizes? Keep telling yourself that smaller portions of unhealthy foods are better than bigger. If you need to fill up, stick to whole fruits and veggies.
- Are you exercising regularly? Have you chosen activities that you can continue to do and that you enjoy? Are you physically active most days of the week?

Exercising Your Way to Weight Loss!

Exercise is essential to any weight-loss program. You need to burn the energy that your body has stored while keeping your lean muscle tissue strong. To get the most out of your exercise time and effort, follow the American College of Sports Medicine’s guidelines.

HOW OFTEN DO I REALLY NEED TO EXERCISE EACH WEEK?

Health gains can be made with exercise that is only done twice a week for those who are just starting out.

WHAT KIND OF EXERCISE SHOULD I BE LOOKING TO DO?

To burn calories your body has stored as fat, you need to do activities that involve aerobic exercise. Aerobic exercise uses large muscle groups rhythmically and continuously so that heart rate and breathing become raised for an extended period of time. The best examples of aerobic activity include walking, jogging/running, swimming, stair climbing, bicycling, and dancing. Don’t feel like you are bound to just doing one kind of activity.

HOW LONG DO I NEED TO EXERCISE TO GET RESULTS?

This really all depends on your goals, schedule, and physical condition. If your goal is body-fat loss and you are appropriately conditioned, then longer is better. The longer you exercise, the more calories you will burn. You should try and exercise at least 30 minutes with each workout, although 40 to 60 minutes may be optimal if you’re trying to lose weight. Recent research also shows that aerobic fitness levels can improve with as little as 10 minutes of activity, as long as exercise is repeated two to three times a day, and done five days a week.

If you only have a few breaks in your day, like a coffee break or the end of your lunch break, walking and exercise during these times can allow you to meet your exercise commitment.

HOW HARD AM I SUPPOSED TO WORKOUT DURING EXERCISE?

You should workout at a moderate level of intensity during your exercise time. A moderate level of intensity means that you are working at about 70% of your total effort. The easiest way to see if you are exercising at the right intensity is to take the “Talk Test.” The “Talk Test” says you should be able to talk comfortably while you are exercising. If you are still able to breathe comfortably and talk while exercising at the same time, then you are probably working at an appropriate intensity level.

Remember, adults need at least 2 hours and 30 minutes (150 minutes) of moderate-intensity aerobic activity (i.e., brisk walking) every week or 1 hour and 15 minutes (75 minutes) of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity (i.e., jogging or running) every week.