



## 25 simple ways to cut calories if you're trying to lose body fat

### 1. Beware of dressings

Salad dressings can turn a healthy meal into a high-calorie meal. Even with a salad bowl adding a standard creamy dressing can add on 100+ calories. Don't be fooled by fat-free dressings either as many brands add sugar to compensate for removing fat, with some fat-free dressings containing up to 80 calories for 2 tablespoons!

When ordering your meals, make sure to ask for all the sauces and dressings on the side so that you can avoid significant calories from your meal. Having them on the side also gives you control of your food choices.

A low-calorie option for dressing is a single serving of vinaigrette, or add lemon juice and salt and pepper.

### 2. Avoid added sugars

We all love added sweetness to our tea or coffee, however with a teaspoon of sugar containing 20 calories, and a tablespoon containing 60 calories, this can quickly add up.

Replace sugars with zero-calorie sweeteners such as Stevia, or low-calorie sweeteners, such as Canderel, Equal, or Splenda.

Next time you visit a coffee shop, ask your barista if they have low-calorie flavoured syrups available, such as hazelnut, caramel, or vanilla.

### 3. Switch to zero-calorie soft drinks

A can of regular coke contains 7 tsp of sugar and 140 calories. One of the quickest and easiest ways to deficit your calories is by switching to zero-calorie soft drinks, such as diet coke, 7up free, and several other zero-calorie drink options.

### 4. Eat more 'zero-calorie' foods

Fill up on zero-calorie foods, such as mushrooms, celery, cucumber, lettuce and cabbage! Now, these aren't technically zero calories, but some vegetables are so low in calories that it's barely worth tracking them.

Bulk your meals with these vegetables so that you can increase food volume without the added calories.

#### 5. Beware of fruit juices!

Fruit juices are frighteningly high in sugar and calories, with a glass of orange juice serving 110 calories and 21 grams of sugar. I personally limit my fruit juice intake to being on holiday when there is a hotel buffet - something I enjoy once in a while but that isn't part of my 'normal' nutrition.

For fruit juice alternatives, try switching to fruit-infused water or sparkling water or adding chopped fruit or vegetables to your water. Another option to wane off fruit juice slowly is to dilute half your juice with water.

#### 6. Drink more water

Sometimes your body isn't hungry- it's just wanting water. Most people confuse thirst for hunger, often mistaking the former for the latter.

Studies show that 37% of people mistake hunger for thirst because thirst signals can be weak. So, before you reach for that fridge handle or pantry, walk yourself to the sink and drink a glass of water and wait 10-15 minutes before deciding to eat.

It is important to stay hydrated- don't wait for your body to tell you it's thirsty for you to drink. The daily recommended intake of water for a male is 10 cups and for a female, 8 cups. This should be increased by at least an extra cup for pregnant and breastfeeding women. Children should look to be having 4-6 cups a day depending on their age.

During physical exertion and in warmer weather the need to up our fluid intake increases.

#### 7. Drink water before meals

Drinking water before meals could help you feel more satisfied, causing you to eat fewer calories and can help with weight loss.

#### 8. Switch to low-calorie alcohol

Alcohol contains empty calories and doesn't provide any nutrients for our bodies. Also, once we've had a drink or two, we tend to lose track of our health and weight goals. Because of the social nature of drinking- where 'just one drink with some friends' turns into a parade of cocktails, mixers and bevies- calories can add up quickly, with some cocktails serving up a whopping 500 calories per glass!

To deficit your calories with drinking, go for a light beer (95 calories). Swap out the cocktails for a glass of prosecco (80 calories per serve), red wine (105 calories per serve), or

spirits-and-soda mixes, such as single vodka and soda (133 calories) or a single gin and tonic (170 calories). For the strong-willed, mocktails are a great alternative.

#### 9. Cut down on snacking!

Snacking is not inherently bad in itself, if you have spaced out your meals sufficiently throughout the day and have space for a snack then go right ahead! (for example 3-5 hours between feeds)

However if you are mindlessly snacking because the food is just 'there', consider finding ways to eliminate this behavior as these calories are not needed and do add up more than you might realize.

#### 10. Control your portions!

Portion control is crucial for weight management. We are more likely to eat more when more is available, hence why I avoid buffets as much as possible (I have almost NO self control if a food is tasty and endlessly available)

When dining out, avoid sharing platters (unless you have a partner who will eat more than their fair share and eat only what you ordered. In social settings, there can be the temptation to pitch in for sharing plates and platters or to try other people's meals, but if you stick to your orders, you can control your portions.

Control your portions at home by weighing some of your foods (rice, pasta, potato, oats, grains, lentils etc).

#### 11. Eat on smaller dishes

Larger plates mean larger portions, which usually leads to us eating more

This is the case for most of us; we feel as though we need to fill our plates for it to be a sufficient meal or a real meal.

The solution is quite simple- eat on smaller plates. Research suggests that people tend to eat around 20 % fewer calories when they put their food on smaller plates

When you've finished, allow yourself some time to assess if you want more.

#### 12. Swap cooking oils for air frying

Sometimes we use excessive amounts of fat and oil when cooking foods, when we can get great results with air fryers, or if this is out of budget (or as in our case limiting in terms of countertop space for more gadgets) steaming, poaching or grilling works well for most foods.

Don't be afraid of cooking with oil if it is necessary for the taste/texture but just be mindful about how much you are choosing to fry in oil, vs the other lower calorie methods.

### 13. Remove animal skin

Whether it's chicken, turkey, or crispy pig skin, you will find that eating the skin on these animals' packs on extra calories. For example, a skinless chicken breast is 284 calories. Add the chicken skin and you're looking at 386 calories. Remove the skin before consuming to cut calories.

Sad but true. Sorry Nandos!

### 14. Cut off visible fat from meats

Yes, it can be the best part, and trimming off the fat usually means trimming off some of the flavour. But they're also high in calories and removing visible fat can easily save you hundreds of calories! Make sure to cut off any visible fat before cooking as well, as it could render and soak the meat in all its flavoursome juices. And we wouldn't want that...

### 15. Re-think sauces

Ketchup and mayonnaise can add more calories to your meals than you realise, with 1Tbsp mayonnaise containing 94 calories!

Try minimizing your consumption of sauces to cut off calories, or opting for the lighter options: Hellmans' Light Mayo contains 35 calories per tablespoon; Sriracha sauce has zero-2 calories per Tbsp; Tabasco sauce has zero-2 calories per Tbsp.

Plenty of businesses, such as My Protein and MySkinnyFoodCo, have started selling zero-calorie and low-calorie sauces so you can still enjoy your favourite sauces with meals.

### 16. Be careful how you're enjoying your coffee

Black coffee on its own is zero calories. It's when we start adding things to our americano that a zero-calorie coffee can transform into a 570-calorie salted caramel mocha.

Enjoy your coffee without the whipped cream and the chocolate dustings; say no to adding sugar; and forgo the however many pumps of the vanilla and hazelnut syrup. Keep your coffee simple. If you don't want a black coffee, choose a skinny vanilla latte (100 calories) or a cappuccino (120 calories). Ask your barista for low-calorie coffee options.

### 17. Invest in a good non-stick frying pan

A good frying pan can do wonders for you- as demonstrated by Rapunzel in Disney's Tangled.

Sometimes it's how we're cooking our food that is costing us calories. A good non-stick frying pan eliminates the need for oils in cooking, which in turn eliminates calories.

#### 18. Remove junk food

You can't eat high calorie/high fat/high sugar convenience food if it isn't readily available in your home- out of sight, out of mind.

So should you feel the need to want some 'junk food', you'll be forced to go through the effort of going out and about. Removing junk food from the house creates the first obstacle to giving into junk food temptations by making it less accessible and not readily available.

This obstacle can force you to assess if you really need the junk food and can deter you from eating out of boredom or stress.

#### 19. Eat mindfully

Have you ever been in this spot: you've just made yourself a lovely meal, sat down, put on your latest Netflix series you're currently bingeing or random clips on YouTube to watch while you enjoy your meal, and suddenly the lovely meal you made for yourself is finished- with no memory of really consuming it?

And before you know it, you're headed back to the kitchen to make yourself another meal, or topping off your meal with a snack or two because you don't feel like you've really eaten, and in some ways feel cheated.

Mindfulness with eating is about paying attention to your food, on purpose, and focusing on your sensual awareness, thoughts and feelings and your experience with your food

Eating attentively and mindfully can help you make healthier choices and also improve your self-control and prevent you from overeating. So, we need to be mindful with our eating so we can enjoy our foods without distraction.

#### 20. Eat slowly!

Don't rush eating your meals! Chewing your food slowly may help you feel fuller quickly, which can help you eat less.

Eating slowly is part of eating mindfully as we can appreciate and savour the tastes, textures and flavours of our meals. But eating slowly also has its benefits.

Our appetite is largely controlled by a hormone called ghrelin. After a meal, our gut suppresses ghrelin, which controls hunger, while also releasing fullness hormones. These hormones tell your brain that you've eaten, reducing the appetite, making you feel full, and helping you stop

eating. This process takes about 20 minutes, so the reason we recommend eating slowly is so that we give our brain the time it needs to receive these 'feel full' signals.

### 21. Chew your food!

It goes without saying that we chew our food, but the more chews we can get in per mouthful, the better! Research suggests that chewing food forty times (instead of the usual 15) can cut calorie intake by 12%.

Increasing the number of chews before swallowing can help you eat less and feel fuller, quicker. So as much as you enjoy the food you're devouring, there's no need to rush! Slow down, chew your food thoroughly and enjoy each bite! Chewing your food more will help digestion, and help you eat less.

### 22. Carbohydrate substitutions

We all love our carbs! Pasta, rice, pizza and bread- it's a staple for many of us in our diets, however, they tend to be high in calories. It's time to get creative with our food substitutions to deficit our calories:

- Spiralised courgette = Pasta
- Cauliflower rice= Rice
- Cauliflower= Pizza base
- Lettuce cups= Burger buns and Bread

### 23. Eat with your non-dominant hand

It sounds silly, but eating with your non-dominant hand can help you eat slower, eat less, eat mindfully, and help prevent binge eating. According to a study from the University of Southern California switching the hands you eat with can help control your calorie consumption. Using the non-dominant hand seemed to disrupt eating habits and cause people to pay attention to what they were eating. Switching your hand makes you more conscious of what you're doing, therefore allowing you to be more conscious of your eating behaviours.

### 24. Increase your protein

Protein keeps you fuller longer. Protein, especially when compared to carbs and fats, can help you feel fuller with less food. This is because protein reduces levels of ghrelin, the hormone responsible for hunger. At the same time, protein boosts the levels of peptide YY, a hormone that makes you feel full.

Protein takes longer for our bodies to break down, and because of this, we experience slower digestion which makes us feel fuller for longer. Feeling fuller for longer keeps you away from snacking or adding in extra calories to your day!

Protein also helps curb cravings. Cravings are different from a true need for food. They come from your brain, not your stomach.

#### 25. Sleep more

Sleep can help with weight control as it has an impact on our hormones and our metabolism. One such hormone is ghrelin- a 'hunger hormone', and levels of this increase as we become sleep deprived, as our hunger and appetites are stimulated this can increase our risk of unhealthy weight gain and obesity.