



Published by the University of Missouri-Columbia
Extension Division
College of Home Economics

Be Pound Wise

Ruth Lutz
Food and Nutrition Specialist

MAR 12 1982

Anyone who has tried to lose weight knows the road is difficult. But it is also usually agreed that staying slim and active is an important key to good health.

Controlling weight greatly depends on personal philosophy. Asking several people how they keep weight off will probably result in as many answers. This is because one system of losing weight works for some people but not for others. It is possible to find a weight-loss program that works for each individual.

The key to weight loss suggested by most experts, in one way or another, is getting more exercise and consuming fewer calories. This guide will point out many ways to achieve individual goals which people can set for themselves. In order for these ideas to be of help, read all of them. Then try those which sound good.

Weight-conscious people can develop individual ideas and try them. By developing a personal system, a slimmer, healthier body can be achieved.

Food Record

A food record should be a part of every diet effort. (It often helps identify problem areas.) The rationale behind the food record is to be able to see a regular pattern of eating behavior, the quantity eaten, and perhaps gain some insight into the whys of eating. Of course, this will help only if the record is completely honest. In order to be effective the record should be kept faithfully for at least three weeks.

To set up a food record:

- Keep a record for each day. Record everything eaten and the exact amount at the time the food is eaten or immediately after.
- Describe the foods carefully, including the way they were prepared. Include margarine, gravy, cream, etc. each time they are used.
- Write down the time of day next to what was eaten at the time and perhaps why it was eaten. For example, write down 2 c. of popcorn with butter (1T) at 9:30 p.m. while watching TV and felt a need to munch.
- Record second helpings.

It is not necessary to record calories unless desired but



it is necessary to know relative calorie values of foods. Two extension publications are of help—*Food and Your Weight* MP340 and *Calories and Weight* MP338.

Personal Plate

Try eating all food from one plate whenever possible. This should be a small-sized dinner plate or a regular plate with a wide rim. Only serve as much food as can be put inside the rim of the plate. A rimless plate is very deceptive. The amount of food which will fit on a rimless plate looks like much less compared to the rimmed variety. Like the food record, this helps the dieter become more aware of the amount eaten.

Put everything to be eaten at a given meal on the plate at once before starting to eat.

Substitutions

Substitutions are a way to cut calories without feeling "deprived." Use lower calorie versions of foods now eaten—sherbert instead of ice cream, fresh fruit instead of canned fruit, skimmed milk instead of whole milk, broiled hamburgers instead of fried, salads with vinegar instead of blue cheese dressing, diet soda instead of regular soda.

Portion Control

Know how much food is actually consumed, because any food eaten in excess is fattening. Avoid recording general terms like serving, helping, dish, spoonful, bite. These are too vague and vary with the individual.

Measure portions before eating, using measuring cups, until it is easy to recognize a standard serving. Check visual measurements with the cups and spoons every week to keep estimates from "stretching." Meat items are especially hard to measure because they aren't often easily put into a measuring cup. A kitchen scale that is accurate for ounces is handy in this case. Refer to *Calories and Weight*, MP338, mentioned previously. This publication gives actual-size pictures of average meat portions and their calories.

Proper Food Handling

Prepare the exact amount of food that is needed to avoid the temptation of leftovers.

Prepare low-calorie foods.

Prepare family favorites but not personal favorites.

Use an exhaust fan to reduce the appetite stimulation caused by food aromas.

Cook with lids. Don't hover over food. It is tempting to taste it.

Don't cook when hungry. Have a light snack of vegetable juice or bouillon before fixing meals.

Fix cakes and desserts for the family shortly after the meal so hunger will not be a problem.

Food Storage

It is easier to avoid impulse-eating if there is no temptation. These hints will help achieve "out-of-sight, out-of-mind."

Put all foods away from clear sight. Cookies go in the cupboard, not on the counter. Cover the cake plate. Put cinnamon rolls in foil and out of sight. This way problem foods are less accessible.

Take the bulb out of the refrigerator to reduce visibility and avoid unnecessary contact with food.

Don't hoard food or save foods when it is unnecessary.

Don't leave food out. Have a place for everything and everything in its place.

Watch out for clean-up time. If tempted to eat the last bit of food from the bowl, have someone else scrape the dishes. Scrape the dishes directly in the garbage can or all into one bowl at the table. Eat only what is on your own plate.

Know the Food Buying Tricks

Proper buying saves money. Besides, it is impossible to eat what is not purchased.

Buy groceries from a weekly shopping list which is specific to number and size of the product.

Don't take impulse shoppers along. It is surprising how much it can increase the bill as much as the temptation.

Buy only the amount needed. For instance, if only a half pound of hamburger is needed, buy a package as close to that weight as possible. Don't buy a three-fourths pound package and use it as if it were one-half pound. Or, buy in multiples of what is usually used, divide it, and freeze what is not used immediately.

Go grocery shopping after a meal so hunger is not a problem and there will be no temptation to buy more.

Buy once a week or on a regular schedule.

Buy food which requires some preparation so the immediate temptation to eat is not so great.

Buy for specific meals and try to buy just enough food to minimize leftovers.

Check newspaper ads for sale items before preparing a shopping list.

If the budget allows, buy fresh vegetables in season. The flavor is great when they are in their peak. The same applies to fresh fruits. Eat both fruits and vegetables plainly seasoned with vinegar or lemon juice, if appropriate. It's easy to learn to enjoy natural flavors.

Serve food in dishes that cannot be seen through. Remember: out of sight, out of mind.

Put on the table only what is needed for that meal and serve yourself last.

Life-Style

The success of any good weight-loss program hinges on being able to change old patterns of living for the better. Try to determine a regular eating pattern to avoid being tempted to snack.

Find an alternate activity that will capture interest after eating time. This will shorten temptation at the table.

Brush teeth often. Besides being good for teeth and gums, the fresh taste in the mouth can be a deterrent to snacking. If brushing is impossible, try a breath mint.

Develop a regularly scheduled spot for a favorite form of exercise. Then invite a friend to exercise with you so it won't be put off.

Keep track of weight. If it is higher several days in a row, start dieting immediately. It is always easier to lose one pound than 10.

These are several tips in the many facets of being pound wise. Remember, not all will work for everyone, but some should help you. Try these ideas and think of some new ways to change food habits. Then share this learning experience with someone else.

For further information, a slide-tape, *Be Pound-Wise*, is available from local University of Missouri Extension area home economists.

■ Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914 in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. Leonard C. Douglas, Director, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Missouri and Lincoln University, Columbia, Missouri 65211. ■ An equal opportunity institution.