

Healthy Diet and Weight Loss in 10 Steps, 2/2

Healthy Diet, Step 5 - Take Healthy Carbohydrates and Unprocessed Whole Grains

The first thing you need to learn is how to tell apart healthy and unhealthy carbohydrates.

- **Start by complementing your diet with unrefined and whole grain foods** such as whole wheat bread, brown rice, brown sugar and whole-grain pasta. Feel free to experiment with different flavors to see what you like best.
- If you are having a hard time getting used to the taste of unprocessed foods at first, you can **ease into it by mixing brown rice with white rice or whole-grain pasta with white pasta**. You can increase the ratio of unprocessed foods little by little until you eventually get used to eating unprocessed foods on their own.
- **Avoid refined grains** found in white bread, pasta and breakfast cereals other than whole-grain.

Healthy Diet, Step 6 - Take Healthy Fats Instead of Bad Fats

Healthy fats are essential for the normal function of the brain and heart, but they also **play a vital role in the outward appearance, particularly of the hair, skin and nails**.

Step 7 - Don't go Overboard with Protein

Proteins are essential for growth and energy, and they are the **building blocks of all cells** in the human body. Lack of protein in the diet **slows down growth, weakens the immune system and impairs heart function**. Still, most of us take too much protein. Child nutrition makes for a notable exception, since children need a protein-rich diet due to their intensive growth and development.

- **Try protein from a variety of sources**. Whether you are a vegetarian or not, include the following in your diet:
 - Peas and legumes
 - Nuts
 - Seeds and sprouts
 - Soybean products, tofu, soy milk...
- **Reduce protein intake** so that proteins are not the main part of your meal. Try to eat protein, vegetables, and grains in equal proportions.
- **The best sources of protein** are fish, chicken, tofu, eggs and nuts. You should avoid meat that you suspect may contain added hormones or antibiotics.

Step 8 - Add More Calcium and Vitamin D for Strong Bones

Calcium and vitamin D are both equally important nutrients when it comes to **bone development**. The recommended daily intake of calcium is 1,000 mg, and for people over 50, it is a bit higher at 1,200 mg. Since it is difficult to get that much calcium from your everyday diet, it is sometimes good to supplement your diet with calcium from the drug store.

Calcium sources include:

- Dairy Products
- Dark green vegetables
- Legumes

Step 9 - Limit Your Sugar and Salt Intake

It is perfectly fine to indulge in sweets occasionally and in moderate amounts, but try to avoid food that is too sweet, as well as sweet foods in large quantities.

- **Revisit and rewrite your favorite recipes for pastries and cakes** - they will often taste just as good even with less sugar.
- Avoid **soft drinks**
- **Salt** is not bad as such, but its intake should be limited to **one teaspoon a day**.



Step 10 - Plan Your Meals in Advance

Healthy weight loss starts with **good planning**. If you stock up on healthy foods and simple healthy recipes, you are already half way there. Whenever you can, **try to cook your own meals** instead of eating out. When you are unable to do that, **plan ahead where and what you are going to eat** to avoid suddenly getting hungry, which may tempt you to stop at the nearest diner or fast-food restaurant for a meal that has a lot of calories and a low nutritional value.

Load up your pantry and fridge with:

- Fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables
- Onions, garlic, carrots and celery
- Whole-grain rice, Basmati rice, whole-grain pasta
- Unprocessed whole wheat bread
- Beans and green beans
- Berries, frozen if out of season
- Nuts and seeds
- Olive oil, pumpkin seed oil, and sesame oil, unprocessed
- Red wine, white vinegar, apple cider vinegar
- Hard cheeses like Parmesan cheese, goat cheese and mozzarella

In Conclusion

The 10 steps we have outlined here are **not your typical weight-loss diet** in the sense that we normally think of diets. They are neither the famed "moon diet" nor the fabulous "UnDiet" or any other popular diet of that kind. These are the steps that **lead to health and a slimmer appearance** if you have excessive body weight.

If you have chosen a specific diet, it should be **compatible with these 10 steps**. If it is not, then it is likely an unhealthy diet, one that will, for example, lead to vitamin deficiency or dehydration.

Steer clear of such diets. In general, **sensationalist diets should be avoided**, especially those which promise success within an unrealistic time frame. Instead of trying out one revolutionary diet after the other, you should aim to create healthy habits that will slowly but surely lead to a lasting positive outcome.

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