



**10 TIPS TO ACHIEVE  
YOUR IDEAL WEIGHT**

# 10 TIPS TO ACHIEVE YOUR IDEAL WEIGHT

Weight is often a concern for many, and in the United States alone, an estimated two-thirds of the population is considered overweight or obese, putting health at risk. Because this issue is spreading throughout the globe, it is important that Health Coaches know ways to help reduce its prevalence and offer support to individuals as they develop healthy habits.

Health Coaches are bound to encounter all sorts of scenarios when it comes to body weight. Be mindful that not all individuals want to lose weight; some may be looking to gain weight, shift their weight (reducing fat and gaining muscle), or simply maintain their current status.



## WHAT EXACTLY IS AN IDEAL WEIGHT?

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There are two ways to consider an “ideal” weight – one is more technical; the other is more intuitive. Read on to learn about both!

### The technical formula for determining ideal weight is the Hamwi equation:<sup>1</sup>



**Women:** 100 pounds + 5 pounds for each inch above five feet  
and - 5 pounds for each inch below five feet



**Men:** 106 pounds + 6 pounds for each inch above five feet  
and - 6 pounds for each inch below five feet

Typically, being within 10% of this number is considered acceptable, allowing for different body frames.

**Example:** According to the Hamwi method, the ideal weight for a woman who is 4’10” is 90 pounds ( $100 - [5 + 5]$ ). The ideal weight for a man who is 5’10” is 166 pounds ( $106 + [6 + 6 + 6 + 6 + 6 + 6 + 6 + 6 + 6]$ ).

**From a more intuitive standpoint**, ideal weight is the weight one feels best at and can safely maintain. This allows people to let how they feel be their guide versus relying on a number on the scale. An intuitive approach to ideal weight looks at the big picture – how both primary and secondary food affect the body. This approach acknowledges that weight is only a small piece of the wellness puzzle. Placing too much emphasis on body weight alone can cause areas of primary food to suffer. It often ends up backfiring and creating a stressful relationship with food and/or physical activity or even straining relationships with loved ones.

Rather than getting caught up in the number on the scale, focus on balancing your primary food and making good secondary food decisions that you enjoy to naturally support a healthy weight.

This is a topic that seems to always be on people's minds, and it's certainly something you can expect clients to discuss. To make sure you're ready, review the tips for weight loss and weight gain related to both primary and secondary food on the following pages.



No matter the goal, don't forget to consider the big picture and put more emphasis on how you and/or your clients feel rather than body weight.

## 1. SWITCH UP YOUR BEVERAGES.

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### Weight Loss

Studies show that simply adding more water to your diet may contribute to weight loss over time as an increase in water intake may reduce energy intake.<sup>2</sup> Replacing sugar-sweetened or high-calorie beverages with water is especially useful in supporting a healthy weight as these items not only are a source of empty calories, but individuals who consume soft drinks may actually eat more calories during the day.<sup>3</sup>

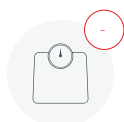


### Weight Gain

If you're looking to add more calories to your diet, smoothies packed with whole foods are a great option. Smoothies can help add calories between meals – try using nut butters, flaxseeds, chia seeds, or avocados for some extra goodness!

## 2. FOCUS ON WHOLE, NUTRIENT-DENSE FOODS.

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### Weight Loss

A well-rounded diet based on whole foods can naturally help support a healthy weight. Things like healthy fats, complex carbohydrates, and lean proteins provide adequate nutrition while also contributing to satiety (the fullness factor). Fiber from plants is especially useful in supporting a healthy weight – it keeps you fuller for longer, meaning you're less likely to reach for snacks shortly after meals, and supports your gut health, which may have larger implications when it comes to weight.<sup>4</sup>



### Weight Gain

To ensure you're getting enough calories, you may find it easier to eat several small meals that include whole, nutrient-dense foods rather than trying to consume larger meals. Snacks like nuts and seeds, dried fruits (without added sugar), and cheese help add calories. Include high-quality fat sources, such as olive and coconut oils and salmon, during meals.

### 3. LIMIT EXPOSURE TO ADDITIVES.

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#### Weight Loss

Some compounds you're likely to encounter in your daily environment may contribute to weight gain by affecting the body's ability to metabolize fat. These chemicals may also be referred to as endocrine disruptors. Some examples include BPA (bisphenol A), a compound found in many plastics and cans; perfluorooctanoic acid, a nonstick coating used on pans; pesticides; and phthalates, chemicals found in plastics.<sup>5</sup>



#### Weight Gain

If you're looking to gain weight, you should still try to avoid these substances (BPA, phthalates, etc.) since they have negative implications on your health and may make weight regulation more difficult after you've reached your ideal weight.<sup>6</sup> Look instead for healthy ways to increase calories and add weight naturally through balanced meals.



## 4. MANAGE STRESS.

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### Weight Loss

Stress may cause weight to increase in two ways. First, the body increases its production of stress hormones. When these hormones are triggered, the body goes into fat-storage mode and becomes more effective at storing fat. The second way is emotional – stress tends to cause people to seek comfort, often in the form of food. In fact, the more stressed you are, the more you may be drawn to fatty, sugary foods. So not only are you more drawn to high-calorie foods when stressed, but your body is also more efficient at turning them into fat.<sup>7</sup>



### Weight Gain

Many find that stress causes a decreased appetite. This may lead some to actually eat less during times of stress, thus causing weight loss. If you find yourself cutting back or avoiding food when you have a lot going on, make a plan to increase your intake. To help increase your appetite during these times, try to eat regular meals with others and include interesting spices and flavors in your cooking. Ginger and cayenne are examples of spices that may help stimulate the appetite.



### Ways to Reduce Stress

- Yoga
- Exercise
- Meditation
- Music
- Deep breathing
- Books

## 5. EAT MINDFULLY.

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### Weight Loss

When eating, try to slow down and be present. Take a moment to be grateful for the food and try to chew each bite thoroughly. By trying to eat (and chew) mindfully, you may find you are satisfied by a much smaller portion than when you are rushed and don't take time to consider the meal.<sup>8,9</sup>

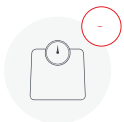


### Weight Gain

It is important to recognize that each bite of your meal is nourishing you. Picture the food entering your body and making you stronger. Taking extra time for eating your meals can also help support good digestion and nutrient absorption.

## 6. INCLUDE BREAKFAST.

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### Weight Loss

One thing that many people who have been successful at losing weight and keeping it off have in common is that they eat a wholesome breakfast every morning.<sup>10</sup> A thoughtful breakfast can help keep you full during your morning and prevent you from binging later in the day due to hunger.



### Weight Gain

If you're looking to add more calories to your diet, breakfast is an excellent opportunity to do this! Choose a well-rounded breakfast that offers protein, complex carbohydrates, and lean fat sources.



## 7. DON'T SKIP MEALS.

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### Weight Loss

If you're trying to lose weight, make sure you're not getting too hungry between meals. When this happens, you are more likely to binge on the foods you're trying to limit. Not only are you more inclined to make an impulsive food decision, but you may end up eating far more than you normally would.



### Weight Gain

To gain weight, you may want to eat smaller, balanced meals and include more snacks to add calories. Skipping meals may make putting on weight more difficult.

## 8. COOK FOODS AT HOME.

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### Weight Loss

Not only are portion sizes larger at restaurants, which leads people to eat more, they're also typically higher in fat, salt, and sugar.<sup>11</sup> Eating out can be a fun treat, but if you're getting the majority of your food from restaurants, you may be consuming more calories than you realize. Experiment with cooking at home and explore a variety of whole foods and cooking techniques.



### Weight Gain

Cooking at home gives you more control over the ingredients being used, which helps ensure that you're not only getting enough calories but also getting a high-quality meal prepared with love that includes all the things you want and avoids all the things you don't want.

## 9. PRIORITIZE SLEEP.

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### Weight Loss

Skipping out on sleep can cause disruptions in your circadian rhythms, which can increase inflammation in the body and create conditions conducive to weight gain. Sleep deprivation also causes your body to produce more ghrelin, the hormone that signals you to eat.<sup>12, 13</sup> Most adults need 7–9 hours of sleep per night.



### Weight Gain

Sleep is your body's time to rest and repair, allowing it to be more effective during the day. Although you may want to add calories throughout the day, try not to eat at least 2–3 hours before bed as this may affect your sleep quality.

## 10. EXERCISE YOUR BODY.

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### Weight Loss

Working out helps relieve stress, burn calories, and give your metabolism a boost even when you're not working out. Make sure to have some protein following your workout to help support muscle repair.



### Weight Gain

Resistance exercises and strength training can help build muscle. Remember to eat enough calories to support the extra activity while still allowing weight gain. You may also want to consider a protein-rich snack or meal following a workout to help support muscle repair.

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