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Make Your New Year's Resolutions Successful: **Don't over-commit!**

By: Cleveland Clinic Wellness Editors

Happy New Year! For many of us, January 1st is that magical day when we look optimistically into the future, see a new and improved version of ourselves, and decide that we are going to become that person. We all love shiny new beginnings — the chance to reinvent or improve ourselves.

Here at Cleveland Clinic Wellness, we believe that taking on new goals in the name of better emotional or physical health is a great idea — no matter what day of the year it is. That's why we're dedicating this entire month to helping you stick with your intentions.

Today, take a look at your list of resolutions. The more goals you have, the harder it will be to truly commit to any of them. The secret to your success: Choose only one or two small goals and be specific. Instead of committing to a broad objective like "eating better," commit to cutting out soda, eating five servings of vegetables daily, or eating only when you're hungry and only until you're full. The more specific your resolution, the more likely you'll be to accomplish it.

If and when you've mastered your first resolution, take on another small goal. If you're trying to lose weight this year, commit to slimming down in five-pound increments.

Each milestone builds self-confidence and helps you start reaching for your next one. So think small, but plan big. Know what steps you have to take to reach your goals, and have a plan in place for when you're tempted to stray from your resolutions.





6 Foods to Help You Lose Weight

By: Kristin Kirkpatrick, MS, RD, LD



Losing weight and keeping it off is not easy — but it can be done! It may seem that at every corner you turn, there are obstacles to keep you from your goals. Many factors are to blame: the company you keep; the line of work you're in; increased variety in stores; and shortcuts to get from point A to point B (e.g. motorized scooters, elevators, etc.). You may also be confused, like many, about what to eat, what to avoid, when to eat, and how much to eat. Deceptive food labeling, which can make unhealthy food seem healthy, adds to this confusion, as do so-called "diet foods," with their multitude of ingredients. Here's the good news: There are a few diet perfect foods that can help you lose weight. Try adding these six foods to your diet to help you satisfy your cravings, keep you full, and ultimately arm you with the tools you'll need to reach a healthy weight and maintain it!

1 String Cheese

Many of my patients start off with a common plea: "I can give up anything, but please don't ask me to give up cheese!" Well there may be a happy medium, and its name is string cheese. This cheese is just 80 calories, has no carbs, is easily portion-controlled, and can be taken almost anywhere. In fact, it is perhaps the perfect snack for dieters. A 2011 study in the *Journal of Nutrition* found that increasing consumption of dairy foods and protein during weight-loss efforts promoted fat mass loss and lean mass gain. String cheese is my only exception to the "one ingredient" rule, due to the addition of enzymes in the processing of skim milk.

2 Apples

A study in the journal *Nutrition* found that women who consumed either three apples or three pears a day were more likely to lose weight and have better blood sugar control. As an added bonus, many studies have linked apple consumption to improved bowel function, as well as reductions in the risk of breast cancer and stroke.



3 Black Pepper

Looking for a way to spice up your weight-loss efforts? Ditch the salt and use more pepper on your food. A study in the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry* found piperine, a component in black pepper, may block the formation of new fat cells.

4 Peanut Butter

Ever heard of something called piceatannol? If you haven't yet, you may soon. A new study in the *Journal of Biological Chemistry* found that piceatannol, a component found in peanuts, grapes, and red wine that is similar to the compound resveratrol, has the ability to block a process that allows immature fat cells to turn into mature fat cells. Peanut butter may be one of the best ways you can prevent fat cell growth and curb your cravings. Important clarification: I'm talking about 100 percent peanut butter, where the only ingredient is peanuts. You won't find the same effects with any other kind of peanut butter, even reduced-fat versions that are often loaded with sugar.



If you're going to snack while trying to lose weight, snack on something that will help you get the most bang for your nutritional buck!



5 Legumes

What is one thing that the healthiest individuals in the world have in common? They all eat legumes. A study in the *Journal of Nutrition* found that low-glycemic foods (those that are slowly digested, like lentils) helped to increase a hormone that assists in regulating metabolism of fat and sugar. Additionally, low-glycemic foods were found to significantly reduce inflammation markers in obese adults.

6 Popcorn

High in fiber and low in calories, popcorn is a great example of nutrient density at its best. Nutrient density means you're getting the most nutrients with the least calories. For example, you can have three cups of popcorn for 100 calories or you can have three licorice twists. While the calories are the same, the popcorn will give you fiber (making you full) as well as a healthy dose of antioxidants.

In fact, a 2012 study found that popcorn could have even more antioxidants than some fruits and vegetables. Of course, that doesn't mean you should skip the produce aisle and fill up on popcorn instead! The licorice, well, it will give you a big boost in blood sugar and insulin, followed by a crash, followed by yet another craving. See where I am going with this? If you're going to snack while trying to lose weight, snack on something that will help you get the most bang for your nutritional buck! Popcorn is a snack that will actually make you feel satisfied after you're done eating it. Imagine that.



Let the Good Vibes Roll!

For weight loss, surround yourself with positive feedback.

By: Cleveland Clinic Wellness Editors

Among your must-haves when trying to reach a healthy weight or keep it off: regular exercise, nutritious meals in appropriate portions, and good old-fashioned love and acceptance. Among the must-not-haves: tough love. However well-meaning it may be, pressure or criticism from people you love doesn't help you lose weight and, in fact, can lead to more weight gain, according to new research. We are social animals, so messages we get from loved ones affect how we feel about ourselves.

Being accepted - just the way you are - encourages acquisition of the eating and activity patterns that help you feel good, support your overall health, and guide you to a healthy weight. So if you're trying to lose a few pounds or maintain the weight you've lost, ditch the critics. Surround yourself instead with the very thing that the world needs now: love, sweet love.



Healthy Recipe:

Lentil Salad with Tomatoes and Apple

Lentils, the tiniest treasures of the legume family, may be small but they are powerful, providing a large dose of dietary fiber along with important vitamins and minerals. Add in lycopene-rich tomatoes and crunchy, tart apples and you've got a delicious recipe for good health (and happy diners too!).

Developed by: Sara Quessenberry for Cleveland Clinic Wellness



Servings: 4

Ingredients:

- 1 cup French green lentils
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 pint cherry or grape tomatoes, halved
- 2 scallions, sliced
- ¼ flat leaf parsley, chopped
- 1 green apple, cut into matchsticks

Instructions:

Place the lentils in a strainer and rinse well. Keep a watchful eye for any pebbles that may have slipped through. Fill a medium saucepan with water and bring to a boil over high heat. Add the lentils and lower the heat to medium so the lentils simmer gently until just tender, 12 to 15 minutes. Drain and rinse under cold running water to cool.

Meanwhile, make the vinaigrette. In a small bowl, whisk together the lemon juice, oil, mustard, and pepper. Set aside.

In a large bowl, combine the tomatoes, scallions, parsley, and apple. Add the cooled lentils and drizzle the vinaigrette. Gently stir everything together.

Nutrition Info Per Serving:

(about ¾ cup) 120 calories, 4 g total fat, .5 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 5 g protein, 19 g total carbohydrate, 7 g fiber, 8 g sugar, 0 mg cholesterol, 110 mg sodium