



# Losing weight

## Getting started - Week 1

Develop healthier eating habits, be more active, and get on track to start losing weight with this easy-to-follow NHS Choices 12-week guide.

If people are overweight, it's usually because they eat and drink more calories than they need. This guide will help you to reduce the number of calories you consume.

This will help you to work towards losing weight at a safe and sustainable rate of 0.5kg to 1kg (1lb to 2lbs) a week. For most men, this will mean consuming no more than 1,900kcal a day, and for most women, 1,400kcal. You can also get your own personal calorie target using the [BMI calculator](#).

This is the first of 12 weekly information guides, which are full of diet, healthy eating and activity advice. Each pack includes a food and activity chart to help you to track your progress. Print out the chart and stick it somewhere you can see it, such as on your fridge.

Before starting, visit [nhs.uk/weightloss](https://nhs.uk/weightloss) to check your BMI, use our calorie counter and sign up for weight loss email support.

### Is this for me?

This guide is intended for use by healthy adults with a body mass index (BMI) of 25 and over. It is not suitable for children or pregnant women. If you have any medical condition you should consult your GP before starting. Find out if you need to lose weight using the BMI healthy weight calculator at [nhs.uk/bmi](https://nhs.uk/bmi)



### Set your target

If you find it hard sticking to the plan's daily calorie limit of 1,900kcal for a man and 1,400kcal for a woman, use our [BMI healthy weight calculator](#) to get your own personal daily calorie target.



# Week 1



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## Getting started - Week 1

Welcome to Week 1 of your weight loss journey and well done for taking the first steps to a healthier lifestyle.

Over the next 12 weeks we're going to help you make healthier choices to help you lose weight and keep it off.

From today, we'll help you stick to a daily calorie intake: 1,900kcal for men and 1,400kcal for women.

We'll be with you every step of the way, helping you achieve real change, picking you up when you stumble and celebrating your successes.

### Laura's diary

#### Week 1



I've been on all sorts of diets and have learned there's no miracle cure. But losing weight doesn't need to be complicated. If you learn to keep an eye on the calories you're eating and those you burn off during physical activity you're halfway there. Don't forget to track your food and drink using our calorie counter. Spend some time thinking about your meals in advance. If you know what you're having each day you'll spend less time thinking about food and you're less likely to snack on impulse buys.

## Your actions for Week 1

- Record your weight and waist size in the food and activity chart
- Stick this week's chart on your fridge and update it at the end of each day
- Plan your meals using our Meal Mixer at <https://mealmixer.change4life.co.uk/>
- Use our calorie counter to track your calories at [nhs.uk/caloriecount](https://nhs.uk/caloriecount)
- Sign up to the weight loss forum for support and information at [nhsweightloss.healthunlocked.com](https://nhsweightloss.healthunlocked.com)

## Did you know?

Research shows that it takes about 12 weeks on average to form new habits.

By sticking to this routine for three months, healthy eating and regular exercise will become habits, which are key to losing weight and keeping it off.



# Week 1

# Fill up with fibre

**Eating food with lots of fibre will help you feel full for longer, so you're more likely to stick to your calorie limit.**

Fibre keeps your bowels healthy and can help reduce cholesterol. Most people in the UK eat only about 18g of fibre a day, but should aim to eat at least 30g.

Increase your fibre intake gradually, though, as a sudden increase can cause cramp and constipation. And make sure to drink plenty of water - aim for 1.2 litres a day - to avoid cramp and constipation.

Here are some easy ways to boost the fibre in your snacks and meals:

## Breakfast

Adding some fibre to your breakfast can help you stay feeling full until lunch and reduce the urge for a mid-morning snack.

- Swap white bread for wholemeal or wholegrain varieties.
- Swap sugary cereals for high-fibre cereals such as wholegrain wheat cereals, unsweetened muesli, or porridge oats, and don't forget to check the salt content.

## Lunch and dinner

Vegetables are a good source of fibre, so try swapping some of the things on your plate for more veg. Aim for two portions of veg on your plate at dinner.

- Swap white rice and pasta for

wholemeal versions – simply doing this can double the amount of fibre you've eaten.

- Add pulses – beans, lentils and peas – into your meals. They're a cheap, low-fat source of fibre, protein, vitamins and minerals. Add pulses to soups, casseroles, rice and pasta, or serve baked beans (choose reduced-salt and sugar varieties) on wholemeal toast.

## Snacks

Stock up on healthier snacks containing fibre such as:

- Fruit – fresh, canned or frozen. Don't forget to eat the skin on fruits such as apples and pears.
- Veg sticks – carrot, celery or cucumber sticks or a packet of sugar snap peas. You can enjoy these low-calorie snacks if you feel hungry in between your meals.
- Reduced-fat hummus. For a bit of variety, dip your veg sticks, wholegrain crispbreads or pitta bread in a tub of reduced-fat hummus. You'll get the fibre from both the veg and the bread.
- Air-popped, plain popcorn. Homemade is best, to avoid the high fat, sugar or salt content in some commercial brands. Don't add any sugar or butter.

## Food with fibre

- 6 apricots: 4g
- 1 medium orange: 3g
- 1 medium apple: 2g
- 2 slices of wholemeal bread: 4.2g
- 1 medium jacket potato: 5g
- 90g of peas: 4g
- 90g of spinach: 2g
- 200g of new potatoes: 3g
- 30g of chickpeas: 1.5g
- 135g of sweetcorn: 2g
- 165g of baked beans: 5g
- 220g of brown spaghetti: 8g
- 180g of brown rice: 1.5g
- 1 large wholemeal pitta bread: 5g

## Protein sources

Protein can also help you feel fuller for longer. Choose low-fat protein sources, such as:

- beans, peas and lentils
- fish
- lean cuts of meat
- skinless white-meat poultry
- lower-fat dairy products (milk, cheese, yoghurt)
- eggs
- tofu
- Quorn



# Portion distortion

**No matter how healthily you eat, you can still put on weight if you're eating too much.**

Food portion sizes today are far bigger than they were 30 years ago, which means we're consuming a lot more calories than we realise.

In fact, many of us no longer know what makes a normal portion – a problem known as portion distortion.

Regain some portion control with these six simple tips:

- Eat with smaller plates and bowls. You'll have a smaller portion and still feel satisfied.
- Aim for two portions of veg on your plate. This helps to cover your plate with low-calorie filling food, leaving less room for higher-calorie ingredients. Use the eatwell plate to help you get the balance right. Go



to [nhs.uk/eatwell-plate](https://nhs.uk/eatwell-plate).

- Eat slowly. It takes about 20 minutes for your stomach to tell your brain you're full. When you eat fast, it's easy to overeat.
- Turn off the TV. Eating in front of the TV can mean you eat more without noticing or enjoying your food.
- Weigh your food. Use kitchen scales to weigh your ingredients before you cook. This will help you stick to the suggested serving sizes.

## Your meal guide

You need to keep an eye on your portions to help you meet the calorie target for your day's meals.

### Women (allowance 1,400kcal)

- Breakfast: 280kcal
- Lunch: 420kcal
- Dinner: 420kcal
- Other food and drink: 280kcal

### Men (allowance 1,900kcal)

- Breakfast: 380kcal
- Lunch: 570kcal
- Dinner: 570kcal
- Other food and drink: 380kcal

The calorie allowance at meal times includes any drinks or desserts you have. If you eat more for your breakfast, lunch or evening meal, you may need to drop a snack later in the day to stay on track.

## Eating out

- Avoid appetisers including bread, nuts or olives
- Stay clear of 'supersize' or 'go large' options
- If you're having dessert, share it and go for fruit-based options
- Choose a starter instead of a main course
- Stop eating before you feel full



### Recipe inspiration

The Change4Life Meal Mixer is full of easy, calorie-counted recipes for all your meals and snacks. You can download them and email yourself a shopping list of ingredients. Plus, there's a free app, too!

<https://mealmixer.change4life.co.uk/>