



Losing weight

Getting started - Week 7

Welcome to Week 7. Well done, you're on the home straight!

Stick with it, each week is another week of developing healthier habits and skills that you can use at home or away.

After six weeks following this guide, you should be feeling more confident with the idea of eating out.

From Italian to Thai, our eating out tips and healthier meal swaps will help you to enjoy a guilt-free lower-calorie meal out.



Laura's diary

Week 7

When you're trying to lose weight, eating out, whether for lunch or dinner, can be a challenge. There are just so many temptations and pitfalls. It's not always easy to make healthier choices. This week's tips will help your decision-making. When I go to the restaurant with friends I try to look at the menu in advance and think about the healthiest options and calorie content. I'll keep to my normal daily meal routine, that way I won't arrive at the restaurant completely ravenous which in my case always leads to bad choices.

Your actions for Week 7

- Armed with this week's advice, why not suggest a meal out with friends or family?
- Look at your last six food and activity charts to go over your progress and identify any trends you need to keep working on
- Try our [10-minute home toning workout](#) – and try to do at least 150 minutes of activity this week
- Keep counting those calories and stick to your daily limit

Did you know?

It takes approximately 20 minutes for the stomach to tell the brain that it is full, so eat slowly and stop eating before you feel full.

To avoid overeating, use smaller plates and bowls. This will help you get used to smaller portions without going hungry. ✓

Week 7

Dining out

Going out for a meal? Don't panic. We've got you covered. Our tips will help you enjoy the occasion without breaking the calorie bank.

Read the menu online

If you know which restaurant you're going to, look up their menu online to work out the lower-calorie options and figure out your expected calorie intake. Planning ahead like this will help you make better choices and avoid temptation.

Don't skip a meal

Don't skip breakfast or lunch to build calorie credits for your evening out. Stick to your daily meal routine to keep your appetite under control throughout the day. If you go over your calorie allowance, don't worry: simply reduce your calorie intake the following days.

Stick to one course

It's perfectly acceptable to have just a main course. And don't feel the need to finish your plate. Try to stop eating before you feel overly full. If you can't resist having a starter or a dessert, find someone to share it with.

Downsize your portions

To avoid eating too much, order a starter and a side dish as your main course instead of one of the larger mains on the menu.

Avoid deep-fried

Avoid food that is deep or shallow fried, battered, pan-fried, marked as 'crispy' or with pastry. These are high

in fat. Instead, look out for grilled, roasted, poached, steamed or baked dishes.

You say tomato

Avoid cheese, cream or butter-based sauces, which are high in fat and pack a calorie punch. Instead, go for tomato or other vegetable-based sauces.

Beware of high-calorie salads

Watch out for high-calorie toppings such as croutons, cheese, bacon and nuts. Ask for salad dressing on the side and add only as much as you need.

Take your time

Eat slowly, enjoy every mouthful. You'll feel satisfied before you feel full and have more chance to take part in the conversation and enjoy the atmosphere.

Share dessert

Go for healthier options such as fruit-based desserts, including crumble. If you can't resist a decadent dessert, share it with a friend.

Don't drink your calories

Alcohol and sugary soft drinks can be high in calories. Go for water or sugar-free drinks.

Healthier side dishes

Fill up on veggie sides. If cooked, go for steamed or boiled. A portion is 80g for your 5 A DAY.

- Broccoli
- Mixed leaf salad
- Carrots
- Beans
- Mushrooms
- Kale
- Watercress
- Spinach
- Cabbage

How many calories?

While many menus now list calories, it's not always possible to work out the calorie content in a restaurant or takeaway meal. These tips may help:

- Choose sauce-free dishes, such as grilled meat, baked fish or tandoori dishes. Some sauces and dressings can push up a dish's calorie content
- Ask what's in a dish or how it's been cooked – the restaurant should be happy to tell you
- If you aren't sure, ask for a dish to come without a 'suspect' item
- Try to keep track of exactly what you eat and the amount so you can tot up the calories accurately

Fabulous foreign food

Tips to help you select lower-calorie options when you fancy something a little more exotic.

Italian

Avoid cheese and cream-based pasta sauces, such as alfredo or carbonara.

Thumbs up: thin pizzas with veg toppings, tomato-based sauces, vegetable-based soups, grilled dishes.

Thumbs down: cheesy and meaty pizzas, salami, creamy sauces, garlic bread, lasagne.

Chinese

Chinese food can be low-calorie. Just avoid sweet sauces and anything fried or deep-fried.

Thumbs up: stir-fries, steamed dumplings, steamed veg, plain boiled rice, steamed fish or chicken.

Thumbs down: anything deep-fried or sweet and sour, prawn toast, spring rolls, egg fried rice.



Thai

Thai food is great as it tends to feature lots of steamed or stir-fried vegetables.

Thumbs up: salads, stir-fries, steamed rice, broth soups.

Thumbs down: coconut milk dishes, fried rice, peanut sauce, crispy noodles.

Indian

In spite of its reliance on frying, there are plenty of healthier choices.

Thumbs up: tomato-based sauces, tandoori dishes, plain or basmati rice.

Thumbs down: bhajis, poppadoms, creamy curries, pilau rice, naan bread.

Restaurant tips

- Banish the buffet: it's hard to control your portion size at an all-you-can-eat buffet. It's a real test of willpower and the food tends to be less than healthy. The solution? Avoid them completely!
- Order less: there's no need to cry off takeaways when trying to lose weight, but portion control is key. Try to avoid ordering more food than your need.
- Plain and simple: steer clear of creamy sauces and meals with lots of cheese.

When in Blighty

British favourites such as fish and chips, pub meals and traditional breakfasts can easily blow your calorie budget. Avoid fried foods, ploughman's lunch and pastry-based foods such as Cornish pasties and steak and kidney pie. Thin-cut chips and roast potatoes are also a no-no. Instead, try lean meat, grilled salmon or white fish. And for side dishes, stick to jacket potatoes, steamed vegetables and salad.



10-minute home toning

Firm up your bum, abs, legs and arms with this 10-minute home toning workout - ideal if you're short on time and need exercise without too much fuss.

[nhs.uk/toning](https://www.nhs.uk/toning)