

Tips for Fat Loss

1. **Start thinking about FAT loss, not weight loss.** Get your body composition measured and focus on how much FAT you're trying to lose; it may not reflect what the scale is telling you. Remember, if you could control your weight, everyone would weigh exactly what they wanted, all the time. It's the fat that you want to lose, and the scale doesn't tell you how much fat you have; you have to have your body fat measured.
2. **Weigh yourself and get your body fat checked once a week AT MOST.** Fluctuations of 3-5 pounds are common day to day. Weekly, bi-weekly and monthly readings should show your true progress as well as indicate if the diet you have mapped out is really working.
3. **Avoid fad diets.** If they actually do work, they won't work for long.
4. **Accept the facts.** There's no magic involved in getting your body to liberate stored fat. You must change the way you live and the way you eat. In other words, exercise your body and monitor your intake of food.
5. **Maintain or increase muscle mass.** Specifically, do weight training. This will increase your "fat burning engine".
6. **Do your cardio.** Forty-five minutes of consistent cardio with your heart rate at 70-75 percent of VO2 max will keep your metabolism elevated for up to six hours post-exercise. Four sessions per week is a minimum if fat loss is a main goal.
7. **Don't skip meals.** Starving yourself does two things to foil the diet: First, sensing starvation, the body slows metabolic function to preserve energy and begins to rid itself of tissue that is metabolically active—the muscle you are trying to keep. Next, hunger, cravings, or other symptoms of hypoglycemia set in, signaling you to eat. Eat consistently to avoid overeating.
8. **Order sauces and salad dressings on the side.** Even healthy-sounding dressings and sauces can be loaded with fat.
9. **Order à la carte.** Ask your server if the side can be replaced with fresh fruit, low-fat cottage cheese, or a plain baked potato, or build a meal from single items on the menu.
10. **Don't guess.** Weigh or measure your food for a while so you know exactly what you're getting
11. **Keep a diet journal.** Writing down everything you eat and drink really helps you have an awareness of what you're actually doing.
12. **Rid the house of junk.** Junk food can be defined as anything that's not included in your diet.
13. **Don't shop hungry.** All kinds of things can end up in your shopping cart because they look good at the moment. Prepare a list and stick to it. Go to the store after you've eaten a meal.
14. **Eat foods high in fiber.** Salads, leafy green vegetables, etc. Just watch the dressing!
15. **Eat foods low in fat.** No more than 20 percent of the calories per serving should come from fat.
16. **Read the labels!** Loads of fat and sugar are innocently consumed, hidden under label claims of "fat free," "lean," "light," "low fat," etc... FDA labeling claims are based on net weight of a food, not calories, so do the math! Multiply the fat grams by nine to get the number of calories from fat per serving and you will have a much different picture than the label claims. Sugars are also listed separately from total carbohydrates. While the number of carbs may be low, most of them could be coming from sugar. The total grams of sugar should be no more than 25-30% of the total grams of carbs.
17. **Don't punish yourself.** If you do go off the deep end and really, really blow it, go right back to where you left off. You can't compensate by starving yourself or over-aerobicising. No matter what you ate, or how much, three days back on the program will have you back on track.