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# Top 10 dieting mistakes

WOMEN'S WORLD

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**There are no shortcuts to losing weight.**

WHEN I wrote about quick weight loss in my last article, I shared some advice on how to do it safely.

Unfortunately, there are no shortcuts to weight loss, even if you want to achieve it in a short time. Crash and fad diets do not work, and some are just plain dangerous.



There's no avoiding exercise when it comes to a sustainable weight loss programme.

It all comes down to a great deal of discipline, daily moderate-intensity exercise and a strict diet that reduces calorie count. You should aim to reduce weight and maintain it over the long term, otherwise you will find yourself yo-yoing up and down, which is bad for your health.

There are many mistakes that people make when trying to lose weight, because they may think that it won't make a difference, or it will help them go the extra mile.

However, I call these mistakes because they can jeopardise your calorie count and destroy all your good intentions of losing weight the healthy way.

Here are the 10 most common dieting mistakes:

### **Skipping meals**

Foregoing a meal, particularly breakfast, may seem like a quick way to cut calories, but it can backfire disastrously. You will find yourself extremely hungry for the rest of the day, and more likely to snack frequently or eat a bigger lunch.

Eat a high-protein and high-fibre breakfast (for instance, eggs or wholegrain cereal with low-fat milk), and have regular meals.

### **Uncontrollable snacking**

Stop and think about your snacking. Do you have a secret stash of candy or junk food in your desk drawer? Do you pinch munchies off your friends or colleagues, such as a couple of potato crisps, a chocolate biscuit, or a slice of cake?

Maybe you think that they don't make a difference, but the calories do add up! Keep track of how much you snack, and stop stealing other people's snacks!



If you have fruit juice, soda, lattes, and cappuccinos all the time, the calories will add up very quickly. Some fancy coffees and alcoholic beverages contain more than 500 calories.

### **Snack ban**

Don't bar yourself from snacking completely, as it helps you to control your hunger and keep your metabolism in high gear. Snack wisely on protein-rich nibbles, such as nuts and seeds.

## **Low-fat isn't no-fat**

Low-fat products are heavenly for people who are trying to lose weight because it allows them to enjoy, within limits.

However, don't be fooled into thinking that you can binge on something just because it's low-fat. If you have double helpings of a low-fat product, you may be eating more calories than you would with a normal product.

Make sure you read the nutritional information on the label to know just how much calories each serving contains.

## **Drinking calories**

So you think you're doing well because you said no to the potato crisps, but chose to have a latte or a packet of juice instead.

While there's nothing wrong with having these drinks every now and then, though you need to be aware that they contain calories as well.

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Liquid calories will not curb your hunger either, so you may still feel like eating after having a high-sugar bottled drink. When thirsty, water is still the best choice.

## **Dumping dairy**

Many women who are dieting immediately cut out dairy products, such as milk, cheese and ice-cream, from their meals.

However, you need some amount of dairy to provide you with calcium. Not only is calcium important for your bones, but it is believed that the body burns more fat when it gets enough calcium while it produces more fat when there is not enough calcium.

Calcium supplements will not do the trick, so make sure you have some non-fat or low-fat milk, cheese and yoghurt every day.

## **Fast food junkie**

Obviously, greasy burgers or fried chicken are big no-nos for those on a diet. But you may still find yourself drawn to the fast food restaurant for a "once-in-a-while" treat or because it's convenient.

You can order salads or healthier options like grilled and baked meals, but you must resist the temptation of adding on a milkshake or an apple pie.

Few fast food joints serve proper salads too, as many of them tend to be drowned in mayonnaise or other high-fat dressing. Make sure you choose wisely.

Better yet, drive past the neon lights and make your own salad at home.

### **Obsessive weighing**

Some experts recommend weighing yourself every day to keep track of your weight and to motivate yourself.

However, you are less likely to see any difference from one day to another, as you are with a weekly weigh-in. Jumping on the scales every day and finding yourself at the same weight will only make you feel frustrated – for no good reason.

Set yourself a weekly goal for weight loss, and then measure yourself once a week to see more realistic results.

### **Reaching for the sky**

There's nothing wrong with being ambitious and setting goals. But your targets should be realistic and humanly achievable, or you will never be able to reach them.

Forcing yourself to lose 10kg in a week is setting yourself up for failure. After just two weeks, you may feel so upset about failing to achieve your goals that you may give up completely.

Talk to a doctor, dietitian or personal trainer to set a realistic plan over several weeks, so that you can track your targets and see a real difference.

### **Shunning exercise**

There's just no avoiding exercise! You cannot rely on your diet alone to reduce your calories, because it is extremely unhealthy, unsustainable, and you will not be able to enjoy your food.

On the other hand, if you combine physical activity with your diet, you can still eat the foods that you enjoy, perhaps in smaller quantities.

Don't force yourself to do an exercise that you hate. Treadmills work for some people, but others may find it boring and prefer dance classes with a pumping beat.

Team sports like football or badminton may be more your type of game, or activities where you get sunlight and fresh air, such as swimming.

Try out different activities and sports until you find one that you're motivated to do every day.

Most importantly, do not resent the fact that you have to exercise and watch what you eat. Otherwise, you will not be able to lose weight quickly, safely, and sustainably.

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