10 Golden Rules of Healthy Eating

Good nutrition isn't brain surgery. Just follow these simple rules to feel good and lose fat all the time

1 Ditch the junk

Have you noticed all the adverts on TV for fresh broccoli? No? That's because there aren't any. Bloated corporations have no interest in selling you fresh food, only heavily branded, pre-packaged slop created using the cheapest ingredients and made to taste palatable by stuffing them with fat, salt and sugar. Most junk food is heavy in calories and light on nutrition.

By junk, we're talking burgers, crisps, ready meals, anything in 'a delicious crispy coating', anything formed into unnatural shapes (stand up chicken nuggets), anything containing hydrogenated vegetable oils, and anything wrapped in pastry where you can't identify the grisly substance inside. Buy fresh and learn to cook.

2 Balance calories in with calories out

It's simple really. To stay the same weight you need to burn off the same number of calories through activity as you take in through food. If you eat more than you burn, that excess energy is stored as fat for use later on. Before you know it, you're wearing vertical stripes in a vain attempt to look slimmer.

Here's what you need to do: take your bodyweight in kilos and multiply by 29 to get your resting metabolic rate (RMR) that's the approximate number of calories you burn a day simply by going about your regular business of sleeping, eating, working, watching TV, etc. Now add the number of calories you burn through formal exercise. For example, the average man might burn 250 calories through 30 minutes of cardio training, or 200 calories for 30 minutes of intensive weight training. The total is the number of calories you burn a day, and also the maximum number of calories you can eat per day if you don't want to put on weight.

3 Make fat only 25% of your diet

As we've just seen, it's calories that count when it comes to controlling your body fat. However, dietary fat contains nine calories per gram compared with carbohydrates and protein, which both contain just four calories per gram. Basically, fatty foods are more than twice as calorific as other foods for the same sized meals, so it makes sense to limit your fat intake.

What's more, the wrong kinds of fat can clog up arteries, making heart attacks more likely in later life. Try to steer clear of trans fats (it's those hydrogenated vegetable oils again) and keep saturated fats, found mainly in red meats and dairy foods, to a minimum. Instead, go for 'healthy' fats, such as the kind

found in fish, nuts and olive oil. These kinds are actually good for your heart if taken regularly in small doses.

4 Drink lots of water
There are hundreds of good reasons for drinking water you'd be dead without it being number one on the list but it is also vital for maintaining a healthy weight. If you don't drink enough water your kidneys don't function properly, and they pass some of their waste-filtration responsibilities on to the liver, which is then required to give up some of its fat-metabolising duties. The result is that you hang on to more stored fat than you would if you glugged down water on a regular basis. Drink water, lose fat it really is that simple.

5 Eat five or six small meals a day
Most of us have been brought up on the concept of three square meals a day: breakfast, lunch and dinner. However, this throws your metabolism into disarray because you stuff yourself with food, creating an energy overload, followed by starving yourself until the next meal. Your insulin levels bounce up and down as your body tries to stabilise your blood sugar, and the result is that you store more fat than you actually need to.

A better method is to eat small meals throughout the day. That way you get a constant drip-feed of energy, your blood sugar levels remain stable, and you never get hungry, so avoiding that mid-afternoon raid on the biscuit tin.

6 Downsize your meals as the day goes on
Does this diet sound familiar? Coffee for breakfast, sandwich for lunch, huge plate of meat and potatoes plus cake and ice cream for dinner. It's the Great British way of eating, and it could explain why we're fast becoming a nation of bloaters.

In the morning you need energy to get you through the day, so then is the time to stock up on carb-heavy meals cereals, toast, fruit. As the day goes on try to eat less with each meal so that your last meal is a small one, mainly protein-based. There's no point having a large bowl of pasta before bed, because all that energy won't get used up and will find a resting place in your sagging belly.

7 Eat 30g of fibre every day
Amazing stuff, fibre, and not just because it makes your bowels as regular as a Swiss watch. Fibre helps to lower insulin levels in

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