

Over the next 52 weeks, use these strategies in your daily life to help you reach your goal by year's end.

**1. Hit the gas early during your workout.** College of New Jersey researchers found that men who started a 30-minute running workout at high speed, working at 70% of their VO<sub>2</sub> max, and then eased up to 50% of VO<sub>2</sub> max burned 5 to 10% more fat than those who started slow and then revved up the pace. The after-burn of the high-intensity workout seems to carry over into the lower-intensity period, increasing overall fat burn.

**2. Use public transportation.** Turns out taking the bus or train is as good for your body as it is for your wallet and the environment. In one recent study from two Pennsylvania universities, researchers found that people who switched from driving everywhere to using a light-rail system lost an average of about 6 pounds in a year. “The theory is that by walking the extra blocks it takes to get to and from bus stops and train stations—instead of pulling up right in front of a destination—you naturally increase your activity level enough to result in weight loss,” says Cassity.

**3. Drink two cups of coffee, black.** A study in the journal of Physiology & Behavior found that drinking two cups of caffeinated coffee can boost your metabolism by 16% compared with the decaf kind. Make sure to drink it black though. The 67 calories in a spoonful of sugar and a tablespoon of cream can negate caffeine's calorie-burning benefits.

**4. Blot your pizza with a napkin.** You'll dab off about 4.5 g of fat—or close to 30 calories per slice. Of course, depending on the pizza and your toppings, the amount of excess oil you can remove varies, notes Keri Gans, RD, author of [The Small Change Diet](#). If you want a healthier slice, she prefers one loaded with veggies.

**5. Have a glass of wine.** Rat studies show that resveratrol, a compound in red wine, may help fight weight gain when eating a high-fat diet. The same seems to hold true in humans. Harvard researchers found that women who drank about two glasses a day gained less weight and were less likely to become overweight than teetotalers.

**6. But avoid vodka.** A study in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition found that drinking even as little as 1 ounce of vodka can slow your metabolism by as much as 73%.

**7. Douse your food in Tabasco.** Capsaicin—the spicy compound found in the white membrane of chili peppers—has been shown to rev up your metabolism and can torch somewhere near an extra 50 calories. Eating salsa may boost fat burn a little bit, says Cassity, but don't let that give you license to pile on the chips and guac. You still need to watch out for overall calorie intake.

**8. Fuel up on fiber.** In addition to making you feel full, longer (and therefore helping you eat less), fiber can help you burn through as much as 30% more calories, according to a study in the Journal of Nutrition. “Fiber has roughage,” says Gans. “And roughage takes a longer time for your body to break down and requires more energy to digest.”

**9. Sleep more.** Researchers found that dieters who logged 8.5 hours of shut-eye burned more fat than those who slept 5.5 hours. While both groups lost a similar amount of weight (6.6 pounds), the ones who got a full night's rest dropped the majority of their weight from fat while those who slept less lost most of theirs from muscle.

**10. Increase physical activity outside of the gym.** In a recent U.K. study, 34 overweight women completed the same 150-minute-a-week exercise program, and while some women lost up to 7 pounds of body fat, others gained up to 5. The researchers think that the women who lost the most were the ones who maintained or increased their physical activity beyond the gym; those who gained weight had cut back on their everyday activity. “If you're going to the gym, you don't want to negate it by eating a lot afterward or no longer taking the stairs,” says Cassity. “You have to live the same life—if not improve on it—when you pick up exercise.”

**11. Eat breakfast.** A study conducted by the U.S. Navy found that people who ate [breakfast](#) daily helped boost the metabolisms of its personnel by as much as 10 %.

**12. Pump iron.** Lifting weights can help you torch a few more calories even after you finish your session, according to a study in the Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research. Women who did an hour-long strength-training program burned 100 more calories in the next 24 hours than when they didn't hit the weights.

**13. Choose tuna swimming in water.** Stick to tuna packed in water not oil. Three ounces of water-packed chicken of the sea contains 109 calories and 2.5 g of fat compared with 158 calories and 6.9 g of fat in the oil-soaked kind. Plus, it's a good protein source that's rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which can help reduce your risk of heart disease and help prevent depression, says Gans.

**14. Drink chocolate milk.** McMaster University researchers compared the effects of downing low-fat chocolate milk, fat-free soy protein drink, and a traditional carbohydrate recovery drink after exercise. Not only did the milk drinkers gain more muscle than those who drank the soy and carbohydrate beverages, but they also lost twice as much fat.

**15. Drink cold water.** German researchers found that your metabolism can increase by as much as 30% during the 10 minutes after you drink a cold glass. Why? They speculate that your body burns more calories as it tries to warm the water.

**16. Brew a cup of green tea.** A 2010 Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics study found that after 3 months, people who drank two glasses of decaf green tea a day lost 2.6 more pounds than those who drank an herbal brew. Researchers believe that catechin compounds in green tea may prevent fat formation and stimulate your metabolism.

**17. Say yes to yogurt.** A study in the International Journal of Obesity found that eating yogurt as part of a low-calorie diet may help burn more fat. People who tucked in three 1-cup servings a

day lost 22% more weight and 61% more fat than those who dieted without including yogurt. Even better—most of the fat lost was from the belly.

**18. Eat an orange.** People who don't get enough vitamin C burn 25% less fat when working out than those who have adequate levels, say researchers. They also found that people who are vitamin-C deficient can quadruple their fat burn after taking 500 mg of the nutrient.

**19. Do intervals.** You've probably already heard it, but doing interval training—alternating between periods of intense exercise and recovery—burns more fat and calories than exercising at a steady rate. University of Guelph researchers found that cyclists who switched between cycling for 4 minutes at 90% of their max and 2 minutes of recovery for an hour burn up to 36% more calories after their workout than those who biked at a moderate pace for the same amount of time.

**20. Go organic.** Canadian researchers found that people with the highest levels of organochlorides—a chemical found in pesticides—were more likely to have slower metabolisms.

**21. Munch on almonds.** Spanish researchers found that people who eat a diet high in MUFAs lose more fat from their middles than people who follow a high-carb diet or a high-fat one.

**22. Outsmart the elliptical trainer.** The calorie-count mechanisms on cardio equipment are often off by 20 to 30%. So if the readout says that you've cranked out 260 calories' worth of exercise, a more accurate estimate could be 200 calories burned. To even things out, aim to burn off 30% more than your target, notes Cassity in *Better Each Day*. Even if your machine's calorie tally is accurate, ramping up your workout will help you achieve your weight loss goal.

**23. Pick a smarter spread.** Rather than smear on a tablespoon of butter over your morning toast (102 calories, 11.5 g of fat), try apple butter (20 calories, 0 g fat). It tastes delicious and packs a fraction of the fat and calories.

**24. Choose Canadian bacon.** You can get a heftier portion of the leaner meat and still cut fat. Two slices of Canadian bacon are 89 calories, 4 g of fat (57 g); two slices of the regular kind contain 86 calories and 6 g of fat (16 g).

**25. Try Meatless Monday.** Vegetarians usually have a lower body mass index than those who eat meat. For instance, lacto-ovo vegetarians have an average BMI of 25.7, whereas meat eaters check in at a BMI of 28.8. Not ready to forgo meat entirely? Incorporate Meatless Monday into

your eating routine. You'll still be able to reap the benefits as vegetarian diets tend to be lower in saturated fat and cholesterol, and higher in fiber, potassium, and antioxidants than other diets.

**26. See the sun.** Researchers from the University of Minnesota found that people who had higher levels of vitamin D were able to lose more weight on a reduced-calorie diet than those who had inadequate levels—even though both cut 750 calories from their diets. Your body generates vitamin D naturally through sunlight, and it's also found in foods like salmon, tuna, fortified milk and cereals, and yogurt.

**27. Broaden your circle of friends.** Having a lot of friends might not just help you live longer—it may make you leaner, too. A study in *Cell Metabolism* found that having a more active social life can turn regular white fat into calorie-torching brown fat, increasing overall calorie burn. Researchers found that when lab rats were placed in a living environment with 15 to 20 other mice and had greater opportunity to play, they lost weight due to increased brown-fat stores.

**28. Have half a grapefruit.** There's no need to go on an all-grapefruit diet, but incorporating the fruit into your diet can help you lose weight, say researchers from Scripps Clinic in La Jolla, CA. They found that people who ate half a grapefruit before every meal lost 3 pounds more than those who didn't. Why? Not only is grapefruit a good source of fiber, but it also seems to help regulate insulin levels.

**29. Sweeten with cinnamon.** An in vitro study by the USDA found that the spice can increase the rate at which sugar is metabolized by 20-fold. Eating 1/4 teaspoon to 1 tablespoon of cinnamon a day has also been shown to lower blood sugar levels. The spice is also a great low-calorie alternative to sugar to sweeten your coffee.

**30. Clean your house.** A tidy home may translate to a fit body. A recent study found that how clean a house is—or isn't—is a better indicator of the occupant's fitness level than the home's proximity to safe walking trails and sidewalks. "Scientists really don't know if it's because you burn calories while cleaning the house or if it's a reflection of how you take care of your body," says Cassity. "It's probably a little bit of each."

**31. Avoid boxed baked goods.** Store-bought cookies, cakes, and mixes are often loaded with saturated fat. Case in point: A serving of Entenmann's coffee cake is loaded with 260 calories and 13 g of fat—4 of which are saturated. Make your own dessert at home using a low cal low fat recipe

**32. Switch to sorbet.** A 1/2-cup serving of Häagen-Daz chocolate sorbet has half the calories and a whopping 16 grams fewer fat than a serving of chocolate ice cream.

**33. Slurp broth-based soups.** A bowl of creamy New England clam chowder contains 154 calories and 5 g of fat. Switch to the broth-based Manhattan clam chowder at 73 calories and 2 g of fat per cup. Penn State researchers found that people who had a cup of [soup](#) before lunch ate

20% fewer calories at the meal. When you choose a low-cal soup to fill up on beforehand, you can actually consume fewer calories overall, too.

**34. Cut the can.** And while we're on the subject of soup, fresh is better than canned. Harvard researchers found that people who ate canned soup for 5 days in a row had BPA levels in their blood that were 10 times higher than those who ate homemade soup for the same amount of time. Elevated levels of BPA—a chemical- and hormone-disruptor that's found in plastics and plastic-lined cans—has been shown to increase the number and size of fat cells.

**35. Skip fried food.** It's a no-brainer. Deep-frying adds tons of fat and calories. Make this fast-food swap: Instead of a Chipotle BBQ Snack Wrap (Crispy) from McDonald's try the grilled version. You'll save 80 calories and 7 g of fat.

**36. Pop smarter.** Popcorn is a great whole grain snack, but don't pour on the butter. Three cups of Orville Redenbacher Pour Over Movie Theater Butter popcorn will set you back 154 calories and 12 g of fat. Choose the Smart Pop version and snack without guilt for 48 calories and 1 g of fat.

**37. Take a fish oil supplement.** A study in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition found that people who took 6 g of fish oil a day and exercised three times a week lost 3.4 pounds more in 12 weeks than those who just hit the gym and didn't take a supplement.

**38. Max out.** Stoke up your after-burn by lifting heavy. Women burned twice as many calories the 2 hours following a workout that involved doing 8 reps of lifting 85% of their max as when they did 15 reps at 45% of their max. Your max refers to the maximum amount of weight that you can lift in a single rep of an exercise. To estimate your one-rep max, determine the greatest amount of weight you are able to perform an exercise to exhaustion. Plug in the weight and number of reps into this formula:  $\text{Weight} \times [1 + (0.033 \times \text{number of repetitions})]$  or use an [online calculator](#). Then multiply by 0.85 or 0.45.

**39. Load up on lobster.** Arginine, an amino acid found in lobster, nuts, seeds, and watermelon may help you burn more fat, according to a study in the American Journal of Physiology, Endocrinology and Metabolism. Researchers followed two groups of people on a diet and exercise program. One group received an 8.3 g arginine supplement daily. While both groups lost about 7 pounds in 21 days, those who took the arginine supplement lost only fat, while 57% of the weight loss of the control group was from muscle.

**40. Eat lean protein.** Your body burns through more calories when digesting high-protein foods as compared with fatty or carb-heavy fare. Research shows that your metabolism can increase by as much as 35% after eating protein.

**41. Eat more eggs.** The incredible edible is considered a perfect protein ([what does that mean?](#)). University of Arkansas researchers demonstrated that high-quality protein, such as eggs, can help older adults build and maintain muscle. Because muscle burns about 50 calories more per pound than fat, you won't just be stronger—you'll torch through more calories on a daily basis, too.

**42. Go skinless.** Take off the skin from half a roasted chicken breast and save about 50 calories and 2.5 g of fat.

**43. Ask for your dressing on the side.** A shot-glass-sized serving of creamy Ranch dressing contains 140 calories and 14 g of fat, but it's easy to pour much more than that on your salad. Manage how much dressing you eat by dipping your fork's tines into the dressing, and then scooping up a bite of lettuce.

**44. Corn over flour.** When you can, choose a corn tortilla. While they have the same amount of fiber (1 g), a 6-inch corn wrap contains 40 calories and 0.5 g of fat, and the same size flour tortilla has 110 calories and 2.5 g of fat. Flour tortillas have more protein (3 g versus 1 g), but also 64 times as much sodium.

**45. Channel Popeye.** Spinach is loaded with iron, a mineral your body needs to bring oxygen to your muscles to burn fat. When your body has low levels, your metabolism can slow down. Other good sources of iron include beans, lean protein, and fortified cereals.

**46. Eat whole grains.** A study in the *Journal of Nutrition* found that people who ate muesli with milk, peaches, yogurt, and apple juice burned almost twice as much fat during an hour-long walk than on the days that they ate cornflakes with milk, white bread, and an energy drink. Why? The first breakfast ranks much lower on the glycemic index than the second, and researchers think that the spike in insulin levels that occurs when the body digests simple carbs may interfere with your body's ability to burn fat.

**47. Eat at least 1,200 calories a day.** Your [metabolism](#) slows down when it doesn't have enough fuel, so going on a crash diet can actually reduce the rate at which your body burns fat. "I've seen that when people are consuming too few calories, and then they eat 200 to 300 more a day and start to lose weight," says Gans. "It's almost as if your body goes on starvation mode." If you eat fewer than 1,200 calories a day, you can't meet your nutritional needs for enough protein, healthy fat, and vitamins for your body to run properly, she adds.

**48. Snack in the afternoon.** Afternoon and evening snackers may lose more weight than those who nosh in the morning, concludes a study in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*. Researchers followed the snacking patterns of dieters and found that those who snacked in the morning lost 7% of their body weight after a year, while those who ate a treat later in the day or not at all lost 11% of their weight. Not only are morning snackers more likely than afternoon snackers to snack more than once a day, afternoon snackers tend to choose healthier foods to munch on, such as fruit and veggies.

**49. Choose the smarter topping.** Eating two slices of ham pizza will save you 80 calories and 4 g of fat over two slices of pepperoni.

**50. Stand up.** The simple act of standing engages muscles in your legs, abs, and back—and when your muscles are activated, they release myokines, hormones that stimulate metabolism, according to a study published in the *Journal of Physiology*. The reverse also seems true. When you don't move—think sitting in front of a computer or the tube—your metabolism slows.

**51. Don't serve meals family-style.** Heaping platters of home-cooked foods might be a staple at your family's dinner table, but keeping those dishes at the table can increase your likelihood of overeating. Research from Cornell University shows that when serving platters were out of sight, diners ate 20 to 29% less than when second helpings were within arm's reach. "A lot of times we're just mindlessly eating," says Cassity. "We might not even realize that we're full if food is right within reach."

**52. Just add ginger.** Like cinnamon, black pepper, and red pepper, spicing your food with ginger may prevent weight gain. Scottish researchers found that mice fed a ginger supplement while on a high-fat diet gained less weight than those on the same meal plan but without the supplements.