



Most important is to find activities you enjoy

## Weight LOSS for beginners

*shaping up for the beach holiday*

If you need to lose weight but don't know where to start, **NALISHA PATEL** lists 12 simple steps.

The first step for weight loss success is to get a clear definition of what weight loss means to you. Does this mean losing eight kilos in 12 weeks? Does this mean looking toned when you look in the mirror? Get specific about what you actually want to achieve.

It's important to have an end point in mind before you begin so you know exactly what you will gain (or lose) so you will be revved up to take action. Create an exciting outcome and picture yourself full of energy and vitality after having shed the excess weight.



The next most important step on the path to weight loss is just to take action! We can procrastinate starting a new weight loss plan or get so confused with the conflicting advice out there, that we don't know where to begin. Just begin! Do anything to move your body.

It is important to have a specific plan of action to achieve your goals. Make weekly goals such as feeling more energetic or feeling healthier and happier rather than: "I must shed two kilos this week." Take the focus of the actual weight loss and the process will run smoother.

Try making one small change a week. Increase the amount you exercise gradually to avoid overwhelming yourself and possibly quitting. Begin week one walking for 10 minutes and week two walk for 15 minutes and so on.

Walking is a great cardio workout for beginners. It's free and easy to do! Aim for 40-45 minutes of cardio / walking, at least four to five times per week. Walk briskly and

try to map out an up-hill route for optimal weight loss.

Exercise is crucial for weight loss. It isn't necessary to join a gym though. Try and increase the activity you do each day. Wearing a pedometer can be an excellent motivational tool (Available at most sporting and fitness shops). Aim for 10,000 steps a day. Increase the number of steps daily as a personal goal. Chart your progress on a calendar. Try and incorporate more activity into your day. Walk to the local dairy instead of driving. Do lunges as you vacuum! Make any activity fun and it will add up and make weight loss easier.

Dumbbells are all you need to achieve optimal weight-loss. They are versatile and easy to use. There are hundreds of exercises that can be performed for all areas. Weight training is the difference between mediocre weight loss and having the fit toned body you desire. Weight training should not be optional in terms of weight loss. Weight training increases your lean body

mass, which indirectly contributes to overall weight loss as it increases your metabolism for longer. You will therefore lose more weight even when you're not working out! Cardio exercise alone cannot achieve this.

Most important is to find activities you enjoy! Try new activities that you hadn't considered before like rock climbing! You might surprise yourself.

Aim to incorporate a new fruit into your diet each week. Aim to eat at least two servings of fruit a day by taking the fruit out the night before and packing it for the day as a snack. Do the same with vegetables.

Try to avoid setting negative goals such as: "I won't eat junk food." Instead say: "I will keep healthy snacks and meals on hand only."

Don't get caught up in details. Rely on commonsense to guide your actions. Most people can assess whether a food is good for them or not.

Make all these changes gradually. Don't expect to change your diet and physical activity level overnight. It may be helpful to record over a week, the foods you eat and the activity you do. Look over the week and monitor any areas that need improving.

Always try and enlist support when starting out, such as a personal trainer or friend. As a beginner it is very motivating to be accountable to someone.

So the key factors to weight loss include cardio exercise, lifting weights, and eating sensibly. Include a quality protein with each meal, keeping fat intake low, eating nutritionally-packed foods, and eating more complex carbohydrates, vegetables and fruits. Consistency is the key to all these factors.

Aim to create a healthy lifestyle rather than a "quick fix". A short term "diet" is actually harder to follow than a lifestyle that is healthy and manageable. Real success comes after a plan becomes a routine. That's why diets do not work! Focus on the long term benefits. Start today!

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