

David Harrison's

Complete Guide
to
Losing 14 Pounds
in 14 Days



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Introduction

When it comes to losing weight, one thing's a certainty: It took time to gain the excess weight, and it will take time to lose it. But there are steps you can take to speed up the process. If you play it smart, you can lose up to 14 pounds in 14 days!

Of course, not all of that will be fat loss. You will also lose weight by getting rid of the retained fluid, bloating, and waste products that keep your weight high. By the time the two weeks are up, you'll feel like a new person – a much lighter one!

This e-book will be your guide through every step of the 2-week journey. You will begin by learning how to mentally and physically prepare yourself for rapid weight loss. In chapter 2, we'll discuss the benefits of fasting for quick weight loss and learn how to do it safely.

Chapter 3 will explore the best nutrition plans for sustained weight loss. You can avoid regaining the weight you initially lose by following these simple rules.

Chapter 4 describes the importance of hydration. Water plays a vital role in fitness and fat loss. You will learn how to determine how much water you need each day (Hint: Not everyone needs 8 glasses a day!)

In chapter 5, you will learn why sleep is so important for weight loss. If you're not getting 8 hours a night, you're not alone. But you're not losing weight as quickly as possible if your body doesn't get regular recharges.

Chapter 6 will introduce you to the basics of calorie burning through exercise. Working out doesn't have to be a chore; you will be presented with dozens of fun activities that will burn more calories than a trip to the gym.

Muscle-building is the subject of chapter 7. Did you know that muscle tissue is a 24-hour fat burner? You will learn how to eat and exercise to build maximum muscle tissue and burn more calories than ever before – even while you sleep!

Chapter 8 will examine various herbs, vitamins, and foods that are rumored to jump-start your metabolism. Which ones work, and which ones don't? You'll soon be able to tell fact from fiction when it comes to dietary supplements.

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Chapter 9 is the first part of a quick and dirty guide for beating the bloat monster. You'll learn why bloating happens, and how to get rid of it – and get back into your skinny jeans – in no time.

Chapter 10 is a follow-up that explores the embarrassing but very real problem of constipation and sluggish bowels. You might be shocked by how much weight you're carrying around due to waste products.

In chapter 11, we will look at the sometimes devastating condition of emotional eating and eating disorders. Sometimes you have to deal with underlying psychological triggers in order to stop overeating. This chapter will get you started on the road to recovery.

Chapter 12 contains tips and ideas for staying motivated long past day 14. You will learn how to motivate yourself, how to use outside influences for motivation, and how to keep your eyes on the prize.

Chapter 13 delves into medical conditions that can cause you to stop losing weight, or even cause you to gain weight. Many can be detected by simple blood tests, and most can be treated with prescription medicines. Diagnosis is the first step. You will learn some of the most common symptoms to help you decide if a trip to the doctor is in order.

Finally, in chapter 14, we'll teach you how to keep losing weight and keep it off for life.

You will learn valuable skills for healthy and permanent weight loss.

Without further delay, let's set off on your two-week weight loss journey!

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Chapter 1: Before You Begin

Does your dieting past still haunt you? Do you find it harder than ever to lose weight after years of yo-yo dieting? Well, you're in luck: You're about to embark on the last weight loss plan you'll ever need.

It starts with a 14-day regimen designed to melt away pounds and even heal your diet-damaged metabolism. Even if you've been subsisting on very few calories (and not losing any weight), you can change your habits and get back the fast metabolism you enjoyed before. If your metabolism has never been speedy, get ready to see it come alive like never before.

Before you start any diet or exercise plan, you need to make sure your doctor is okay with it. The tips outlined in this e-book might not be appropriate for someone with diabetes, malnourishment, or a compromised immune system. Dieter discretion is advised.

Keeping that in mind, let's walk through the steps you can take to prepare yourself for 14 days of weight loss.

Step 1: Forget the Past

Don't let past diet failures discourage you. This is a new beginning, and you will have new results. Get ready to try as though you've never failed, because you will never fail again!

Step 2: Set Concrete Goals

Your first goal might be to lose 14 pounds, but which activities will you do to burn calories? What types of food will you buy? When will you make time to work out and cook healthy meals? Goal-setting isn't just about ideas; it's about fleshing out the logistical details, too.

Step 3: Purchase Supplies

You're going to need plenty of fresh produce, lean protein, and pure drinking water. If you don't already have those things on hand, you'll need to plan a shopping trip. Try to think of other items that could prove helpful. For example,

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weight loss requires adequate sleep. If you have trouble sleeping at night, invest in some earplugs or a sleep mask that blocks out ambient light.

Step 4: Plan Your Schedule

If you work during the week, you might want to start the initial fasting phase on a Friday evening. That's because fatigue is common when you're starting out, and you want to give your body enough time to grow accustomed to the new regimen. After two days, you will feel more energetic than ever.

Step 5: Make a List of Rewards

Think up some tangible rewards you can give yourself for losing weight. Since you want to lose a large amount of weight in a short amount of time, avoid using foods as treats. Instead, buy yourself a new book, or rent a movie you've wanted to see. Go for a walk through a new neighborhood, or splurge on a pedicure. There are plenty of ways to celebrate your success that won't sabotage your efforts.

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Chapter 2: Fasting for Quick Weight Loss

Some experts warn that fasting is no way to lose weight. But proponents of fasting claim that taking a break from food can have all sorts of health benefits. They credit fasting for giving them everything from increased energy to elevated mood and even clearer skin.

Here's the secret: Fasting is not the same thing as starving. There are different levels of fasting. Some even allow you to eat solid foods. Of course, you can also restrict your intake to just liquids, or to just water, but such fasts shouldn't be sustained for very long.

Fasting is usually done for detoxification purposes. Think of how many processed foods you eat each day. All of them contain chemicals designed to extend shelf life or enhance flavor. Those chemicals can build up in your system, making it hard for your body to function normally. Fatigue, achiness, and depression can result.

Now consider how many toxins you pick up from other sources. How many chemical cleaners, pest control sprays, cosmetics, and other chemicals do you come into contact with? How is the air quality in your area? How is the tap water? You could be polluting your body simply by eating, drinking, and breathing.

You can kick off your 14 day diet plan and give your body a break by fasting. To do this, you should first determine how extreme of a fast you're willing to try. Here are some popular types to choose from.

Sugar Fast

A sugar fast is a relatively mild fasting technique. All it requires you to do is give up sugary foods and white flour products. Those foods will be replaced with healthier carbohydrates in the form of low-glycemic fruits, fibrous vegetables, and whole grain products.

Prepare for some adverse effects in the first few days of your sugar fast, especially if you're something of a sugar addict. You might experience headaches, lethargy, and even nausea while your body cleanses itself of sugar.

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Just take it easy for a couple of days and drink plenty of clean water to flush the toxins from your system. You can do a sugar fast pretty much indefinitely, as long as you continue to eat healthy carbs.

Raw Food Fast

Food loses a lot of its fiber and nutrition when you cook it, so proponents of raw food diets insist that their way of eating delivers the most nutrients and the highest fiber content.

Obviously, there are many foods which should be cooked before consumption. A raw food fast will limit you to safe raw foods like fruits, vegetables, nuts, and grains. Some people eat raw for life, but if you're a meat fan, you should probably make it a temporary weight loss technique.

Juice Fast

Juice fasts gained notoriety among the Hollywood set. Now they've gone mainstream, with hundreds of web sites devoted to the merits of fresh fruit and vegetable juice.

Juice fasts can be healthy when they're done right. To get enough vitamins and fiber, you'll definitely want to do your own juicing using fresh produce. Pre-packaged fruit juices are typically high in sugar and lack fiber content.

Some of the most popular homemade juices include "green" smoothies, which blend fruits, vegetables, and silken tofu; fresh orange and carrot juice for a massive dose of vitamins C and A; and cucumber melon smoothies to keep you hydrated at a very low calorie cost.

As long as you're getting a variety of fruits, veggies, and soy protein, a juice fast can last for several days or even a week. The nutrient-dense drinks are easily digestible. You might feel revitalized right away as your body absorbs the vitamins and macronutrients.

Water Fast

For some, only a total water fast will do. As the name suggests, a water fast means giving up food altogether and drinking pure water instead.

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While this doesn't provide nutrients like eating solid food does, fans of water fasting insist that the process gives them mental clarity, clearer skin, and increased energy.

Due to lack of nutrition, water fasts should not be sustained for more than a few days at a time. Ask your doctor for permission before you embark on a water fast.

The Master Cleanse and More

The Master Cleanse gained notoriety because several high-profile celebrities used it to shed extra pounds. Beyonce Knowles lost a fast 25 pounds in preparation for her role in Dreamgirls, thanks to the Master Cleanse.

This plan is a liquid fast that requires you to drink several cups of juice made from lemons, cayenne pepper, and maple syrup. Salt-water drinks and laxative teas are sometimes incorporated for a full-body cleanse.

The Master Cleanse is effective for cutting weight, but not for long-term loss. It just departs too radically from normal eating. It's also possible to become dehydrated while following the plan, so dieter beware!

The Final Word on Fasts

A fast that cuts out junk food but leaves you with plenty of nutrition is the most sustainable type of fast. Kick off your 14-day plan with a sugar fast or raw food fast, and see how great you feel!

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Chapter 3: Eating for Sustained Weight Loss

To start losing weight right away, you'll need to know the scientific principles behind weight loss. Let's start by learning how many calories you actually need each day.

Your basal metabolic rate, or BMR, dictates how many calories your body needs to perform its functions for the day. This number is the bare minimum; it tells you how many calories your body needs to simply survive and carry out natural processes. If you're an active person, you will require more calories than your BMR suggests. The sum of your BMR plus the calories you burn during daily activities is your Total Energy Expenditure, or TEE.

There are various formulas you can use to help you figure out an appropriate number of calories for weight loss. The most widely used is the Harris-Benedict formula, which considers your age, gender, height, and current weight to come up with a suitable number of calories. Here is an example of this formula in action:

Men: $BMR = 66 + (13.7 \times \text{wt in kg}) + (5 \times \text{ht in cm}) - (6.8 \times \text{age in years})$

Women: $BMR = 655 + (9.6 \times \text{wt in kg}) + (1.8 \times \text{ht in cm}) - (4.7 \times \text{age in years})$

(For calculation purposes, 1 inch = 2.54 cm and 1 kilogram = 2.2 lbs.)

Example:

A 35 year old female who stands 5'4" (163 cm) tall and weighs 130 pounds (59 kilos) would use the following equation:

$$655 + 566 + 293 - 165 = 1,349.$$

The woman in the example would need 1,349 calories a day just to lie around in bed and keep her organs functioning. If that number seems small, it's because we haven't yet taken this woman's activity level into consideration.

Activity multipliers work as such:

Sedentary people (office jobs, no real exercise) multiply their BMR by 1.2.

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Lightly active people (exercise 1 – 3 times per week) multiply their BMR by 1.35.

Moderately active people (exercise 4 – 5 times per week) multiply their BMR by 1.55.

Highly active people (sports or hard exercise most days) multiply their BMR by 1.725.

Extremely active people (hard exercise every day) multiply their BMR by 1.9.

Let's revisit the woman in our example. We'll assume she works a desk job and is sedentary most days of the week. Even at such a low activity level, she would expend extra calories walking around, driving to and from work, typing, and fidgeting at her desk.

Her BMR (1,349) multiplied by her sedentary activity level (1.2) reveals that she needs about 1,619 calories each day to maintain her current weight. If she started exercising just 2 or 3 days each week, her daily calorie requirement would increase to 1,821.

So how do these numbers help you lose weight? Easy: To lose a pound of fat each week, you must burn 3,500 more calories than you consume. In order to lose a pound of fat, the woman in our example would need to eat 1,119 calories a day if sedentary, or 1,321 a day if lightly active.

As you can see, it's much easier to lose weight through diet and physical activity than through diet alone.

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Chapter 4: The Importance of Hydration

We're often told about the importance of adequate water intake, but do you know why it's so important? Water can contribute to weight loss – even fast weight loss – in several ways.

First, since our bodies need water to survive, they have a self-defense reaction when we don't consume enough water. In response to dehydration, they start to hold on to every bit of fluid they get. This is called fluid retention, or bloating, and it can cause the scale to leap up by several pounds.

The cure for bloating is to drink more water. If you drink at least 8 glasses a day, your body will start to let go of the fluid it has been retaining. Your waist will shrink, and you will lose some superfluous pounds.

To tell if you're bloated, clench your hands into fists. Do they feel tight and puffy? Are your rings leaving indentations on your fingers? If so, you might be bloated, and water can help.

Secondly, water acts as a vitamin delivery system. The vitamins you consume through food and supplements will be distributed throughout your body if you're properly hydrated. If you haven't had enough fluids, the vitamins will have trouble getting where they need to go.

Finally, water keeps our organs functioning at their highest level. This directly affects your body's ability to burn fat.

You see, our bodies have a natural filtration system that gets rid of toxins and built-up fluid: the kidneys. But the kidneys need plenty of water to be able to do their job properly. If you don't drink enough water, the kidneys have to call on the liver for back-up filtration. While the liver is busy helping out the kidneys, it's not metabolizing fat as efficiently as it should, and more of the food you eat will be stored as fat.

You can avoid this situation by drinking at least 64 ounces of pure drinking water each day. A more customized approach is to drink 1 ounce of water for every 2 pounds of body weight. Thus, a 150 pound man would need 75 ounces of water each day. If you do a lot of sweating, or if you have a medical condition that leaves you chronically dehydrated (like diabetes) you will need extra hydration.

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Chapter 5: Sleep More to Lose More

When you think of weight-loss measures, sleep isn't usually the first activity that comes to mind. But sleep is one of the most important things you can do when you're trying to lose extra pounds.

Like hydration, adequate sleep benefits the dieter in many ways. First and foremost, sleep relieves stress. Stress is actually counterproductive to weight loss. That's because stress triggers a chemical reaction in our bodies that actually promotes weight gain.

Think about our ancestors: They had to store body fat to help them survive through times of famine. Therefore, whenever their bodies were stressed (as in times of starvation), a hormone called cortisol was released. Cortisol tells our bodies to save up their fat stores in preparation for hard times ahead.

In modern days, we have more stress than ever before due to job schedules, family obligations, overcrowding, and financial concerns. We are bombarded with information and advertisements. Many of us work around the clock to make ends meet.

Add to that a cycle of self-imposed famine in the form of dieting, and it's no wonder people are more stressed out – and fatter – than ever.

Sleep soothes the mind and body, gives us a chance to slow down and process the events of our day, and tells our bodies to replace cortisol production with endorphin production. Endorphins are feel-good chemicals that relieve stress and give us a general sense of well-being.

Finally, sleep gives our bodies the opportunity to repair themselves. If you exercise, and especially if you do strength-training, you might end up with achy muscles. That's because exercise and weight-lifting cause microscopic tears throughout your muscle tissue.

When you sleep, your muscles repair these tears, rebuilding your muscle tissue stronger than before. This leaves you with more lean muscle mass, which means you burn more calories all day and all night, even when you sleep.

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In spite of its many benefits, adequate sleep is something few of us enjoy. Studies have shown that most people don't get the 7 to 10 hours of sleep that their bodies require. Insufficient sleep can have a direct impact on how much weight you lose or gain.

Start your 14-day weight loss program by performing a personal sleep inventory. Look at the amount of sleep you get each night. Is it enough? If not, what is keeping you from sleeping more? Sometimes the answer is obvious, like a newborn baby or a demanding work schedule. Other common culprits include too much computer time before bed (computer and video games stimulate the brain, preventing it from winding down in preparation for sleep); alcohol consumption; and insomnia due to stress or anxiety.

Do what you can to manage your stress level while you're awake. Get some exercise each day, in the sunlight if possible. Avoid drinking caffeine after noon. Journal about issues in your life which are troubling you, or talk to a trusted friend or advisor. Yoga and meditation can also help. Never use sleep aids unless your doctor gives you the go-ahead, as you can become dependent on them.

Finally, make sure your bedroom is conducive to a good night's sleep. If noises tend to wake you during the night, invest in a cheap pair of foam earplugs, or drown out background noise with a fan. Make sure the room is dark, and turn off any electronic devices that have flashing lights. Wind down before bed with a warm bath, a cup of chamomile tea, and a book. You can also take melatonin supplements to help you get restful sleep throughout the night.

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Chapter 6: Calorie-burning Activities

As we learned in chapter 3, weight loss comes easier when you add physical activity. Many of us have plenty of excuses for our sedentary lifestyles: We work too hard, can't afford gym memberships, have too many demands on our time, or just plain don't like to exercise.

If you hate exercising, it's probably because you're not getting the right kind of exercise. Some people are perfectly happy running on a treadmill day in and day out, but there are many more who dread the monotony.

If boredom is keeping you from getting a healthy amount of cardio, mix up your routine with some fun activities. Group sports like basketball and flag softball burn far more calories per hour than a treadmill, and they're fun and social to boot. Call up some friends, or visit your local activity center to sign up for an amateur sports league.

Swimming is another great way to burn calories. Jump in the pool and paddle around, then jog as fast as you can in the shallow end. The water provides enough resistance to kick your metabolism into high gear. If you have a local beach, brisk walking on the sand will burn more calories than walking on pavement.

Kids also provide opportunities for calorie burning. If you have a baby, contact your local stroller club to go on walks with other new parents. You can keep an eye on your little one while you get in shape. If your child is older, they will appreciate some one-on-one time spent tossing a football, shooting hoops, or just swinging and sliding at the playground. These activities help you burn calories while you bond with your child.

If you have a garden, you've got a calorie-burning goldmine. Lawn work, including mowing the grass and planting shrubs and saplings, is a great way to firm up and lose pounds. Weeding, pruning, picking flowers and vegetables, and laying sod are all calorie-burning activities. Spend an hour a day working on your landscaping, and you'll soon see the results in your yard – and on the scale.

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Maybe you're an animal lover. Try walking your dog in the evening, or taking the neighbors' dogs for a walk. Take your pet to the park for some Frisbee action. Saddle up a horse and go for a relaxing trail ride. Don't have a pet of your own? Try volunteering at a ranch or animal shelter. Caring for and cleaning up after the animals is a rewarding act that enriches their lives and helps you stay in shape.

There are also plenty of human-based charities and foundations which can use volunteers. You could serve your community by helping build homes, stack and sort food donations, or join walks and runs to raise funds for medical research.

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Chapter 7: Building Muscle to Burn Fat

Fat is the accumulation of excess energy. If you don't burn off the calories you consume, they will be stored as fat. If you build muscle mass, you will not only feel better and look leaner, you will actually start to burn fat at a much faster rate.

That's because muscles tissue is an incredible fat-burner. The more lean muscle mass you have, the more calories you burn, even at rest. With that in mind, it makes sense to add strength training to your weekly routine.

First, find out how much of your body is made up of fat, and how much is made up of lean muscle. This measurement is your body fat percentage. You can find guides online which help you determine your body fat percentage, but if you're a first-time measurer, you might get better results by asking your doctor or fitness trainer to measure it for you.

Some "smart" scales can even calculate your body composition by sending a painless signal through your body. The signal returns data that tells you how much of your weight comes from fat, muscle, bone, and fluid.

A healthy body fat percentage for women ranges from 14% (for a young, athletic woman) to 35% (for women over 65). Males have more natural muscle mass than females, so men can be healthy with body fat percentages between 6% and 25%.

It's worth noting that a normal body weight does not protect you from the effects of a high body fat percentage. People with low weights and a large amount of body fat (also known as "skinny-fat" or "normal weight obesity") face the same health risks as other obese individuals.

So how can you get rid of excess body fat and build lean muscle tissue to take its place? By working your muscles with strength-training exercises.

Strength training brings to mind images of sweaty guys shouting as they strain, red-faced, to lift a bar with huge weights on each end. But that's not representative of strength training as a whole. In fact, you don't need a gym or even weights to make your muscles stronger and leaner.

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You can do strength-training in the comfort of your own home. Persistence is the key. If you're not accustomed to exercising, your muscles will be weak at first, and you might not feel like you're doing yourself much good.

In fact, the opposite is true! Every strength training session will benefit your muscles tremendously. When you rest the next day, your muscles will reknit themselves into something stronger than ever before. All you have to do is stick with the program.

Some of the best strength-training exercises are traditional workouts used in school gyms and military boot camps: Sit-ups, pull-ups, push-ups, chair dips, wall sits, and squats.

Don't worry if you can't do these maneuvers right at first. You can do modified versions of these exercises until you build enough muscle strength to do the traditional versions. For example, if you can't do a full push-up, you can do knee push-ups while you grow stronger. If you can't do a knee push-up, try pushing yourself away from walls or kitchen counters. Your arms will grow stronger over time, and you will start building muscle immediately.

Sit-ups are another easily modified strength training exercise. Many people do a modified version of sit-ups when they do abdominal crunches. You can lower or increase the difficulty of crunches by changing the way you hold your legs, or by twisting your body as you come up. Full sit-ups should be your goal, though, because they give your entire core a good workout. A well-developed core will help you perform all of your strength-training exercises.

Start slowly by doing strength-training on a few non-consecutive days each week. You might start by doing core exercises on Monday, resting on Tuesday, doing Arms on Wednesday, resting on Thursday, working your legs on Friday, and resting on the weekend.

As you grow stronger, increase your strength-training to 4 or 5 times per week. Keep working until your muscles feel weak and wobbly. This is called muscle failure, and you won't get much benefit from working out beyond that point. The more you work out, the longer it will take you to reach muscle failure.

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Chapter 8: Vitamins, Herbs & Supplements

Many herbs and supplements are marketed as fat-burners. Some claim to increase the body's core temperature, resulting in a higher basal metabolic rate. Others purport to stimulate the liver, causing it to metabolize fat at a higher rate. Still others are thought to increase your heart rate, leaving you in the fat-burning zone for longer periods of time as you work out.

So which supplements are for real, and which ones should you avoid? Obviously, there is no miracle pill that leads to instant weight loss. If that were the case, obesity would no longer be a problem. But there are in fact a few supplements that have been linked to faster weight loss.

The very best supplements for fat loss include green tea, guggul, and dandelion. Each of these supplements has been studied and found to have measurable results on weight loss. Guggul in particular was found to help dieters lose 6 times as much weight as others who were given a placebo pill.

Green tea acts as a mild stimulant and appetite suppressant because of its caffeine content. But its real power lies in the phytonutrients it contains. The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition found that dieters who took 390mg of green tea extract each day lost twice as much weight as dieters who did not consume green tea, even though both groups had identical calorie intake and activity levels.

Dandelion is a popular fat-burner because it is thought to stimulate the liver's fat metabolism process. It also has diuretic properties which can help you get rid of water weight.

Note that none of these herbs, by themselves, is enough to help you lose fat. They merely improve the results you get from diet and exercise. Also, though herbs are natural, they can be dangerous if you have certain health conditions or if you use them incorrectly. Always seek your doctor's advice before adding supplements to your diet.

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Chapter 9: How to Beat Bloating Every Time

It happens to the best of us: We indulge in some sugary or salty carbs, and suddenly we can't button our skinny jeans. The scale moves up several pounds, and we feel puffy and miserable.

You would have to eat a truly massive amount of calories to gain 5 pounds of fat in a single day (somewhere in the neighborhood of 20,000). But it's painfully easy to gain 5 pounds of water weight when you're bloated.

Bloating is usually caused by three things: Over-consumption of sugar, over-consumption of sodium, or dehydration.

Carbohydrates attract water molecules, which leads to water retention and a puffy appearance. This is why professional body-builders eat carbs to make their muscles appear larger, and cut carbs when they want to look as lean as possible. If you go overboard on the carbs, especially on refined carbs like desserts and bread, your waistline could quickly expand.

Sodium is another common cause of bloating. The typical modern adult eats far more sodium than they need. That's because so many of the processed foods we eat, even "diet" foods, are packed with sodium as a flavor enhancer and preservative. Too much sodium causes inflammation inside the body, and the body attempts to hold on to fluids to dilute the irritating sodium. And, of course, retained fluids = bloating.

The same thing happens when we don't drink enough fluids. Insufficient water intake causes dehydration, which also causes fluid retention. Deprived of water, the body tries to hold onto every drop. The result is a decrease in sweating and urination, and an increase in water weight.

Fortunately, bloating is easy to beat. You can get rid of it by drinking plenty of water (1 ounce for every 2 pounds of body weight) and limiting your food intake to lean protein, low-fat dairy products, and fibrous fruits and vegetables. You could also drink a cup of coffee or a few cups of green tea to "push" the fluids from your body faster. Avoid sugary sweets, carbonated drinks, and refined white flour products when you're trying to beat bloating.

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Chapter 10: Laxatives & Colon Cleansers

Laxatives and colon cleansers deserve special mention in this quick weight loss guide. While they can be useful for the loss of water weight, their potentially harmful effects make them a bad choice for a long-term weight loss solution.

It's true that the contents of your stomach and bowels can add a couple of pounds. If you don't get enough fiber or water in your diet, you could become painfully constipated and bloated. It's healthier to address the root cause of these conditions (in this case, dehydration and insufficient fiber) than to routinely use laxatives to force a bowel movement.

Colon cleansers are just laxatives with a fancy name. The makers of these products would have you believe that the human colon is incapable of keeping itself clean. In reality, the human body is remarkably efficient at ridding itself of waste as long as you eat right and drink enough water.

Laxatives and colon cleansers can actually make you gain weight by causing your body to retain fluids due to dehydration. You can also become physically dependent on these substances. Our digestive system keeps itself in good working order by contracting and passing solid waste. If you use laxatives too frequently, the digestive system won't work as hard, leading to a loss of muscle tone.

In addition, many colon cleansing products are quite expensive. You would be better off saving your money and increasing your intake of water and fiber. Laxatives should only be used on rare occasions when you're in pain and need fast relief.

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Chapter 11: Put a Stop to Emotional Eating

Emotional eating is more common than you might think, but it makes sense. Think back to your memories of childhood, times when you felt happy, secure, and cared for. Chances are, those memories involve food.

As children, we did much of our bonding with family members during mealtimes and holidays. Those fond memories stay with us as adults. When we feel lonely, bored, or sad, instead of reaching out to another person, we often reach out for food.

It makes sense on a scientific basis as well. The foods we typically think of as “comfort foods” are high in fat and carbohydrates. Fat satisfies our hunger, and carbohydrates cause our bodies to produce the feel-good chemicals known as endorphins. The result is a sense of relaxation and well-being.

While there are more dangerous coping mechanisms in the world, using food to sooth your emotional pain can have many negative consequences: guilt, shame, low self-esteem, and obesity and all of its related health concerns.

Emotional eating also prevents you from getting to the root of the problem. While the food picks you up temporarily, the underlying problems still exist, causing you to go back top the food when your emotions flare.

If you are one of the millions of people who engage in emotional eating, there is good news: You can stop the cycle and learn to identify your true needs. All it takes is a desire to change and a little persistence.

The key to beating emotional eating is to identify the triggers that send you off in search of food. Think back to the last time you ate food for comfort. What was your emotional state like? Were you sad or stressed out about something? Were you lonely or bored? Maybe you were angry and didn’t have an outlet for that anger, so it quickly turned into sadness and despair. Emotions can be confusing, but they always make sense.

Now imagine the next time you’ll feel the urge to binge on comfort foods. What will you do differently? Instead of eating to cheer yourself up, maybe you can talk

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to a trusted friend, write out your feelings in a personal journal, or simply take a walk in your neighborhood or local park.

If you typically eat out of boredom, find something else to do to occupy yourself. This could mean taking up a new craft or hobby, volunteering to help people or animals in your community, or exercising. Try to avoid activities that you associate with mindless eating, such as watching television. Find something else that engages your mind more fully.

If depression is the underlying cause, try speaking with a doctor to discuss treatment options. Depression can be seasonal, situational, or perpetual. A doctor or even a therapist could help you get to the bottom of your depression. If a chemical imbalance is causing it, drug therapy could work wonders.

Once you understand why you feel the urge to eat for comfort, you can take steps to change your behavior. Then, you can eliminate unnecessary calories and start to slim down – permanently.

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Chapter 12: Tips for Staying Motivated

It's pretty easy to feel gung-ho about your diet when you're first starting out. It's something new, you're hopeful and enthusiastic, and you might even be looking forward to your new way of eating and exercising.

Fast-forward two weeks, and you might find a different story entirely. You've gotten bored with your daily menu, the exercises seem like a chore, and perhaps you've even fallen off the wagon completely.

Finding the initial motivation can be a challenge, but staying motivated is at least as difficult. Here are some ways you can sustain your enthusiasm until you reach the finish line.

Set Small Milestones

For the sake of this example, let's say you need to lose 30 pounds. That sounds daunting! The goal might seem more manageable if you break it down into smaller milestones. For example, you could set yourself the goal of losing one pound in a week. If you stick to the plan, you can almost certainly reach that goal. Then you'll only have 29 more milestones to go, and a sense of accomplishment to help you pass those milestones.

Treat Yourself Often

Humans are wired to love rewards. Personal achievement might be enough to keep some people going, but the rest of us need tangible rewards to keep moving forward.

These rewards don't need to be expensive, but they do need to be motivational. For example, let's imagine you've reached your first milestone – one pound gone in one week's time. You could reward yourself with a guilt-free evening to goof off and play video games, rent a movie you've wanted to see, or have an at-home spa session complete with a homemade facial and a do-it-yourself pedicure. Special milestones, such as the loss of 10 pounds, deserve larger treats! Get creative, and you'll come up with several ideas.

Should you use food as a weight loss reward? The concept is pretty controversial. Experts warn against it, but some dieters say it works for them.

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The bottom line is that you have to set up a reward system that will motivate you to keep going. If that means indulging in a hot fudge sundae, then eat the sundae. It's far better to have those extra calories than to give up on your diet because you feel deprived.

Just be careful. If you tend to eat for comfort, the taste of a sundae could send you into a binge. Some dieters find it easier to stay on track by rewarding themselves with non-edible treats.

Find What Motivates You – and Be Honest

Why do you want to lose weight? Many of us would answer with safe responses, like "I want to do it for my health", or "I want to fit into my old clothes again". These might be 100% true, but for many dieters, that's not the whole story.

Be brutally honest with yourself. Even if you think the truth is ugly, go ahead and take a personal inventory of all the reasons why you want to lose weight. Do you want to be considered a hottie? Do you want your exes to kick themselves for letting you go? Do you want to be able to wear more risqué clothing styles? Do you want to avoid getting jowly as you age?

Some of those reasons might sound vain and selfish, but plenty of dieters use them as personal motivators. If they help you stick to your diet and fitness plan, use them.

Keep a Journal

Studies have shown that dieters who keep food journals are more likely to lose weight and keep it off. But you can keep a journal to track more than just your calories. Start writing down your moods, level of hunger, and thoughts about your weight loss journey.

Seeing everything in print can help you identify situations that make you want to eat. A journal can also help you discover patterns in your eating, like skimping on breakfast and subsequently overeating at lunchtime.

You can also use a journal to plan your milestones and rewards. Seeing your next reward spelled out in ink can keep you from giving in to a temporary urge to binge.

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Share With Others

There's no need to go through your weight loss alone. The Internet has brought together millions of people who want to lose weight. They have formed communities, meet-up groups, and social networking sites.

Don't be shy; many of these people face the same hardships and struggles as you do. Jump right in and introduce yourself. Ask questions of long-time members. Share every little victory and setback, and congratulate and comfort others when they do the same. You might find that joining a community keeps you accountable not only to yourself, but to your new friends as well.

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Chapter 13: Addressing Medical Concerns

It's important to note that there are several medical conditions that make it hard or even impossible to lose weight. Though these conditions are rare, they can seriously impact your quality of life until they are diagnosed and treated.

Some of the most common medical reasons for weight gain (or slow weight loss) include Cushing's disease; hypothyroidism; insulin resistance (or pre-diabetes); and, for women, polycystic ovary syndrome.

Fortunately, all of these conditions can be diagnosed with simple blood tests. Once you have a diagnosis, you and your health care provider can decide on a good course of treatment. As the condition improves, your weight loss will progress more normally.

Sometimes medical treatments are the culprits behind weight gain. If you take oral steroids, you might find it very difficult to lose weight or even avoid gaining weight. Some birth control methods, such as depo-provera injections, are also linked to weight gain.

Speak with your doctor about treatment alternatives. Medical research has given us plenty of new drugs to choose from, so chances are good that you can use one which will not stall your weight loss.

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Chapter 14: Your 14 Day Weight Loss Schedule

Ready to get started? Here's a sample 14-day diet plan that will have you shedding pounds FAST! Remember: The more weight you need to lose, the faster your initial weight loss will be. We tend to lose weight at a slower pace as we approach our ideal weight.

Things to Do Before Day 1:

- Shop for groceries, drinking water, and supplies
- Choose a cardio workout plan that sounds fun
- Figure out how many calories you need to consume each day
- Decide if you will start off the diet with a period of fasting
- Take steps to ensure a good night's sleep
- Search for a community of supportive dieters, locally or online
- Rule out medical issues that prevent you from losing weight

Sample Plan, Day 1:

- Start the day with some green tea and plenty of drinking water. Eat some lean protein for breakfast, and do your stress-busting yoga stretches.
- If you're a morning person, do your cardio then. Follow it up with 15 minutes of strength-training exercises, focusing on your arms.
- Eat small meals throughout the day, staying well below your required caloric intake.
- Drink approximately 1 ounce of water for every 2 pounds of body weight.
- Avoid sugary or salty foods.
- In the evening, do a longer session of stretching.

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- Wind down before bed with relaxing activities like reading or taking a warm bath.
- Sleep at least 8 hours.

The next 13 days will be very similar to the first. Continue to put an emphasis on adequate sleep and fluid intake, regular meals, and exercise. Vary your cardio routines, but try to get between 30 and 60 minutes of cardio each day.

Confuse your muscles by focusing on a different muscle group each day during strength training. Start by focusing on your arms with push-ups, chair dips, and pull-ups. The next day, work your legs with squats, wall-sits, and lunges. On day 3, work your core with a variety of sit-ups, crunches, and leg-lifts.

On day 14, you'll be lighter, leaner, healthier and happier. Be sure to reward yourself with a great treat, and get ready for the next 14 days.

Best wishes on your journey!

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Recommended Reading

Cheat Your Way Thin *By Joel Marion*

<http://workoutedge.com/cheatthin>

Joel Marion has been in the fitness industry as a personal trainer, nutritionist and author for nearly 10 years now, and I just know that his “Cheat Your Way Thin” weight loss guide is going to appeal to you.

You see, despite his extensive knowledge and understanding (and high level of fitness), when it comes to dieting for fat loss, Joel is no different than the rest of us.

He has been through the agonizing struggle of cutting all of his favorite foods out of his diet in order to stick to a nutrition and cardio regime... and has experienced the frustration of stepping on the scales 3 weeks later and seeing he has not lost any weight...

...And then the embarrassing frustration of falling off the wagon and giving in to his favorite foods... and the feeling of guilt and failure.

Actually, his failure led him to stumble across a very nifty trick that meant he was able to lose weight by eating his favorite foods.

The catch is, you must strategically eat your favorite foods in order to 'trick' your body.

Joel's accidental discovery has led him to write "Cheat Your Way Thin", a guide to how you can make this 'trick' work wonders for your weight loss.

The "Cheat Your Way Thin" program will protect your metabolism, promote maintenance of calorie-burning lean muscle, ensure lost weight STAYS off, **REQUIRES** you regularly indulge in your favorite foods, and works with everybody.

You can find out more about how it works and get yourself a copy through this link below:

<http://workoutedge.com/cheatthin>

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