



It's your body!

If you've already checked with your doctor or taken an objective inventory of yourself and still desire to lose weight, here are some helpful tips on a simple way to do it:

Check with your doctor, nurse practitioner, or dietitian to determine a realistic goal.

Losing 5 to 10 percent of your total weight is an achievable amount that you will, hopefully, be able to keep off through decreased calorie intake and increased physical activity.

Follow a calorie-reduced, but balanced diet, including all five food groups.

Your body cannot get all the nutrients you need from just one food group. It is not advisable for women to eat less than 1,200 calories per day and men should consume 1,500 or more calories a day.

Change your mindset.

Don't think diet! Diets have been proven to be ineffective over the long run. Look at it as a lifetime lifestyle change – create a plan you can live with for the rest of your life!

Discover some type of physical activity you enjoy, such as walking, dancing, rollerblading, ice skating, bike riding, playing Frisbee, kick boxing, gardening or swimming.

If you don't enjoy the activity, developing a habit of doing it for 30-60 minutes each day will be difficult.



MyPyramid.gov

MyPyramid.gov shows how to eat a balanced diet from a variety of food groups without counting calories or any other nutrients. This eating plan was developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Health and Human Services nutritionists, then reviewed by a panel of health experts.



MyPyramid.gov
STEPS TO A HEALTHIER YOU

The foundation of MyPyramid.gov calls for enjoying 5-10 ounces of grain foods each day, such as bagels, breads, cereals, crackers, pasta and tortillas. At least half of this portion should come from whole grains, which are identified by these words, "whole grain," in the labeled ingredient statement. These foods provide complex carbohydrates for energy, as well as folic acid, several other B vitamins, minerals and fiber.

MyPyramid.gov also recommends eating two-and-one half to three cups of vegetables, two cups of fruit, three cups of milk, yogurt or cheese; and five to six ounces of meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs or nuts each day. Fats and oils should be limited to unsaturated fats.

Don't follow the fad!

Before buying the latest fad diet book, take a closer look at the science behind the claims. You may be putting your health at risk without reaching your weight-loss expectations. See how fad diets stack up against MyPyramid.gov.

Eating Plans: How They Compare

MyPyramid.gov	Sugar Busters!	Enter the Zone	Protein Power	Dr. Bob Arnot's Revolutionary Weight Control Program	South Beach Diet
Premise					
One component of an overall lifestyle that includes nutrition and physical activity, MyPyramid.gov emphasizes the importance of grain Foods and works through all food groups, including fruits and vegetables, meat and protein, dairy foods and sweets/fats.	Recommends eliminating sugar from the diet. The authors claim sugar is toxic to the body, causing the body to release insulin and store excess sugar as body fat.	A throwback to the '60s and '70s high-protein, low-carbohydrate diets, <i>The Zone</i> follows rigid, obscure rules, such as eating in "macronutrient blocks."	A high-protein, low-carbohydrate diet, the book claims the human body has no physical need for carbohydrates; therefore, they should be completely avoided.	The book says foods are drugs: Some foods make you feel good and others make you feel bad. Refined carbohydrates are described as the food equivalent of "crack" and one of the biggest contributors to weight gain.	The theory behind the South Beach Diet is that the faster sugars and starches are digested, the more weight is gained. Comprised of three phases, it begins by banning carbohydrates and allowing normal size portions of meat, poultry, shellfish, vegetables, eggs, and nuts. The second phase reintroduces 'good carbs' (as defined using the glycemic index). The third phase is least restrictive, allowing dieters to eat pretty much anything in moderation.
Author's Background					
USDA and Health and Human Services dietitians and nutritionists developed MyPyramid.gov, and a panel of health experts reviewed the plan.	The authors are a corporate CEO and three medical doctors.	Author Barry Sears has a Ph.D. in biochemistry and no formal nutrition training.	Authors Michael and Mary Eades are medical doctors with no formal nutrition background.	Author Bob Arnot is a medical doctor, but admits he is not a weight-loss specialist.	Author Arthur Agatston is a cardiologist with no formal nutrition background
Dietary Recommendations					
45-65% Carbohydrate 20-35% Fat 15-20% Protein	No firm guidelines, but recommends the diet consist of limited types and amounts of carbohydrates, leaving the rest to protein and fat.	40% Carbohydrate 30% Protein 30% Fat	15-35% Carbohydrate 30-45% Protein 30-50% Fat	55-65% Carbohydrate 20-25% Protein 15-20% Fat	No firm guidelines but recommends limiting carbohydrates to whole grains and fats to unsaturated in phases two and three. Phase one bans all carbohydrates.
Caloric Guidelines					
1,600-2,800; Depends on an individual's gender and activity level.	800-1,200	800-1,200	No caloric guidelines are provided, but warns against letting calories fall below 850-1,000 per day.	No caloric guidelines are provided.	1,400-1,500
Missing Nutrients					
None, if MyPyramid.gov is followed consistently.	Carbohydrates Vitamins Minerals	Vitamins Minerals	Carbohydrates Vitamins Minerals	Vitamins Minerals	Phase one: Vitamins Carbohydrates Minerals
Negative Health Implications					
None, if MyPyramid.gov is followed consistently.	Long-term implications may include kidney and liver damage; short-term implications may include fatigue, weakness and irritability.	In addition to health problems associated with nutrient deficiencies and lack of carbohydrates, the strict format may take the pleasure out of eating. A high protein and unusually high fat diet often leads to coronary heart disease.	The Protein Power diet is very low in carbohydrates and fiber, and extremely high in total fat. The effects of a high-fat diet may include increased risk for coronary heart disease, high cholesterol and other health problems.	This diet may take a psychological toll on its followers. Labeling foods "good" and "bad" may make someone feel like a bad person when they eat a "bad" food.	Potentially dangerous accelerated weight loss and short-term implications that include fatigue, weakness, and irritability. Psychological concerns occur when labeling foods 'good' or 'bad' inferring one is bad when eating bad foods.
Validity					
Scientific studies have proven that the most effective weight-loss program balances a healthful eating plan with regular physical activity. To maintain weight loss, lose no more than one or two pounds a week.	<i>Sugar Busters!</i> is supported by testimonials and anecdotal claims. Its validity is based on opinions, not proven scientific facts.	<i>Enter The Zone</i> has not been validated scientifically and is supported by testimonials and poorly conducted studies.	The authors claim success through testimonial anecdotes and book sales. No scientifically validated studies suggest that the <i>Protein Power</i> diet works.	Arnot's theory lacks supporting scientific studies. The "validation" for his book comes from "my producers at work, scientific colleagues, 100,000 readers of <i>Turning Back the Clock</i> , my wife, children and friends."	Its validity is based on opinions, not proven scientific facts. Weight loss results from decreased caloric consumption not the speed at which sugars and starches are digested.