



## shape up!

**Over half the adults in the UK are putting their health at risk by being overweight. Obesity increases the risk of a number of serious health problems, including diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, back pain, and certain types of cancer. Losing weight isn't easy, but the benefits are enormous – losing just 10% of our body weight can provide real health benefits.**



### Checking for size

We can usually tell just by looking in the mirror if we need to lose weight, but a more accurate way to find out is to measure round our waist.

Waist measurement for	At increased risk	At high risk
European men	94cm (37")	102cm (40")
Asian men	90cm (36")	–
European & Asian women	80cm (32")	88cm (35")

Our weight is determined by the balance between the energy (calories) we take in from food and drink, and the energy we burn during day-to-day activities and exercise.

### Getting the balance right

If we consume more calories than we burn, we store these extra calories as fat. To lose weight we need to use more calories than we consume. We can restrict the number of calories we consume or increase the number we use, but the best way to lose weight is by a combination of both.

The total number of calories needed each day varies with age, weight, gender, activity levels, body composition and the number of calories needed to keep our bodies ticking over. Women need around 2000 calories and men need around

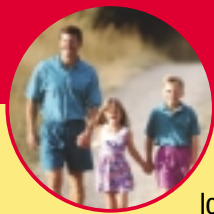
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2500. To lose 0.5kg (1lb) a week we need to reduce our calorie intake by 500 calories a day.

### Getting moving

Exercise burns calories and also helps develop muscle tissue. Muscle uses more calories than fat, so the more muscle we have, the more calories our bodies burn. Small changes to our routine, such as walking up stairs and ignoring lifts, can make a big difference.



### Making lifestyle changes

Keeping weight off is a challenge - most people who lose weight end up regaining it later. The only way we can lose weight safely and permanently is to make long-term changes to our lifestyle.

#### **Be prepared**

Make sure cupboards, fridge and freezer are full of healthy foods, and have plenty of healthy low calorie snacks available.

#### **Eat regularly**

If we skip meals, we are more tempted to snack in between meals and overeat at the next meal. Aim to eat three small- to medium-sized meals a day, plus two or three healthy snacks.

#### **Eat slowly**

It takes 15 minutes for our brains to get the message that our stomachs have had enough to eat. If we eat too quickly, our stomachs fill up before our brains know we're full, and we end up eating too much.

For references please see our website.

### Start with a healthy breakfast

Studies show that people who eat breakfast are more likely to be within the ideal weight range than people who skip breakfast. A bowl of wholegrain cereal with semi-skimmed milk, or a couple of slices of wholemeal toast are an ideal way to start the day.

### Get fruity

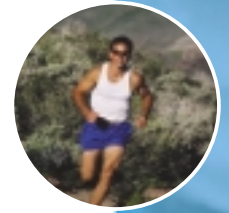
Fruit and vegetables are a dieter's best friend - they are low in calories and fat-free. Aim to eat at least 5 servings a day.

### Fill up with fibre

Fibre-rich foods, such as wholegrain cereals, can help us feel full for longer. They can provide slow-release energy which helps keep blood sugar levels stable.

### Trim the fat

Fat is a dieter's biggest enemy. Weight-for-weight, fat contains twice as many calories as protein or carbohydrate.



Wholegrain Goodness  
[www.wholegraingoodness.co.uk](http://www.wholegraingoodness.co.uk)

British Dietetic Association  
[www.bdaweightwise.com](http://www.bdaweightwise.com)

British Nutrition Foundation  
[www.nutrition.org.uk](http://www.nutrition.org.uk)

Weight Concern  
[www.weightconcern.com](http://www.weightconcern.com)

Topic sheets are free to download from our website.

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