

# Monthly Tip

Still looking for the perfect diet?



Links Psychology  
Your connection to wellbeing

## **Don't let your mind trip you up.**

Worrying about calories, fat and kilojoules in order to control your weight can become difficult and tiresome. Does the "perfect diet" really exist? After all, 95% of diets fail because diets don't work. Why else would people have to keep searching for new ones all of the time?

A healthy lifestyle is not the product of willpower, but more in your approach. When was the last time you truly had fun dieting? Most likely you won't remember it as a pleasurable experience. After all, it doesn't feel so great to be getting hungry for lunch but forcing yourself to wait an extra hour. Do you remember feeling irritable? Did you get a headache or was your stomach growling? False beliefs, irrational thoughts and negative self-talk are far greater enemies than "off limits" foods in maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

The reason diets don't work is because your body needs food for energy, just like a car needs fuel to drive. Your body needs vitamin and nutrient rich foods to keep it running efficiently. That's why it's important to listen to your body and respond to its natural hunger. It will tell you what it needs. And if you don't listen, it will find ways to keep reminding you--like headaches, a growling stomach, and obsessing about food.

The first key to achieving and maintaining a healthy weight, is to curtail negative thoughts and replace these with positive ones. The next time you start to tear yourself down, build yourself back up with a few quick affirmations that work for you. The tendency to evaluate yourself too harshly will only make you give up altogether. "If I can't do it perfectly it's not even worth trying" The pressure you put on yourself to succeed and the self-criticisms that follows when you fall short of your ideal, can have serious emotional ramifications.

Don't beat yourself up when you overeat. Accept that you acted in a self-defeating way and then establish better methods to meet your goals. Most overeating is related to starving yourself or eating as a way of soothing distressed feelings. Start to listen to your body as a way of being able to detect when you are getting hungry. If you are indeed truly hungry, and not just looking for food to cure your boredom, stress, or loneliness, then it is time to refuel.

Recognise when you have had enough. Listen to your body. When you begin to feel full, you will know that you have had enough to eat. The goal is to feel content--not uncomfortable or starving either. Sometimes this means eating 5 or 6 smaller meals a day instead of 3 large meals. And, remember it takes about 20 minutes for your body to realize it's full. Also, be aware of what you are eating--sit, chew slowly, enjoy the tastes, smells, and textures of your food.

Take a sustainable approach to healthy eating and good nutrition. Losing weight at any cost leads to extremes. When you deprive your body of essential nutrients, chances are you'd experience cravings. These cravings are your body's way of helping you get the nutrients it knows you need.