

STEP 2. Eat more fish and healthy, high-performance fats, like extra-virgin olive oil, olives, avocados, nuts, and seeds. “You need both the fat and the protein because they stimulate burning of fat in different ways. The fish protein, the olive oil, and all those other healthy oils help to mobilize the fat in the abdominal area and to keep fatty acid metabolism going so the brain doesn’t slow down fat-burning,” says registered dietitian Susan Kleiner, author of *Power Eating*. When it comes to fats, consume everything in moderation. Too much of a good thing doesn’t help the waistline, so the key is to listen to your hunger signals. In general, fats are higher in calories and help you feel more satiated so you end up eating less.

Kleiner suggests chowing down on fish that are rich in oils — mackerel, herring, sardines, salmon, tuna, halibut, shellfish, black cod, catfish, and some trout. “Those are going to be high sources of omega-3 fats, which are important, as well as protein.”

STEP 3. Count your calories. Sounds daunting, doesn’t it? Well, perhaps, but it works. Take inspiration from Wendy Gross-Pinto. After losing 70 of the 80 pounds she gained during her pregnancy, she knew she needed to do something more than just exercise and eat right if she wanted to lose those last 10. So, she decided to find out exactly how many calories her body needed (or her basal metabolic rate, see Step 1) and eat only that much.

By using Livestrong.com’s Calorie Tracker application on her phone, she was able to keep tabs on how much she ate. Eating by the numbers not only helped her lose those last pounds, but has also helped her keep them off. “It isn’t fun,” she admits, “but it’s worth it if I continue to feel good about my body.”

One of her favorite tactics: Eat an apple 20 minutes before you have a meal. Not only will you satisfy your hunger, but you will also give your body much-needed fiber and important vitamins and minerals. Another bonus: it’s an easy way to get at least three (out of the 5 to 7) recommended servings of fruit daily.

STEP 4. Get a grip on your emotional eating. What’s wrong with an occasional PMS binge on ice cream or stealing a few handfuls from your co-worker’s candy bowl? They can add up. And as a result, so can your weight, according to a 2009 study in the journal *Obesity* that studied 446,608 healthy-weight, overweight, and obese adults. Researchers found that the more of these patterns you have, the heavier you tend to be.

“It’s important not to use food for comfort, and just as important not to use food as a reward when your spirits are up,” says Yvonne Quiñones Syto, a registered dietitian in Stanhope who specializes in diabetes education, weight loss, and weight management. “Find an activity when you’re feeling down to manage your feelings without treating them with food. Step away from the kitchen and deal with the emotions at hand. Set up a routine to counter these feelings. Try walking, running, or yoga to

provide a break as well as the energy to jump back in,” suggests Syto, who is also the author of *Nutrition Map: Your Guide to Eating Healthy in the Real World*.

STEP 5. Get Moving. Benotti points out that the only way we can affect how many calories we use is to exercise regularly. “You can’t really change your basal metabolic rate, but you can change the amount of calories you expend,” he says. Pinto, who practices yoga regularly, agrees and notes that “it’s important to do something you enjoy — and will stick to.” Walking, for example, is a low-impact and effective exercise that anyone can do.

A bonus: Exercise will also build muscle and tone your physique, which could change your perception of your body. If you’re healthy, and feel energized, you might just find yourself happy at the weight you’re at — and, then, maybe you’ll discover that losing those last 10 pounds isn’t as important anymore. *

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