



DR. IAN'S DIET AND EXERCISE TIPS

Dr. Ian offers lots of tips and tactics to succeed with The Challenge. You can find helpful advice in his books (The Fat Smash Diet and Extreme Fat Smash Diet), The Challenge Brochure and at 50millionpounds.com. Here's a starter collection to review and share with others:

Breakfast like a king

The one meal you should never skip is breakfast, yet this is the meal that most people omit. Eating something for breakfast is critical because it gives you the energy you need to start your day and it prevents you from snacking on fattening, unhealthy foods.

Your body needs fuel first thing in the morning to handle the new challenges it will face. Skipping breakfast only increases your hunger and leads to the consumption of larger meals throughout the rest of you the day. Not fueling up in the morning can also slow down your metabolism.

Remember the old proverb: Breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince, dinner like a pauper. Commit to eating smarter, and you will hit your goals!

Fresh is best

Whether it's juice or whole fruit, it's best to eat your foods as fresh as possible. Canned fruit and juices have a lot of additives and sweeteners that pack in unnecessary calories. With fresh fruit you save on some calories and benefit from all of the natural vitamins and other nutrients the food contains.

What food do you think of when you read about "fresh" food? I can't imagine that images of combo meals from your local fast food restaurant enter your mind! Take the time to hit your local grocery store and pick up fresh food. The flavor is better, and your body will respond with the energy it needs to get you through your day. Make smarter choices to take care of your body and you'll see the results.

Watery foods are the way to go

Eating foods that have high water content can be a great way to lose weight. Watery foods allow you to eat as much as or even more than the calorie-rich foods and still get full on fewer calories. Foods that fit the bill include celery, cucumbers, lettuce, tomatoes, and squash.

The smell of BBQs have permeated the air and enticed us to indulge some great food all throughout the summer. Along with BBQs, summer brings an onslaught of fresh fruits and vegetables that need to be included on your plate. Take advantage of these foods while they're in season—the flavor won't disappoint you. And, they are lower in calories, which complements the changes you're making in your diet.

Changing your eating habits doesn't have to be a punishing journey into flavorless meals! Experiment by incorporating some of these watery foods into your recipes, or have them on the side to accompany your meals. Trust me, you'll enjoy it!

Add soup to your menu

The right soups can be your friends. Eating soups that contain chicken, beans and/or vegetables can fill you up, prove a tasty meal and load you up on vitamins and other healthy nutrients. As a general rule, the clearer the soup, the fewer the calories it's likely to have. Avoid adding bacon bits, cheese, crackers, and cream, which all pile on unnecessary calories.

Soups can be great low-calorie meals. Take a moment before you go grocery shopping to think about what soups you can incorporate into your meal plan. The right seasoning will give you a flavorful and healthy meal.

Fiber

Increase your consumption of fiber-rich foods (fruits, vegetables and whole grains). These foods tend to be low in fat and calories. Fiber adds bulk to your diet, making you feel fuller faster and longer. The good thing about fiber is that it can't be digested, so it doesn't add any calories to your diet. High-fiber diets may also help reduce cancer risk and lower your risk of heart disease.

Foods high in fiber include pears and apples with skin, strawberries, oranges, Brussels sprouts, lentils, beans, bran cereals, oatmeal, and peanuts. Be intentional and rotate these foods into your diet, and use some of them for snacks throughout the day. These are the choices that will make a significant difference as you work for results.

Smaller plates, smaller portions

If you're having trouble keeping your portions under control, try this: instead of a large dinner plate, serve your meal on a smaller salad plate and leave a one-inch perimeter around the food—always make sure you can see plenty of plate when you serve anything except salad! Don't go back for seconds. Instead, grab a piece of fruit or low-fat dessert if you're still hungry.

You have the ability to make smart choices—like choosing a smaller plate to help you control portions—that have a great impact the success of your diet. The more you become accustomed to this thought process, the more second nature it will become.

Tips for eating out

Eating out can be treacherous when trying to lose weight. Many of the hidden cooking ingredients are high in calories and the portion sizes tend to be way too large. Instead of eating everything on your plate, divide your food in half before you even start eating. Eat only half of what you've been served and share the rest with a friend or ask the waiter to wrap the other half so that you can take it home.

You've heard me talk about self-control before, let me assure you this discipline is extremely important when you go out to eat. More often than not, you are full when you have eaten half the food on your plate. Train yourself to stop eating when you feel full. It's not a waste to leave excess food on your plate. But, it is a waste to eat past the point of being full.

You gain control of this fight when you can say 'no' to an unhealthy craving. Practice this the next time you go out to eat and develop a habit of not finishing your plate.

Remind yourself of your goal and keep making decisions that get you there!

Eat before the party

Lots of high-calorie temptations await you at parties. Avoid the seduction of those fattening foods by eating a small meal beforehand. When you get to the party, not only will you be less hungry, but if you still have the urge to eat, you can snack on the healthier foods and avoid those that are guaranteed to add inches to your waist. This strategy holds particularly true for those upcoming holiday bashes.

I admit cutting back at parties is a big sacrifice. Making these decisions and creating self-controlled eating habits are the best way for us to lose weight and keep it off. The Challenge requires that we make critical changes to the choices we make. Let's start making the right decisions, and we will build the control and confidence we need to change our lives.

Quick snacks

It helps having the right foods available on a moment's notice. Always keep a healthy snack at your desk or in your bag so that when the urge hits you don't go to the vending machine and load up on sugary snacks that are high in calories and low in nutritional value. Healthy snacks include baby carrots, apples, yogurt, etc.

Eating healthy does not mean that we need to starve ourselves. Our bodies need the nutrients food provides to help get us through our day. The important thing is that we give our bodies the right kinds of food. Be prepared with healthy snacks and you'll notice a difference in your energy levels.

Weaning is a good thing

If you drink a lot of coffee each day, then it's time to think about cutting back on some of that java. Some people can stop cold turkey without any side effects, while others might suffer from withdrawal headaches and mood swings. If you fall into the latter category, slowly wean yourself off the coffee. Try to reduce your daily intake by half every three weeks until you are comfortable with the amount you're drinking. Try not to exceed more than one cup a day.

I know you're probably thinking that you're energy levels will drop without a pot of coffee. The intent of weaning from caffeine is not to punish you, but to redirect you to find the energy you need in food and exercise. You will notice an increase in energy as you change your diet and create more time for walking or working out. So, don't go for the quick fix, commit to the changes that will help you live a healthier life!

Eliminate distractions

Eat as many meals as possible sitting down without being distracted. Don't eat in front of the TV or computer; instead sit down with friends or family and enjoy the meal as well as the company. Eating while doing something else tends to cause you to eat large portions and not truly enjoy the food or company with whom you're sharing the meal.

People who work in offices should try to avoid eating at their desks. It's important to clear your mind and change your environment. If you are eating alone, try reading a good book, newspaper, or magazine. Implementing eating habits like this help keep you aware and in control of your diet, and will lead you to success.

Create a shopping list

Go to the grocery store with a shopping list. This will help you be better organized to purchase only those foods that you need to stick with your eating plan. A prepared list will also help prevent you from impulsively throwing extra foods in your cart that are not on the list and full of unnecessary calories.

Do some research and find tasty recipes that complement your plan. Pick out your favorite healthy snacks and recipes before hitting the store and then buy ingredients that you need to get you through the week. A little time and discipline will go a long way as you work towards your goal.

Increase your metabolism

Eat multiple small meals and help increase your metabolism. It doesn't sound right at first, but eating can actually speed up the metabolism that burns calories. It's called the thermogenic effect of food (TEF) and it simply means that food requires some amount of energy to be digested.

Protein-rich foods tend to have a higher TEF, which means they speed up the metabolism more. So eat smaller, multiple meals and burn more calories than you would by eating the traditional three larger "square" meals per day.

Keep a food journal

Writing down what you eat, how much you eat and when you do your exercise is a great way to keep you on the right track. Jot down the times you feel hungry or tired or irritable just because you want that piece of chocolate. Journaling can be a great tool to keep you honest and expose the bad habits that are interfering with your weight-loss efforts. Don't look at it as a chore, but as a strategy to better understand your habits and a way to make smarter decisions.

Journaling can give you insight into when and why you do certain things or react in certain ways. Think of it in sports terms—journaling is part of what scouts do to learn their opponents and help the coaches devise a strategy to win the game. Similarly, we can learn to control our habits once we better understand ourselves.

The Ancient Greeks lived by the principle "know thyself" to get a handle on themselves and their situations. So I encourage you to journal and "know thyself" as you develop strategies to better your lifestyle.

Exercise

One of the most effective ways to drop weight is to complement your diet plan with a strong exercise plan. It can be as simple as grabbing a friend to go for a walk. Group walks are better than using the phone or email to catch up on what's new with each other and you'll reap the benefits of exercise in the process! Check out all of the resources we've provided for FREE at 50millionpounds.com. They're designed to help you design diet, nutrition and exercise plans that will work for you. Remember, exercise doesn't have to be strenuous, just be creative and find a way keep your body moving.

Set weekly exercise goals

Too often we get bogged down with long-term goals. One of the best ways to succeed on an exercise program is to set weekly goals. There are all kinds of attainable goals you can set: complete four 45-minute workouts, ride 3 miles on a bicycle during 3 different sessions, jog for half of the time you would spend on the treadmill. The idea is to set smaller goals each week so that they will help you build to your larger goals. If you reach your goals for the week, treat yourself to a reward such as a massage or a new top you've been eyeing for your wardrobe.

Be realistic with yourself as you work on your weight loss target. Develop attainable, intermediate goals and build up successes that motivate you to keep going. Encourage yourself and others you know on The Challenge to create a rhythm, and commit to the steps that lead you to your desired results.

The Challenge is extreme, but you wouldn't be in the fight with me if you didn't want it. Keep pushing yourself beyond the normal limits, and trust that you can reach your goal!

Be creative with your exercising

You don't need a membership at the gym to lose weight. Look around and be creative with exercises you can do at home or in the neighborhood. Equipment at the gym, if used appropriately, can help you burn calories quicker. But let's not forget that we're in this fight to establish long-term, healthy lifestyle changes. Not to mention, everyone is not in the financial position to join a gym.

So, what are some additional ways we can incorporate exercise into our lives? Try walking and talking with a friend or co-worker instead of meeting over the phone or at a table. Play with your kids at the park or set up regular pick-up games on the basketball courts. And don't forget about swimming—one of the best exercises there is for burning calories and toning up.

There are all kinds of physical activities you can do throughout the day that will burn calories and keep you on the path to losing weight. Be creative.

Variety is the spice of your exercise life

Don't limit your exercises. Mix up your workout so that you don't get bored with the same routine. Also, switching your exercise routine is important because it keeps your body guessing. When your body grows accustomed to a routine, it's more likely to hold on to the fat and make it more difficult for you to lose weight, because it can do the exercise more efficiently and not require as many calories to burn.

Are any of you frustrated with your favorite football team because you see them try to run the same plays over and over again? The opposing defense reads and stops those plays with little effort since they know what's coming. The same rings true with your body and exercise routines.

Variety can give you the spark you need to overcome stale repetition and help you see results again. So, have fun introducing new exercises. If only your football team would do the same!

Bookend your workouts

When you exercise, you speed up your metabolism. This effect can last up to several hours depending on the intensity and length of your workout. The elevation in metabolism means you're still burning calories after you've finished your exercise. So why not take advantage of this prolonged effect by bookending your workouts? Work out in the morning, and then do another workout in the late afternoon or evening. You'll have instant elevated metabolism through a good portion of the day.

Try to balance your diet plans with a solid exercise routine. The right combination will bring you the best results. Be realistic with your schedule and create exercise routines that stretch your ability. The benefits are worth the work!

Reduce your stress

Don't worry, be happy! That's important when it comes to losing weight. Several studies have shown that stress leads to all types of bad habits, especially when it comes to eating. If you reduce your stress, you have a better chance of being successful on an eating program and losing weight. Try meditating, doing yoga, listening to your favorite music, walking, reading a book or any other activity that helps you relax. Stress reduction is also good for your cardiovascular system, so your heart will thank you as well!

Creating a healthier lifestyle stretches beyond diet and exercise. You have to pay special attention to your mind and soul as well. Make room in your busy schedule and find a moment for yourself. It doesn't have to be a lot of time—you can create an extra 10 to 20 minutes in your day by waking up a little earlier, have lunch on your own or even delay turning on the TV until you've had time to clear your mind.

You can manage your stress. Be intentional and find time to relax, and you'll gain a stronger perspective on what is truly important in your life.

Overcoming plateaus

We all hit plateaus, or moments where it seems as though we're not losing any more weight. Plateaus test our commitment. Healthy lifestyle changes are not easy and require your dedication, so fight against plateaus:

- **Push your scale aside and don't step on it for two weeks.**
- **Add some healthy varieties to your eating plan, your work out routines, and walk regularly.**

Try your scale again after implementing this intensive two-week plan. I believe you can overcome plateaus—fight against them and you will reach your goals!

Depression

It's not unusual to get down on yourself when you're making changes to how you live, especially after your initial excitement fades. I encourage you to face the issue and not ignore it. Take a quiet moment for yourself to think through what's bringing you down, then remind yourself of why you are making these changes. Cling to your hope and not the lies or negativity that might be running through your mind. You WILL reach your goals, but know that managing depression can be part of the process. You might need to seek professional counseling to help you deal with what's really bothering you. Don't be afraid to seek the help that you need. Support is critical and millions have succeeded in getting their mind and body back on the positive track.

Confidence

What slows you down when you're trying get ahead? Each one of us battles to accomplish minor tasks throughout our day, let alone the life-altering decisions that The Challenge requires of us. Take a moment to silence the doubt in your mind, breathe and make a move towards your goal. Trust that each decision you make to live healthier, whether it's big or small, will build your confidence and mental strength.