How to Lose Weight with Calorie Counting in 5 Steps

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So you've toughed it out through diet after diet with seemingly no result. You've reached the point where you have tried everything you can think of to lose weight. You eat healthy. You exercise regularly. You've attempted "fad" diets like the ones you've seen on TV. Short of gastric bypass surgery, you feel like you have no other option.

But there may be one simple diet that you still have not tried. So simple in its design, many people overlook the diet we will be discussing in this report - **Calorie counting**.

Chances are that you have heard the old adage of dieting. Calories in, calories out. That means that in order to lose weight, you have to take in fewer calories than you burn in a single day. Or you can burn more calories through exercise than you gain by eating. Either way will work, but since we are talking diets here, we'll stick with the first description.

Losing weight then turns into a simple numbers game. As long as your caloric intake is less than what you burn each day, you will lose weight. That is really all there is to it. But do not go running off and starving you just to shed a few pounds.

The five step program we will be discussing in this report will help you learn how to eat the right foods at the right times for the rest of your life—so you can lose the weight now and keep it off for good.

After all, losing a huge amount of weight and then putting it right back on gets you nowhere. That's why this diet and all other diets require you to keep up with your dieting and get at least a little bit of exercise at the same time. Then, and only then, will you be able to keep the weight off for years rather than weeks.

Step 1: Know What You're Dealing With

Before we get into the proper practice for counting calories and losing weight, we have to learn what a calorie actually is.

A common misconception is that calories are, by their nature, bad for you. This could not be any further from the truth. Calories are the energy our bodies need to survive. Without taking in any calories (caloric intake), our bodies would shrivel up and die due to lack of energy. After all, our cells need energy to survive and they get that energy from the food we eat, specifically calories.

From a more scientific perspective, calories are a measurable amount of energy. One calorie is the amount of energy needed to raise one gram of water by one degree Celsius in temperature. It is important to note that a food calorie is not the same as a regular calorie. Food calories are actually kilocalories, or one thousand regular calories. Therefore, the amount of energy in one food calorie is actually enough to raise one kilogram of water by one degree Celsius.

Calories are used for everything our bodies do. We expend caloric energy when we walk, run, eat, dance, watch TV, type an email, tap our foot to music, and even when we sleep. There is nothing our bodies do that does not require energy from calories. Like it or not, we need calories to keep on living. It's the amount of calories that we intake each day that has to change if we want to lose weight. But more on that soon.

Every person burns a different amount of calories because of their activities and their genes. People with higher metabolisms burn calories faster, so they can eat more each day and still lose weight. People who have jobs that require a lot of physical activity also burn calories more effectively, so they can eat more and not gain weight either. The problem is that these people are few and far between.

For most of us, we don't have a job that requires a lot of activity, and as we get older, our metabolism slows down, meaning we have to eat less to stay in shape. We are the ones that this five step calorie counting diet is designed for.

Step 2: How Many Calories Do You Need Each Day?

In order to start a diet plan where you lower the amount of calories you eat each day, you need to know how many calories your body burns just doing what you normally do. After all, if you lower your caloric intake to a level that is still above how many calories your body burns, you will still not lose any weight.

To calculate how many calories your body burns on a daily basis, there is a handy formula you should look into. It's known as the Harris-Benedict formula. By using data about how old you are, your sex, your weight, and how active you are each day, the formula can determine the amount of calories you burn on an average day.

This number is known as your Basal Metabolic Rate and is the most important number you can know when trying to lose weight using a diet based on calorie counting. While you could input the data into the formula yourself, there are a couple of easier tools that you should check out.

The first is a chart of discretionary calories. You can find the chart here:

http://ey8xx15imq5271xh533fl5fy.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Discretionary-Calories.pdf

While it provides some good data, it is rough and there are better options out there.

A better, more personalized, option in addition to the above chart is a Basal Metabolic Rate calculator where you enter in your own unique data. These calculators are perfectly safe and easy to use. In about two or three minutes, you'll be well on your way to knowing exactly how many calories your body burns on the average day. Of all of the calorie calculators online, the best is one provided at this website:

http://www.stevenscreek.com/goodies/calories.shtml

It gives a very precise
breakdown of how many calories you burn both during activities and resting. Other good calorie calculators include the one at the Mayo Clinic website

http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/caloriecalculator/NU00598

and one found on the Calorie Count website

https://www.caloriecount.com/

With these tools in hand, you've started down the path to losing weight with a diet based on calorie counting.

Step 3: Choose How Many Calories to Cut and Learn How to Read Labels

Now that you know how many calories your body needs every day, you can determine how many calories you want to cut from your diet. The more you cut, the more you'll lose. But if you cut too much, you will notice a major drop in energy levels and stamina, making it hard just to get through the day.

A healthy calorie driven diet should allow for 250 to 500 calories to be shaved off each day. So if your normal calorie intake is supposed to be 2750, consider lowering that amount to 2500 or 2250 for the best results. Under no circumstances should you cut your calories below 1200 per day, even if your daily calorie needs are very low.

Once you've decided on how many calories you want to eliminate from your diet, you need to learn how to properly read the nutritional labels found on nearly all foods. Known in the United States as the Nutrition Facts label, this is a standardized measure designed to help people learn the various amounts of calories, fats, carbohydrates, and other nutritional content in a given serving size. All boxed and bagged food will have this label and some supermarkets will even post labels for their fruits, vegetables, and meats as well.

There are two important things you should notice on a Nutrition Facts label. The first is the serving size. This tells you exactly how much of the food contains the

amounts of nutritional content specified in the label. The serving size can range from anywhere between a small morsel to the entire box.

The other important point to look at is the amount of calories found in each serving. This is the number you will be using for your daily calorie counting. Your diet hinges on your ability to read that number, add it to your daily total, and keep track of exactly how many calories you eat each day. Remember where the number is located, and look for it on everything that you eat.

But what about food that doesn't even have a label? Many restaurants are embracing people on calorie counting diets, and now publish their nutritional information on their websites. Any time you are considering eating out, make an effort to check the restaurant's website before you go or ask about the nutritional information before you order. Some restaurants even provide brochures detailing the amount of calories and fat in each of their meals.

Step 4: Controlling How Much You Eat

While counting calories is the cornerstone of your diet, it does you no good if you are not keeping the serving size in mind. After all, while you may think that a chocolate bar has only 150 calories, the Nutritional Facts label may only be measuring a serving size that's less than an ounce.

A lot of the food you find at the store will be measured by the slice, by the square, or by some other arbitrary measurement. Foods like bread, sliced deli meat, cheese, and candy are some of the most popular foods that are measured in this way.

For most foods, however, the best way to make sure that you stick with the serving size guidelines is to go to the store and buy a measuring cup. Pour every food you are going to eat in the measuring cup before you take your first bite, and only eat as much as the serving size recommends. You can do this with dried foods like rice or cereal as well as liquids like soda, syrup, jelly, or iced tea.

If you find that the serving size on many of your foods is too small to be measured with a measuring cup, use a teaspoon or tablespoon. Remember that there are three teaspoons to every tablespoon.

The tricky part comes when you eat foods that are measured by weight. For these foods you may need to purchase a kitchen scale so that you may weigh your

foods before eating them. Alternatively, there are charts and graphs available online that can convert many of these serving sizes into a more easily used alternative, such as cups or slices.

Simply taking the time to measure your portions before you eat will quickly help you lose weight and make it easier to total your caloric intake.

Step 5: Tracking Your Daily Caloric Intake

Even the most well planned calorie counting diet is useless unless you actually count your calories. In other words, you're going to have to keep a daily chart of how much you eat.

The best way to keep a running total of your caloric intake is to carry a simple paper and pencil with you everywhere you go. Although, if you have a high end cell phone or PDA, you can always use that to keep track of your numbers as well. The important thing is that you always have some idea of how many calories you've eaten.

At the end of each day, you should total your calories as well as which foods were the worst offenders in terms of large amounts of calories. If you are over the daily limit you set for yourself, see if there are any areas where you could have cut out some calories or eaten less. Chances are that there will always be at least one item you could have lived without.

Furthermore, while it may not directly relate to the amount of calories you eat each day, you may also want to use your calorie chart to determine which foods are healthier for you and which are not. If you drink a soda and eat an apple each day, and you find that you are exceeding your calorie limit, cut the soda and keep the apple.

When it all comes down to it, a calorie counting diet may

seem like a lot of work at first, but the benefits are completely worth it. In about a week, counting calories and measuring serving sizes will seem like second nature.

In fact, you'll probably wonder how you ever lived without it. Taking a few minutes out of your day to keep a count of your calories will easily add years to your life expectancy and make you feel better and healthier in the process.