



WEIGH THE FACTS

How to choose the best STRATEGIES for healthy weight loss

Advertising, myths, and illusions of ease often seduce us into believing the latest promises for easy weight loss. The reality is that weight loss can be challenging, and understanding which diets are healthy and effective can be almost as difficult. As you prepare for weight loss, whether it is your own approach or a commercial plan, it's important to understand the science and strategies behind various methods.

To help you lose weight safely and effectively, consider the following components:

COMPONENTS FOR HEALTHY WEIGHT LOSS		
Components	Choose weight loss strategies that:	Why?
Nutrition	Promote eating from all food groups, emphasizing nutrient dense foods such as fruits, vegetables, and grains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Eating a variety of foods provides needed nutrients and fiber ▶ Eating from all food groups is a more realistic eating pattern to sustain in the long-term
Steady Weight Loss	Promote loss of one to two pounds per week through calorie reduction while maintaining high nutrition standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Severe calorie restriction can produce rapid weight loss at the risk of diminishing health; consequences may include loss of muscle, nausea, fatigue, and gallstones ▶ Severe calorie restriction commonly leads to rapidly gaining the weight back which can lead to a cycle of yo-yo dieting
Evidence of sustained weight loss success	Offer evidence of maintaining weight loss after initial loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Many programs result in short term weight loss but the real success is maintaining it
Level of complexity	Match the level of complexity to the time, energy and resources that are realistic for you	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Optimally, your chosen weight loss strategy or diet is one that you are willing to maintain for long term success
Activity and exercise	Promote increasing activity level or exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Successful weight loss and maintenance are most likely to occur when a healthy diet is combined with exercise

Commercial, prepackaged, and meal replacement weight loss programs that meet the criteria above can lead to success, especially if they provide support and accountability.

Notice that in diet plans added sugars and saturated fats are limited or not part of the plan. This may mean reducing the number of sodas and candy in your diet, as well as, avoiding fried foods. It can be helpful to make substitutions such as drinking low calorie beverages or water and adding fruits and vegetables to meals. Those two changes alone could reduce calories sufficiently to create weight loss.

Ultimately, a successful weight loss plan requires a permanent lifestyle change rather than a quick fix. For more information about [weight management](#), [healthy eating](#), and [active living](#), visit the Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center [Health Promotion and Wellness Department](#). For assistance in nutrition or exercise planning and tracking, visit [ChooseMyPlate Supertracker](#).

