



8 Ways to Lose the Last 10 Pounds

The last few pounds have been scientifically proven to be the hardest. But if you follow this blueprint for success, your scale will start moving again.

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The start of your diet couldn't have gone better — you made smart swaps at meals and revved up your old exercise routine. But now that you have had some success and your [weight-loss goal](#) is in sight, the last few pounds just won't budge, no matter what you do.

Here's the problem: Thanks to a process called adaptive thermogenesis, your body has now learned to function efficiently on fewer calories, meaning that your metabolism has slowed. Studies, including one recently conducted at Laval University in Quebec, have found that when your body loses weight and goes through adaptive thermogenesis, it develops a resistance to fat loss.

But if you're ready to get that scale moving down again, there are little things you can do that will help. Ink these ideas into your master plan.

Cut More Calories for Weight Loss

As hard as cutting calories can be, you may need to trim more from your daily total to get back to weight loss. “The changes you have to make to get those extra 10 pounds off are usually fairly small,” says Brian Quebbemann, MD, founder of the NEW (Nutrition, Exercise, Wellness) Program in Newport Beach, Calif. With this in mind, aim to cut an additional 250 calories from your diet if your doctor says it’s safe. Just be sure to cut calories from treats, such as regular sodas and [refined sugars](#), and not the nutrient-rich foods your body needs.

Increase Your Exercise Intensity

If you don’t have time to work out longer, work out harder instead. While running or walking, up your speed, or try working out on a steeper incline. Take the hills you’ve been avoiding when you’re biking. Another simple way to increase your intensity is to try [interval training](#) by either alternating strength training with cardio exercises, or adding sprints to your typical cardio workout.

“If you eat a little less and exercise a little more, you will break your plateau and eventually those 10 pounds will come off,” says Jackie Newgent, RD, a New York City-based nutritionist, author of *Big Green Cookbook*, and a healthy-cooking instructor at the Institute of Culinary Education.

Lift Weight to Lose Weight

Forget what else you’ve heard: Strength or resistance training is the only true way to [increase your metabolism](#) because muscle burns more calories than fat, even at rest. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, strength training exercise can increase your metabolic rate — the rate at which you burn calories — by about 15 percent. If you add muscle to your body, even if you change nothing else about your diet plan, you will start to lose weight again.

Drink More Water

It seems too simple to be true, but [drinking more water](#) can make a difference, says Heather Bauer, RD, author of *Bread Is the Devil: Win the Weight Loss Battle by Taking Control of Your Diet Demons*. Here’s the logic behind the advice: Often, when you think you’re hungry, you’re really just thirsty. Water fills your stomach and squelches hunger, and drinking up will also help you feel satisfied.

Journal Your Calories

After you've been dieting for a while, you might not be as vigilant about counting every calorie as you were at the start. "When you're not as mindful of what you're eating," Newgent says, "extra calories can sneak back in and derail your weight loss." If you've abandoned your diet journal or diary, get it out of the drawer. If you haven't been using one, start now (or go high-tech and create one online or download [a mobile app](#) if you prefer). Record every bite you eat, and you will be on your way to shedding the last 10 pounds.

Eat More Protein

With the often-relentless talk about filling up on fiber, it's easy to forget about protein. Like fiber, protein helps you stay fuller longer, and when you're not starving between meals, it's easier to stick to your weight-loss plan. "You should include some protein in every meal," Bauer says. [Healthful protein choices](#) include low-fat or nonfat yogurt (especially Greek varieties), low-fat cheese, eggs, beans, fish, and lean meats that are grilled, steamed, baked, broiled, or poached.

Stand Up for Weight Loss

Simply moving more is the key to burning more calories throughout the day. [Stand rather than sit](#) when you're talking on the telephone, watching your kid's soccer game, or waiting at the doctor's office. Take the stairs rather than the elevator. Park farther from the door when you go to the grocery store or the mall. Remember that a change of just a few hundred calories a day — from eating less and moving more — can move the needle on that weight-loss plateau.

Change Your Diet Routine

If your plateau has you feeling discouraged, look for new motivation to get back on track. Experiment with [new and different recipes](#). Try new fruits and vegetables that are in season. Sign up for a new exercise class to push yourself in a different way. Organize a weekend hike with friends instead of your typical gym routine. By making weight loss fun, you'll reach your 10-pound goal and enjoy getting there.

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