

Weight Loss Actions and Tips: Drop a dress size, decrease waist for health benefits

Have you been wondering how Celine Dion, Adele, and Anne Hegerty have achieved so much weight loss? Well, I cannot say for sure how each achieved it. Adele's certainly, as she stated on Instagram, involved some sweat and exercise but I am sure she made some adjustments to what, when and how she ate. A good recommendation whenever trying to make a behaviour change, like eating and exercise habits, is to make one small change today and then make another small change in the not too distant future. This post's goal is to identify those small changes that you can make each day or week.

Below I have set out the weight Loss Action category table with the actions that I make most days, have counselled clients to make and I believe you could make today, and most days going forward, to help reduce excess body fat.

Eating in a structured way		
Action	What To Do	Why does it matter?
Plan all meals for the day in advance (what and when)	Take the time to plan what you will eat over the next 24 hours. Make it quite detailed – when will you eat, what will you cook, will you take something prepared if you're going out? If you know you are eating out, look up their menu in advance and plan your order. Then make sure that you stick to your plan and don't eat more.	A lot of calories are added to our diet from impulsive snacks or poor food choices. Committing to a food plan in the morning, when you are mindful of your goals and not exposed to temptations, can help you eat healthily throughout the day
Eat no more than three times	Make sure that you have no more than three eating occasions throughout the day. You can have a breakfast, lunch and dinner, but no snacks in between or after.	Impulsive snacks can add lots of calories. Cutting out snacks will reduce your daily energy intake.
Skip a meal	Skip either breakfast, lunch or dinner. Make sure you don't compensate for the loss by snacking instead.	By skipping a meal, you are saving a lot of calories, which means your body will use its fat reserves instead
No calories after 8pm	Don't eat any food after 8pm and ensure any drinks you consume after 8pm have zero or very few calories (e.g. tea without sugar, water).	Food and drink consumed in the late evening are often unhealthy and high in calories (e.g. crisps, beer). Cutting out all foods and calorie rich drinks in the evening can help reduce your calorie consumption.
Check the calorie count and macronutrients of everything you want to eat or drink	Use nutrition labels, websites or apps to check the calorie content and macronutrients percentages of foods before you eat. Make sure you consider how the calories (and macronutrients) are presented as they sometimes refer to a portion size or per 100g. Reflect on whether consuming the food or drink is worth the calories (and macronutrients) you're adding to your daily intake. Compare the calorie content with that of similar items and see if there is a lower calorie alternative.	Many people don't know how many calories their foods and snacks contain. You might realise that a lower calorie alternative will be just as satisfying.
Have a "fasting" day with less than 800kcal	Have a day of "fasting" where you consume less than 800kcal. You can find some low-calorie recipes to help you here: https://www.bbc.com/food/collections/intermittent_dieting_recipes https://www.bbc.com/food/diets/low-calorie_diet Make sure you drink at least 2 litres of low-calorie fluids to avoid dehydration. You can use free calorie counting apps, such as MyFitnessPal, to help you keep track.	Eating only 800 calories means cutting out more than half of the calories you consume on a normal day. Your body will have to source half to two-thirds of the energy you need from fat reserves, giving a boost to your weight loss
Keep a diary of what you eat and how you feel	Keep a record of all the foods and drinks you consume throughout the day. Make a note of the time when you consume and also the reason e.g. whether you were craving this kind of food, wanted to reward yourself or were hungry. Write down how you felt after consuming the food or drink. Go through your food diary in the evening and see which foods or drinks you could have avoided.	Keeping a psychological diary will make you think more about how you use food not only to feed yourself but also to provide comfort or reduce boredom. You can then think of other strategies to handle these emotions that do not include food.
Only eat when sitting at a table	Only eat while you are sitting at a table. Don't eat while you're on the go or when working.	When you eat while doing other tasks, it is easy to overeat. Sitting down at a dining table will help you focus on your food and boost feelings of fullness. By committing to only eating while sitting at the table, you will reduce snacking

Avoiding or swapping specific foods		
Action	What To Do	Why does it matter?
Don't eat between meals	Do not eat any snacks between meals. Stick to your three main meals, breakfast, lunch and dinner.	Snacks increase your daily calorie intake. So cutting snacks will reduce the calories you consume
Cut out crisps, biscuits, cakes and sweets	Do not eat any crisps, biscuits, cakes, chocolates and sweets throughout the day.	These foods are very 'energy dense' and contain a lot of calories in every bite, so it's easy to overeat.
Cut out fried food	Do not consume any fried foods today. This includes fries or chips, onion rings, poppadoms, battered fish, etc.	Fried foods contain lots of calories. Cutting them out will reduce your calorie intake.
Cut out carbs	Avoid carbohydrates, including potatoes, rice, pasta, bread, breakfast cereals, beans, and sugary foods such as pastries, cakes, biscuits, confectionery or chocolates. Fruit and dairy are allowed.	Carbohydrates account for around 40% of all the calories we eat. When you cut out carbohydrates, you will tend to reduce your overall energy intake.
Swap rice/potatoes/ pasta for extra vegetables	Avoid rice, potatoes or pasta as a side to your main course. Instead swap them with boiled or steamed vegetables, including broccoli, carrots, or cabbage.	Rice, potatoes and pasta contain far more calories than vegetables. Replacing starchy carbs with vegetables will help you stay full while eating fewer calories.
Use meal replacement products	Try swapping breakfast, lunch and/or dinner for a meal replacement product such as a specially formulated meal bar, shake or soup. You can buy them online or in your local pharmacy. https://www.onnit.com/snacking/ https://lilyandloafinternational.com/collections/fibre https://lilyandloafinternational.com/collections/fibre	Specially formulated bars, shakes or soup shakes contain all the nutrients you need and are usually much lower in calories than a typical meal.
Keep a diary of what you eat and how you feel	Replace all unhealthy snacks with 6-8 nuts.	Nuts are high in protein and fibre which will help you to feel fuller.

Changing what you drink		
Action	What To Do	Why does it matter?
Drink only water or unsweetened coffee or tea	Drink only water, coffee and tea today. Your tea or coffee may include a small amount of milk, but no sugar, honey or syrups.	High-calorie drinks can quickly increase your calorie intake without increasing your sense of fullness. Switching to low calorie drinks will help you lose weight https://lilyandloafinternational.com/products/aloce-vera-juice https://lilyandloafinternational.com/products/liquid-chlorophyll
Swap sugary soft drinks with diet or no sugar versions	Swap your sugary soft drinks for the zero or low-sugar versions. You might have to experiment with different brands to discover your preferred taste.	A typical can of sugary drink contains about 100 calories. Switching to zero or low-sugar versions of soft drinks can help reduce your calorie intake.
Drink a pint of water before each meal	Drink a pint of water before you choose your meal and decide on the portion size.	Drinking a pint of water will help fill up your stomach. That way you will feel less hungry when making meal decisions, helping you to make healthier choices and choose smaller portion sizes.

Creating a healthier diet		
Action	What To Do	Why does it matter?
Snack only on vegetables or nuts	Eat at least five portions of vegetables. Tempted to snack outside of your three main meals? Then snack on vegetables, such as carrots, peppers or celery, or nuts as above.	Vegetables are low in calories so they won't add too many calories to your daily intake.
Eat only foods with a green nutrition label for sugar	Only eat foods with low sugar content (5g or less per 100g). This is often indicated by a green colour-coding for sugars on the nutrition label.	Sugary foods contain a lot of calories. Eating low-sugar foods will reduce your calorie intake.
Make sure half of your main meal of the day is a salad or vegetables	Make sure that half of your main meal of the day –lunch or dinner – consists of boiled or steamed vegetables or a salad. Potatoes do not count as vegetables. Salad dressings should be low fat, such as lemon juice, balsamic vinegar, or yoghurt dressing.	Vegetables provide you with many important nutrients and are low in calories. Salads and steamed or boiled vegetables are a great side to your main meal. They add bulk to a meal so you feel fuller and satisfied
Swap rice/ potatoes/pasta with extra vegetables	Avoid rice, potatoes or pasta. Instead swap for boiled or steamed vegetables, including greens, carrots or swede.	Rice, potatoes and pasta contain far more calories than vegetables. Replacing starchy carbs with vegetables will help you stay full while eating fewer calories

Meal-time tactics		
Action	What To Do	Why does it matter?
Eat slowly or 20 chews per bite	Slow down how quickly you eat. You can achieve this by chewing each bite twenty times, decreasing your chewing speed or putting your cutlery down between bites.	Reducing your eating speed will help you notice feelings of fullness before you have overeaten.
Focus on your food while eating	Have a quiet meal without distractions. Be mindful about eating and your feelings of satisfaction and fullness. Concentrate on the feel of the food in your mouth, the smells, taste, and how your feelings change during the meal.	Being mindful can help you identify feelings of fullness and support you in avoiding overeating.
Stop eating before you feel full	Stop eating before you feel full. Instead look out for the moment when you stop feeling hungry. You can freeze leftovers or keep them in the fridge for another time.	It takes a while for feelings of fullness to set in. Therefore it's easy to overeat.
Use smaller plates and bowls	Use smaller plates or bowls and smaller serving spoons to help with your portion control.	Using smaller crockery and utensils will help you eat smaller portions and reduce your calorie intake.
Cut food into smaller pieces	Cut your food into smaller pieces when eating.	Reducing the bite size will increase the time you need to eat and help your gut hormones increase. These tell your brain you are full, meaning you can feel satisfied before you have overeaten. It will also give you the feeling of aving had a larger meal.
Eat for less than 20 minutes at a time	Don't spend more than 20 minutes eating each meal. Eat at a normal pace. You can freeze your leftovers or keep them in the fridge.	Restricting the time you spend consuming your food will automatically restrict your calorie consumption.

Burn more calories		
Action	What To Do	Why does it matter?
Walk 10,000 steps	Set yourself the goal of walking at least 10,000 steps. You can count your steps using a pedometer or fitness tracker. There are many free apps that have pedometer functionality as well. They record the number of steps you made on your phone.	Walking 10000 steps in one day burns around 500 calories, which helps you lose body fat.
Walk/cycle instead of taking the bus or car.	If going somewhere, cycle or walk some or all of the way to get more active.	Engaging in exercise burns calories and helps you lose body fat.
Go for a walk with your friend(s)	Meet your friends for a walk instead of sitting down somewhere.	You burn more calories while walking than sitting. Sitting down with friends often leads to eating, which you can avoid by making it a walking meeting.
Stand up while working	Stand up while you're working. If your work place does not have a height adjustable desk, try to find a cupboard or cabinet that has a good height to work on. Try to have standing or walking meetings with your colleagues.	You burn more calories standing than sitting.
Take the stairs whenever you can	Always choose the stairs over the lift.	Engaging in exercise burns calories and helps lose body fat. Doing exercise in a group can be especially motivating.
Have an active day with your family or friends	Have an active day with family or friends. For example, go for a hike or play sports such as football, frisbee, or badminton.	Engaging in exercise burns calories and helps lose body fat. Doing exercise in a group can be especially motivating. Doing this together with family or friends makes it more enjoyable.
Stand up while watching TV	Stand up while watching TV.	You burn more calories standing than sitting.