

A hand with light-colored nail polish holds the top handle of a black wire basket. The basket is filled with fresh food: a large loaf of seeded bread, several red tomatoes (some in a white mesh bag), and several yellow potatoes. The background is a soft-focus grey.

Beginner's Guide to Weight Loss

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Welcome!



USING THIS GUIDE

Starting a weight loss journey can be both exciting and overwhelming. My Beginner's Guide to Weight Loss is created to provide practical tips and motivational guidance for those taking their first steps. Whether you're aiming to shed a few pounds, improve your overall well-being, or establish sustainable habits, this guide serves as a roadmap. Enjoy, and please keep me posted on how you're doing!

Rachel.

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The information in this guide is not meant to substitute for any dietary regimen or advice that may have been prescribed by your doctor. As with all dietary programs, you should get your doctor's approval before beginning. If you suspect you have a medical problem, I urge you to seek competent help. Keep in mind that nutritional needs vary from person to person. The information here is intended to help you make informed decisions about your eating and health. This guide is meant to be a guide for your food choices; it does not recommend you eliminate any foods from your diet in its entirety. This guide is also not for those who are under 18 years, or who have specific medical conditions. Read more here: collegenutritionist.com/terms



1. Track what you're eating

In today's world where food is everywhere and is served in huge portions, it's just too easy to overeat. This has nothing to do with your willpower, it's our environment! Tracking calories is a useful tool to help understand portions.

- **Set your calorie goal to lose 1/2 pound/week.** This way you're 1) keeping your metabolism high and 2) able to develop consistent eating habits because you're not feeling restricted. I like the Loselt app best!
- **Equally as important: listen to your hunger & fullness cues.** Do you have calories leftover, but you're not hungry? Stop eating. Are you not hungry for breakfast but it's "breakfast time"? Start eating at lunch instead.



2. Create your meals with protein, fat & fiber

Follow my meal formula, as shown in this image.

- Protein: 4+ oz, 150+ cal
- Fat: 1-2 oz, 100+ cal
- Veggies: 2+ cups
- Starch/fruit: ~100 calories, optional

Meal Formula <i>make your own</i>						
PROTEIN 4+ oz, 150+ cal	 4oz chicken	 4oz ground turkey	 1 sausage	 4oz pork chops	 3/4-1 cup yogurt or cottage cheese	 1/2 cup beans & lentils
	 4oz steak	 1 can tuna or salmon	 4oz salmon & other seafood	 4oz seitan or tofu	 2 eggs	 3/4 cup shelled edamame
FAT 1-2 oz, 100+ cal	 1-2 Tbsp oil	 8-16 olives	 1/2-1 avocado	 1/8-1/4 cup nuts & seeds	 1-2oz cheese	 1-2 Tbsp butter
VEGGIES 2+ cups	 Cauliflower	 Tomato	 Celery	 Zucchini	 Broccoli	 Brussels Sprouts
	 Peppers	 Salad Greens	 Cucumber	 Spinach	 Mushrooms	 Onions
STARCH/FRUIT ~100 calories, optional	 1/4 cup dried fruit	 1 slice bread	 1/2 cup cooked wild rice	 1/2 cup cooked pasta	 1/2 cup cooked steel cut oats	 1/2 cup cooked quinoa, barley
	 1 cup chunks: acorn, butternut squash	 1 medium potato	 1/2 cup beans	 1 hand fruit e.g. apple, banana	 1 cup corn, peas	 1 cup berries

Here are some example meals.



Chicken Cheesesteak Skillet

417 CALORIES

8g Carbs 35g Protein 27g Fat

Fiber 2g | Added Sugar 0g

Ingredients

- 6 oz Chicken thigh, boneless, skinless, raw - 190 calories 🍗
- ¼ Bell pepper, red, medium - 9 calories 🌶️
- ¼ Bell pepper, green, medium - 7 calories 🌶️
- ¼ cup Mushrooms, small, whole or sliced - 4 calories 🍄
- ¼ Onion, yellow, large - 14 calories 🧅
- ½ cup Cheese, shredded, mozzarella - 112 calories 🧀
- 2 tsp Avocado oil (tsp) - 82 calories 🥑
- ½ tsp Red pepper flakes - 0 calories 🌶️
- ½ tsp Garlic salt - 0 calories *

Directions

1. Slice veggies and chicken into thin strips
2. Add oil to a pan
3. Stir fry veggies and chicken, stirring occasionally, about 15 minutes on low-medium heat
4. Mix in seasonings, and top with cheese
5. Let cheese melt ~5 minutes
6. No chicken? Use beans or tofu. No cheese? Use more oil, or top with diced avocado at the end.

Home Meal Planner Coaching Lessons Settings



Big Mac Salad

410 CALORIES

10g Carbs 31g Protein 28g Fat

Fiber 1g | Added Sugar 0g

Ingredients

- 2 cups Leafy greens, lettuce, raw - 10 calories 🌿
- 4 oz Ground beef, 90% lean, raw - 185 calories 🍖
- ¼ cup Cheese, shredded, cheddar - 114 calories 🧀
- 1 oz Pickles, chip-cut - 0 calories *
- ½ cup Tomatoes, grape - 16 calories 🍅
- ¼ Onion, red - 11 calories 🧅
- 1 Tbsp Creamy dressing (e.g. ranch), regular (more than 50 calories per 2 tbsp) - 74 calories 🥗
- ¼ tsp Salt - 0 calories *

Directions

1. Spray a pan with an oil spray. Add in beef & stir fry until no longer pink, ~7 minutes.
2. Combine all ingredients in a bowl.
3. Top with salt & dressing.
4. Note: I'm using a sriracha ranch dressing here, but you can use ranch, 1000 island, or whatever else you like.
5. No beef? Use ground turkey, tofu, or beans. No dairy? Use bacon or avocado, and a vinaigrette.

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Buffalo Chicken Bowl

449 CALORIES

18g Carbs 51g Protein 18g Fat

Fiber 2g | Added Sugar 0g

Ingredients

- 2 cups Leafy greens, lettuce, raw - 10 calories 🌿
- ½ cup Celery stalks, chopped in half - 8 calories 🌿
- 1 Cucumber, small - 32 calories 🥒
- 6 oz Chicken breast, boneless, skinless, raw - 190 calories 🍗
- ¼ cup Cheese, crumbled, blue cheese - 119 calories 🧀
- 1 oz Pickles, chip-cut - 0 calories *
- 2 tsp Buffalo sauce - 10 calories *
- 2 Tbsp Tzatziki sauce - 80 calories 🥒

Directions

1. Spray pan with an oil spray. Cut chicken into bite sized pieces.
2. Cook for ~10 minutes on low-medium heat, or until cooked through.
3. Once cooked, mix with buffalo sauce.
4. Chop celery, cucumbers, and pickles into small pieces.
5. Combine all ingredients and top with tzatziki.
6. No chicken? Use tofu or fish. No dairy? Use oil or vinaigrette instead of tzatziki and blue cheese.
7. Note: Any tzatziki sauce is fine to use, I usually get the Trader Joe's one. If you want to make your own, here's a 7-ingredient recipe:

Home Meal Planner Coaching Lessons Settings



5 Ingredient Taco Skillet

518 CALORIES

34g Carbs 40g Protein 25g Fat

Fiber 12g | Added Sugar 0g

Ingredients

- 4 oz Ground beef, 90% lean, raw - 185 calories 🍖
- ½ cup Beans & legumes, pinto beans, cooked - 123 calories 🍲
- 1 Zucchini, medium - 33 calories 🥒
- ¼ cup Cheese, Mexican, shredded - 114 calories 🧀
- ¼ Avocado, small - 58 calories 🥑
- 1 tsp Taco seasoning - 5 calories *

Directions

1. Spice zucchini into small pieces.
2. Spray a pan with an oil spray.
3. Stir fry ground beef on medium heat until cooked through.
4. Add in zucchini, beans, and seasoning. Stir fry for another ~5 minutes, until zucchini has softened.
5. Top with cheese, and cover your pan with a lid to let the cheese melt.
6. When you're ready to eat, dice avocado and top your meal with it. Enjoy!
7. No meat? Use more beans. No dairy? Use more avocado.

Home Meal Planner Coaching Lessons Settings

3. Exercise in a way that you enjoy

Choose a type of exercise that you 1) enjoy, and 2) doesn't make you extra hungry.

Walking is an excellent option. If you can get 10,000 steps a day, amazing. If you can get 5,000 or 20,000 - that's also good. Get even more toned by wearing wrist or ankle weights, a weighted vest, or a resistance band.

If you don't like walking or can't fit it in, here are some other exercise ideas: yoga, pilates, barre.

What is your realistic exercise plan? What will you do? How often will you do it?



4. Get 7+ hours of sleep

When you haven't slept, your hormones, metabolism, and hunger/fullness cues become dysregulated. When you're tired, you're more often stopping at Dunkin' on the way to work. You don't have the energy to cook dinner, etc. I'm sure you've experienced this - I absolutely still do with 2 little kids.

So stop the doom-scroll on your phone, and get to bed please!

What time will you go to bed? What time will you wake up?



5. Do “Fast Forgiveness”

You will get off track, it's inevitable. You'll pick up Chick-Fil-A for lunch; you'll mindlessly snack on peanut m&ms without realizing it. Life happens.

What makes people successful at weight loss is not whether or not they get off track (we ALL get off track!). What makes people successful at weight loss is how fast they get back on track with their plan. Your day is not ruined when you overeat. It's just part of the journey.

Whenever you get “off track”, do “FAST FORGIVENESS”. Forgive yourself for whatever happened, learn something from the situation, and allow yourself to move on.



Which of these mindset shifts do you like?

These reframes will help you get through inevitable difficult times.

1. Beating myself up over this does not serve me.
2. Consistency matters most for weight loss.
3. Healing my relationship with food is more important than any overeating episodes.
4. I am allowed to move forward without overanalyzing this.
5. I am learning what my body needs, and that is valuable progress.
6. I am not behind, I am not off track.
7. I am not “starting over”—I am simply continuing on.
8. I can choose to learn from this.
9. I can show myself the same kindness I would show a friend.
10. I can take a deep breath and let this go.
11. I deserve nourishment and self-care, not guilt and punishment.
12. I do not have to “make up for” anything—I can simply move on.
13. It’s okay to reflect, but I do not need to dwell.
14. Long-term progress is built on flexibility, not rigidity.
15. My body is resilient and knows what to do.
16. My next choice is always an opportunity to realign with my goals.
17. One moment does not erase all my progress.
18. Overeating is only a big deal if I make it one.
19. Overeating is part of a normal eating experience, not a failure.
20. Overeating will happen, nothing has gone wrong here.
21. Progress is made in the long run, not in a single meal.
22. Punishing myself does not help me in the long term.
23. Restriction after overeating only leads to more restrict-binge cycles.

A Few Best Body Member Testimonials

**33 pounds down +
maintenance!! 🙌🙌**

33 pounds down and been in maintenance for 6 months! I don't think I'll ever end my subscription :)

Love this so much! 💕

I wore a bikini to the beach for the first time in YEARS. I didn't beat myself up, loved what I saw in the mirror / photos. I had a great time 💕

5d Love Reply

**EXCELLENT
bloodwork!! 🙌🙌🙌**

I start Best Body in June '23 before my first set of labs in July '23. I knew I needed change even before the doctor told me. I just didn't know how bad I needed the change until the doctor said diabetes. June to October I lost a little over 30 pounds but here is arguably the most important victory. A1C is normal below 5.7% Fasting glucose is normal under 100. (Still working on it.) I share this to inspire, to let you know that you aren't alone, and that it can be done. I have all of you to thank because you've been nothing short of amazing. Cheers to all of us to nourishing our bodies and being kind to ourselves along the way. 🍷

21 pounds down!! 🙌

Went shopping to get new pants for work for the winter because all my work pants are too big from last year. Consistently grabbed 8 and mediums instead of 12/14 and large/xl.

21 lbs down since march and hope to hit 25 by the end of the year.

4d Love Reply

30 pounds down!! 👗🙌

BB is awesome! I joined for my 60th birthday, and I'm very close to losing 30 lbs! My daughter is getting married in 3 weeks and my dress was ordered last year. It was so big on me it had to be taken in 2 times already! I am so happy at this point of my life. I haven't weighed this weight in a very long time. Thank you so much Rachel and the team!

- Colleen S.

15 pounds down!!

Huzzah! 68% to goal and I'm feeling good physically and mentally.

15

Pounds Gone

Imagine carrying around 15 soccer balls — that's about how much weight you've lost so far.

JOIN BEST BODY

DrRachelPaul.com

Do you want to stop dieting, and permanently lose 5 to 50+ pounds?

included in...

BEST BODY

by DR. RACHEL PAUL PHD, RD.

Personalized Weight-Loss Plan

We'll create a science-based program that works for YOU and your lifestyle.

Dietitian-Created Recipes

Choose from my almost 2000 recipes that help with losing body fat, maintaining muscle mass, managing your blood sugar, and more!

Easy Meal Planning

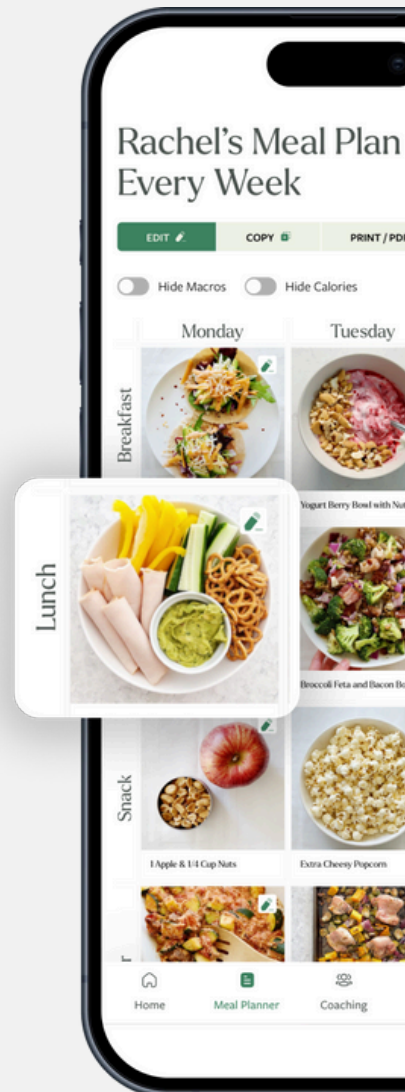
Use my interactive meal planning tool with almost 2000 simple meal, snack, and dessert options.

Weight Loss Coaching

Join 2-4 group calls a week, where my amazing team of coaches and I will help you achieve your goals.

Learn Peace Around Food

Over 70 quick, on-demand trainings on everything from managing cravings, developing consistency, and more.



JOIN BEST BODY

DrRachelPaul.com