



lower-calorie versions like mustard and balsamic vinegar. Both mustard and vinegar add a lot of flavor with very few calories and no fat.

*How to cut the calories:* Instead of a scoop of tuna salad on your greens, opt for dry tuna or a piece of grilled tuna. You're still getting the lean protein but you'll save yourself the unnecessary [saturated fat](#) and calories. You can save up to 200 calories by skipping that mayonnaise-laden salad, which can add up to about 1,400 fewer calories each week.

Also, if you usually order the chicken cutlet sandwich, switching to grilled chicken breast or roast turkey on whole-wheat bread can save you up to 250 calories, or 1,750 calories per week.

## **Snacks**

*Remember to snack.* Snacking is important because it keeps your blood sugar levels stable, increases your metabolism and prevents you from overeating at your next meal. However, in order to lose weight, it is important to choose the right foods to snack on and to exercise portion control. Nonfat yogurt, raw nuts, reduced-fat cheese and fiber crackers are great choices.

*Pack your own "on the go" snacks.* This will help you avoid vending machines, drive-through windows and the bowl of candy in your office. Some easy snacks to keep in your purse, car or desk include raw, unsalted almonds, soy crisps, baby carrots, packets of sugar-free hot cocoa, apples and snack bars (less than 200 calories).

*Pay attention to your hunger signals.* Ask yourself, am I really hungry? Often hunger is confused with thirst, boredom and appetite. Get in touch with what I call your "HQ" (hunger quotient). Think of your hunger on a scale of 1-10, where one is stuffed and 10 is famished. Eat only when you're hungry and aim to stay between a four and six at all times.

*How to cut the calories:* Skip the soda and have seltzer water with a squeeze of fresh lemon. Although it's tempting to go for the 20-oz. soft drink, avoiding it can save you 240 calories, or 1,680 calories per week.

Also, if you tend to go for a bag of Doritos at 4 p.m. when you're feeling sluggish, choose a bag of soy crisps or a nonfat yogurt and an apple for a snack that will boost

your energy, provide you with nutrients and satisfy your hunger. This can save you 160 calories, which will add up to 1,120 calories per week.

## **Dinner**

*When dining out, order a salad and an appetizer as your main entrée.* Most restaurant portions are way too big, making it hard to exercise portion control. If you really want a main entrée, share it or ask for half of it to be wrapped up to take home. Other eating-out tips include: Ask for dressings and sauces on the side, substitute salad or a side of veggies instead of potatoes or rice and avoid the bread basket at all costs.

*When eating in, plate your meal in the kitchen.* By doing this, you're less likely to go for seconds if the serving dishes aren't right in front of you on the table. If you really want to make sure you don't go back for more, pack up the remaining food and store as leftovers before you sit down to eat. (chew gum – clement)

*Avoid mindless eating while cooking.* To avoid picking while preparing dinner, have something that you can munch on that is low in calories, such as a bowl of sliced cucumbers with rice vinegar, sliced bell peppers or celery sticks — this way you keep your mouth busy without sneaking in extra calories.

*How to cut the calories:* Make lean protein and vegetables the main focus of your meal and **go light on the starch**. Instead of a plate of spaghetti with meatballs, go for spaghetti squash with turkey meatballs and save up to 450 calories.

Also, say you're in the mood for Mexican. Instead of going for your usual burrito with cheese, rice, guacamole and sour cream, go for grilled chicken fajitas. Skip the tortillas and choose a small amount of one add-on: **guacamole or sour cream — but not both**. This seamless swap can save you up to 400 calories, or 2,800 calories per week.

## **Dessert**

*When dining out, look for the fruit plate or sorbet.* Or, if you just can't live without your favorite chocolate cake, share it or let yourself have two bites (which is usually around 100 calories). Think about how good you'll feel when you're in your favorite bikini or for the men, 6-pack!!!!

*When dining in, aim for something that is around 100 calories.* Some good options are  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of cereal with skim milk, one Kashi TLC cookie, no-sugar-added pudding,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup low-fat frozen yogurt. Try to choose something that will help satisfy your craving — if it's chocolate you're craving, go for  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. of 70 percent dark chocolate or a fiber cracker with chocolate soy-nut [butter](#). If it's creamy you're seeking, try plain nonfat Greek yogurt with cinnamon or  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup frozen yogurt.

*Shut the kitchen down after dinner.* To avoid grazing after dinner, plan out what you will eat and after you have a portion-controlled amount, turn the lights off and close the kitchen down.

*How to cut the calories:* Instead of a bowl of ice cream, have some homemade banana ice cream (mash a half banana and freeze for 20-30 minutes) or some low-fat frozen yogurt and save yourself 200 calories.

By making a few of these simple changes each day, you can save up to 500 calories, which translates to 1 pound of weight loss per week. By the time bathing suit season arrives, you can be down 12 pounds.

### **Plateau tips**

When you've been following your weight-loss plan and the number on the scale just doesn't seem to be budging, don't panic and give up. Here are some ways to break out of your rut and start losing again:

- Keep a food log of everything you eat and drink. This will help you recognize areas where you might be slipping and will help refocus you. It will also let you know if you're not eating enough — which can slow your metabolism and weight loss.
- Rev up your workouts. Typically it only takes our body a few weeks to get used to certain exercise, thus responding less. Change things up by adding new types of exercise, i.e., try a spinning class or Pilates, add intervals to your cardio routine, and increase weight in your strength training routine.
- Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water. Staying hydrated can actually increase your metabolic rate by as much as 30 percent. When your body is dehydrated, it slows down.