Let’s get started!

Losing weight, and keeping it off, is both an art and a science. First, the science: Simply put, if you consume fewer calories than you burn over a given period of time, you will lose weight. Like any scientific principal, this can be—and has been—successfully repeated by many people. The art of losing weight comes in how you control the consumption of those calories, and how you manage the way you burn them.

Nutrisystem® has mastered this delicate balance, and has helped millions of people lose weight for more than 40 years. This guide will explain the five principles of weight loss, and show you how to put them into practice in your life to help you keep you on track throughout your weight loss journey.

We’ll explain each of the principals—portion control and feeling full, flexibility, support, movement, positive energy—and provide links to great, in-depth articles on our weight loss website, The Leaf. You’ll be able to share the guide with friends and family to create a support network and get others involved in the journey. And by the time you’re through with this guide, you’ll be an expert in how to lose weight, and how to keep it off, the Nutrisystem way.
simple carbohydrates—soda, candy, white bread—increase blood glucose levels, which causes the body to release hormones that store fat as well as signal the brain to eat more.

The key is to eat nutrient-rich foods that don’t cause spikes in glucose levels, foods like vegetables (especially leafy greens), whole grains, lean proteins such as chicken and fish and some fruit. The goal is to never feel “hangry,” that awful sensation when your head hurts and everything gets on your nerves because of low blood sugar.

Ever look at something like a bagel or a muffin, or a cup of soda and say to yourself, “Wow. That’s HUGE!”? It’s no wonder. A recent study published in The Journal of the American Medical Association found that since 1977 portions of most foods consumed both in and out of the home have grown by more than 30 percent: hamburgers have expanded by 23 percent; a plate of Mexican food is 27 percent bigger; the size of a soft drink serving has increased by 52 percent; snacks—potato chips, pretzels or crackers—are 60 percent larger.

“40% of Americans are overweight. We simply eat too much.”

With an increase that profound, it’s no surprise that the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that 40% of Americans are overweight. We simply eat too much. So if you want to lose weight, you need to control the amount of food you eat. But just as important as the amount of food you eat is which foods and how frequently. One of the key drivers of hunger is the glycemic response: the amount of glucose in your blood after eating certain foods. Those rich in simple carbohydrates—soda, candy, white bread—increase blood glucose levels, which causes the body to release hormones that store fat as well as signal the brain to eat more.

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The key is to eat nutrient-rich foods that don’t cause spikes in glucose levels, foods like vegetables (especially leafy greens), whole grains, lean proteins such as chicken and fish and some fruit. The goal is to never feel “hangry,” that awful sensation when your head hurts and everything gets on your nerves because of low blood sugar. By eating these right foods at regular intervals, you’ll feel satisfied, and thus be less likely to binge on snacks or foods that may cause you to want to eat more than you need. It’s simple: eat the proper amounts of the right foods at regular meal and snack times during the day.
STEP 2
FLEXIBILITY

Of course, if eating the proper amounts of the right foods were so easy, America wouldn’t have an obesity epidemic, would it? Let’s face it: the reason we eat snacks and desserts and maybe even too much of healthy foods is that it all tastes so darn good. Our brains are wired to enjoy salty and sugary foods. Our bodies have evolved over the centuries to want to hold onto fat because our ancestors didn’t always know where their next meal was coming from.

“Our brains are wired to enjoy salty and sugary foods.”

Another thing: We live in an age of plenty, where food is relatively cheap and easy to come by. We also live in a highly mobile age, where more and more of our meals are eaten outside the home, on the run, a recipe for weight gain. And most of us are lucky enough to be surrounded by family, friends and co-workers who always seem to be finding something to celebrate, usually with a meal or drinks.

So what’s a dieter to do? Be flexible. Flexibility is the second of the five principals of weight loss, and it’s an absolute must.

Because if you’re not flexible, you’ll fail. Here’s an example: You’ve been great all week, eating your vegetables and regular meals, carrying the right snacks in your bag and feeling full, and the scale reflects your hard work with a lower weight. Friday night comes around and the gang from work is going out to celebrate the end of the week. You go to a bar, drinks are poured and appetizers are ordered. You think, One glass of light beer won’t kill me. Neither will a few chicken wings. And you’re right. They won’t. But the next time you step on the scale your weight is up a pound. So you vow: no more after-work parties.

“So what’s a dieter to do? Be flexible.”

Don’t do it. Keep going to the parties, and out to dinner with friends. But be prepared. Drink seltzer or flavored water instead of beer, and order a plate of raw vegetables with hummus instead of wings or mozzarella sticks. When dining with friends, order a salad and skip the apps. This flexibility will keep you on track.
We’re not going to kid you: it’s not always a breeze being on a weight loss plan. Weight comes off easily for most people at the start of most programs, but at a certain point those dramatic drops in your weight—signified by declining numbers on the scale—become less dramatic. And every once in a while, they may even stay the same. For most of us, the path to weight loss isn’t a straight line. It has twists and turns and ups and downs. The overall result, we hope, is all for the good, but it’s important to know that there will be challenges. And it’s equally important to know that through it all, it’s vital to remain positive.

“Small wins are all around you.”

Another way to stay positive: remind yourself of what you’re doing and why. Think about what happens when you reach your goal—and you will reach your goal. How will you feel about yourself?

Will your restored health mean something to the people around you? People who lose weight typically report newfound feelings of empowerment, more self-confidence and a greater sense of peace. That’s all headed your way as you work toward your goal. Don’t let yourself lose sight of that.
Remember the equation we mentioned earlier on, about burning more calories than you consume? The burning of calories is an important part of weight loss. Now, that’s not to say that you need to lace up your running shoes and start doing marathons or sign up for marathon indoor cycling sessions. But by starting to incorporate some regular forms of movement into your daily routine, you’ll achieve two things: you’ll speed up your metabolism, which in turn will help you burn more calories, and you’ll gain some of the well-documented health benefits of exercise: lower blood pressure, better mood, reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, increased libido… the list goes on.

Don’t think of it as exercise. It’s an opportunity to take time for yourself or share part of the day with a good friend—having a partner has been shown to help people stick with movement programs. And we’re not talking about hardcore stuff either. Simply walking around the neighborhood is great, as is gentle stretching and yoga. If you want to challenge yourself, head to the local gym or community center and take a class: indoor cycling is fun, as are dance classes and anything in the pool.

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We suggest you aim for 30 minutes of movement a day. That can be one continuous session, or three ten-minute sessions. A brisk walk around your office building counts, as does walking up and down the stairs. You can stretch at your desk, too. Just remember to aim for 30 minutes, and to make it as fun as possible.
One thing is for sure when it comes to weight loss: it’s way more fun, and much more likely to stick, if you have a support network to help you along the way. Why? Remember back when we talked about going out to a bar after work with your co-workers? Well, imagine if they all were aware of your desire to lose weight and wanted to help you. All of a sudden, you have a group behind you, cheering you on, answering questions and solving problems. With a team behind you, you’ll feel like there’s nothing you can’t do.

A support network is there to catch you when you fall and make sure you get back up on your feet again. They celebrate those small victories we talked about, and revel in the big gains you make. They can talk you down when all you want to do is eat a bucket of movie popcorn, and before you know it you’re having some blueberries and celery sticks instead. On a cold morning, when you know you should go for a walk to get your 30 minutes but would much rather stay inside and have another cup of coffee, the thought that someone is waiting for you will get you up, dressed and out the door.

When you choose to lose weight with Nutrisystem, we provide you with a team of supportive nutrition counselors who will give you the support and motivation you need.

“With a team behind you, you’ll feel like there’s nothing you can’t do.”

Nutrisystem has online and on-the-phone counselors who can answer your questions and talk you through the tough spots. Many of our counselors have used the Nutrisystem® program to maintain a healthy weight and know exactly what you’re going through. People who have lost weight often make the best support network members. So build that network. Because you are not alone.
**EGGPLANT FRIES**

*Number of Servings: 4*

A healthy alternative to French fries, eggplant fries are simple to make and healthy to eat. On Nutrisystem, 1 serving counts as 2 vegetable servings.

**INGREDIENTS:**
- 2–3 medium sized eggplant
- Zero calorie cooking spray
- 1 Tbsp curry powder
- 1 pinch cumin powder

**DIRECTIONS:**
1. Heat oven to 375 degrees.
2. Slice eggplant into long, thin fry-like strips.
3. Spray fries with cooking spray, toss them in spices.
4. Spread on baking sheet.
5. Bake for about 25 minutes or until tender.
   (check every 10 minutes or so to be sure they don’t burn)

Want to watch the video?

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**PARTY-PERFECT PICO DE GALLO**

*Number of Servings: 4*

Featuring fresh veggies and herbs, this guilt-free Mexican staple pairs perfectly with chicken and beef dishes for a delicious, spicy side dish. *This dish is unlimited on Nutrisystem.*

**INGREDIENTS:**
- 4 medium tomatoes, chopped
- ¼ cup white onion, diced
- 2 jalapeño peppers, seeded and minced
- 2 Tbsp green bell pepper, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ¼ cup cilantro leaves, chopped
- 2 Tbsp fresh lime juice
- Dash of salt and pepper

**DIRECTIONS:**

Combine all ingredients, mix well and refrigerate for at least an hour before serving.
**CILANTRO LIME CAULIFLOWER “RICE”**

Number of Servings: 4

You’ll love this healthy take on a calorie-dense dish, which swaps rice for cauliflower. Enjoy it on its own, or as a side to a grilled chicken breast. *This dish is unlimited on Nutrisystem.*

**INGREDIENTS:**
- 1 small head of cauliflower
- 1 Tbsp no-calorie cooking spray
- 1 lime, juice and zest
- ¼ cup cilantro, minced

**DIRECTIONS:**
1. Create cauliflower rice by grating florets on the large holes of a cheese grater, or adding them to a food processor.
2. Spray a large pan with cooking spray and bring to medium to high heat. Add cauliflower rice, stirring occasionally. Cook until rice is tender and golden in color (about 10 minutes).
3. Add lime juice, zest and cilantro until well-mixed (3-5 minutes). Remove and let cool before serving.

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**PINEAPPLE CHICKEN KABOBS**

Number of Servings: 2

There’s nothing quite like grilled pineapple. This delicious meal pumps up the flavor factor of chicken using pineapple, barbeque sauce and tasty seasonal veggies. *This dish counts as 1 vegetable, 2 PowerFuels, 1 SmartCarb and 2 Limited Extras on Nutrisystem.*

**INGREDIENTS:**
- 1 green bell pepper, cut into 1-inch pieces
- ½ onion, cut into 1-inch pieces
- ½ lb. lean skinless, boneless chicken breast halves, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 2 cups pineapple chunks
- ¼ cup barbeque sauce
- 6 skewers

**DIRECTIONS:**
1. Add green bell pepper, onion, chicken and pineapple to skewers
2. Brush vegetables with barbeque sauce
3. Cook skewers on grill on medium-high heat until chicken is no longer pink in the center (about 8 minutes on each side).
**Grilled Chicken and Summer Peach Salad**

Number of Servings: 4

Grilled peaches are the flavor star in this scrumptious summer salad that includes a simple, tangy dressing that counts as 1 SmartCarb, 1 PowerFuel, 1 Vegetable, and 3 Limited Extras on Nutrisystem.

**Ingredients:**
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 Tbsp white balsamic vinegar
- 2 Tsp honey
- Pinch of salt and pepper (to taste)
- 2 medium peaches, cut in half, pits removed
- 4 oz. lean, skinless, boneless chicken breasts
- 2 cups arugula

**Directions:**
1. Preheat grill on medium-high heat and lightly oil grate
2. In a small bowl, whisk together oil and white balsamic vinegar. Stir in honey and add salt and pepper to taste. Set aside
3. Spray peaches lightly with cooking spray
4. Place peaches, cut-side down, onto grill and cook until heated through (about 4 minutes) then remove
5. Spray chicken breasts lightly with cooking spray
6. Cook chicken on grill until no longer pink in the center (about 4 minutes per side)
7. Slice chicken into thin strips and cut peaches into ½-inch thick pieces.
8. Toss half the arugula and half the dressing together in a bowl.
9. Place dressed arugula on plate, top with half peaches and half chicken.

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**Chicken Pita Pocket**

Number of Servings: 1

This super simple recipe, which includes veggies, whole grains and lean protein, makes for a tasty meal at home or on the go. On Nutrisystem, this delicious dish counts as 1 vegetable, 2 Powerfuels, 1 SmartCarb and 2 Limited Extras.

**Ingredients:**
- ½ cup chopped baby spinach
- 4 oz cooked skinless, boneless chicken
- ½ cup sliced red bell pepper
- 2 Tbsp low-fat Italian vinaigrette
- 1 (6-inch) whole-grain pita, cut in half

**Directions:**
1. Combine spinach, chicken, bell pepper and dressing
2. Serve in pita halves
LIGHTENED UP CHICKEN SALAD WRAPS

Number of Servings: 1

A slimmed down take on a seasonal staple, this is a delicious dish perfect for sharing. On Nutrisystem, this tasty meal counts as 1 vegetable, 1 SmartCarb and 2 PowerFuels.

INGREDIENTS:
- 2 large romaine lettuce leaves
- 1 Tbsp dried cranberries
- 2 medium celery stalks, diced
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- ½ medium apple diced
- ½ cup red grapes, halved
- 3 oz. cooked chicken
- ½ cup nonfat Greek yogurt

DIRECTIONS:
1. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl
2. Serve atop lettuce leaves

SMOOTHIES

CHOCOLATE PEANUT BUTTER BANANA SMOOTHIE

Number of Servings: 1

This deliciously easy treat will curb your craving for something sweet. On Nutrisystem, this recipe counts as 1 SmartCarb and 1 PowerFuel.

INGREDIENTS:
- 1 Nutrisystem Creamy Chocolate Shake Mix
- 1 Tbsp. reduced-fat peanut butter
- 1 medium frozen banana, cut into chunks
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup ice

DIRECTIONS:
Place all ingredients in a blender and mix until smooth.

PINEAPPLE MANGO SMOOTHIE

Number of Servings: 1

Fresh and fruit, you can enjoy this smoothie anytime. On Nutrisystem, this recipe counts as 1 SmartCarb and 1 PowerFuel.

INGREDIENTS:
- 1 cup water
- ½ cup frozen pineapple
- 1 pkg Nutrisystem Vanilla Protein Drink Mix
- ½ cup frozen mango

DIRECTIONS:
Add all of the ingredients to a blender and blend until smooth.
WANT TO LEARN MORE?
Check out these great articles on weight loss to get the facts and inspiration you need to reach your goals!

4 Easy Ways to Lose Weight This Week
https://weightloss.nutrisystem.com/4-easy-ways-to-lose-weight-this-week/

Diet, Not Exercise, is the Key to Weight Loss
https://weightloss.nutrisystem.com/diet-not-exercise-is-the-key-to-weight-loss-2/

10 Reasons to Battle Belly Fat, and How To Do It
https://weightloss.nutrisystem.com/10-reasons-to-battle-belly-fat-and-how-to-do-it/

5 Tips for a Diet Friendly Fridge
https://weightloss.nutrisystem.com/5-tips-for-a-diet-friendly-fridge/

6 Diet Rules You Should Break Right Now
https://weightloss.nutrisystem.com/6-diet-rules-you-should-break-right-now/

5 Point Restaurant Survival Guide
https://weightloss.nutrisystem.com/5-point-restaurant-survival-guide/

10 Snacks Under 200 Calories
https://weightloss.nutrisystem.com/10-snacks-under-200-calories/

5 Ways to Lighten Up Your Latte
https://weightloss.nutrisystem.com/5-ways-to-lighten-up-your-latte/

How Well Do You Know Your Fast Food Facts?
https://weightloss.nutrisystem.com/how-well-do-you-know-your-fast-food-facts/

Yes, You Can Watch Football and Not Gain Weight

5 Healthy Sounding Foods to Beware
https://weightloss.nutrisystem.com/5-healthy-sounding-foods-to-beware/

5 Healthy Habits That May Be Slowing Your Weight Loss
https://weightloss.nutrisystem.com/5-healthy-habits-that-may-be-slowing-your-weight-loss/

How to Make Your Sandwich Healthier
https://weightloss.nutrisystem.com/how-to-make-your-sandwich-healthier/

7 Snacks to Beat the Afternoon Slump
https://weightloss.nutrisystem.com/7-snacks-to-beat-the-afternoon-slump/

6 Places In the Supermarket that Ruin Your Weight Loss Program
https://weightloss.nutrisystem.com/6-places-in-the-supermarket-that-ruin-your-weight-loss-program/

10 Foods You Must Have In Your Diet
https://weightloss.nutrisystem.com/10-foods-you-must-have-in-your-diet/