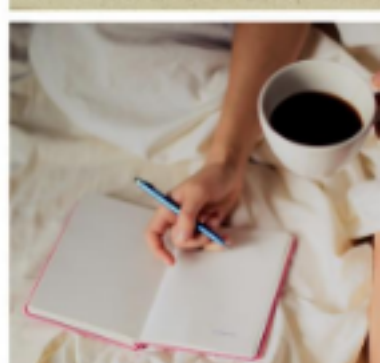
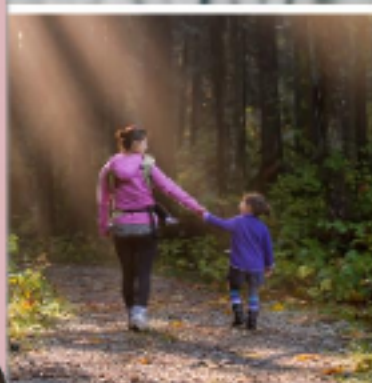


the 31 small habits to lose weight & KEEP IT OFF



MARIA BRILAKI, MSc

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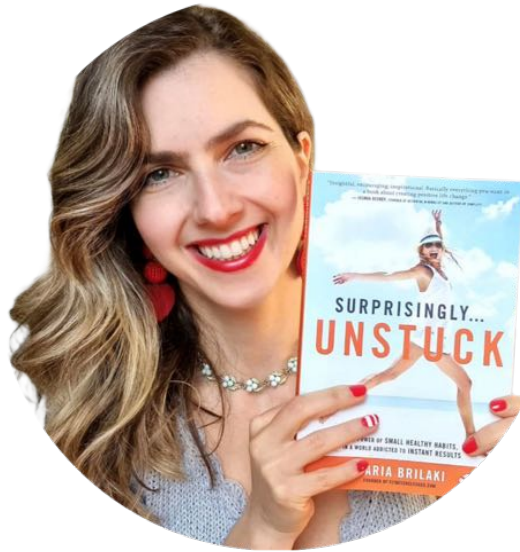
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31 Small Habit Ideas to Lose Weight & Keep It Off

Hello dear reader, I am Maria Brilaki, MSc, best-selling author of [“Surprisingly...Unstuck: The Power of Small Healthy Habits In A World Addicted To Instant Results”](#), and today we will be walking you through 31 small habits that you could start today to lose weight and then keep it off for the rest of your life.

These healthy habits are the ones that my clients do in the Fitness Reloaded [Weight Loss Habits Academy](#) to lose weight, increase their physical activity, eat better, increase motivation, and design a healthy lifestyle according to their goals, needs, and starting point.

What We'll Cover



I'll start by first walking you through what habits are. Then, we will discuss the differences between big habits and small habits. Finally, I'll walk you through the 31 small habit ideas broken by their respective habits category: calories, planning, nutrition, exercise, meal structure, mindset, routine B.

Those 31 habits are only a fraction of the habits we address in the Academy. That said, these 31 small habit ideas provide a solid jumpstart and I'm sure you'll find at least a few that you would like to work on and build up.

I'd like you to know, though, that it doesn't mean you have to do all 31 habits. In fact, in the Academy, we do ten or less – usually six. Now let's get started!

What is a habit?

A habit is an unconscious pattern of behavior. It's something you do automatically that you don't have to think about, or at the very least, that you do semi-automatically.

For example, every time when I open a door, I use my right hand, not my left. That is a habit. Just like after I wake up in the morning, I go straight to the bathroom. It's a habit because I don't think about going to the bathroom, I just find myself there -- every, single, morning.

Habits are powerful with weight loss because if you turn the right behaviors into a habit, you will do the right things without thinking about them. That way, you don't have to, say, force yourself to exercise, you just go ahead and do it.

Imagine: you just wake up in the morning and put your workout clothes on, no debating it! Then you go ahead to work out, simply because working out in the morning is your second nature.

The habit mechanism is powerful when it comes to bad habits. If the harmful behaviors are wired into habits, then those will be the behaviors that you do without thinking! So that's how you find yourself, say, eating chocolate to "reward" yourself for a difficult day, assuming that's a current habit of yours.

Ridiculously Small Habits vs Radical Change

This is something I covered in-depth in my best-selling book, [Surprisingly Unstuck: The Power of Small Healthy Habits in a World Addicted to Instant Results](#).

What is a ridiculously small (or micro) habit?

A ridiculously small behavior is one that is so small that it brings zero resistance. For example, wanting to eat more vegetables and starting out with eating one bite of a carrot for lunch. Or you be meaning to start doing more strength exercise and starting out with a mini habit as small as two squats a day. In fact, this is what we do in my Habit Blueprint program, where we create the exercise habit from scratch.

Starting small is powerful for habit formation because there is no resistance against the behavior. You can't tell yourself not to do it because it's really that small! If anything, the only problem is you forgetting to do it.

However, for ridiculously small habits, you need a good trigger, so that the habit loop can do its work to wire the behavior as a new habit you do automatically.

You might say, 'This is too small! What's the point of doing something so small?'

Well, the point is there is no resistance. Because there's no resistance, you follow through with your goal. And as you follow through while practicing positive thinking, your brain starts learning the habit, and then you find yourself wanting to do it. Furthermore, because you're doing it now, and it feels so easy, you now want to not stop and keep on doing it. In essence, the micro habit creates a domino effect of small wins. That's the power of ridiculously small habits.

Big habits are radical change.



This is like, 'oh, to lose weight, I'm going to start eating twelve hundred calories a day and I'm going to start exercising 5 hours a week!'

It is also you saying you'd eat two plates of salad every day when you used to eat none. It's even you wanting to start 30 min walks (when you used to do no walks for zero minutes.)

Even if it sounds doable, the truth is that this "30 min a few times a week" goal represents a significant change on your end. When motivation eventually subsides, you will start feeling the resistance and

the new habit that was once exciting might now feel like a chore. Unless this type of radical change is really inspiring and you feel pulled towards it, it can be difficult for your brain to wire it as a habit. This is why radical change and big goals have a higher failure rate when it comes to turning them into sustainable behaviors.

When is a habit a small habit?

Somewhere in-between ridiculously small habits and radical change we have small habits.

If there are two squats a day in the ridiculously small category and there are 5 hours of exercise every week in the radical change, a small habit would be going for a ten-minute walk. Yes, that's a small habit: it is achievable and you can start doing it straight away.

Small habits are not overwhelming like radical change. They're less sexy and sound less impressive.

But they also don't have the "ridiculous" factor that micro habits do. They don't sound like they're way too small, which might help you if you have inner judgement and criticize yourself for doing something that is "too small." At the same time, unlike micro habits, they're not resistance-free.

Precisely because they're not resistance free, you'd still need to think about them. You'd need to plan them. They will not happen on their own, and you will not "just do it" like you would with the ridiculously small habit.

Big habits, small habits, or micro habits: it's relative

Ultimately whether a new habit is big or small has to do with your starting point. If you're already going for a 30 min walk every day, then extending from 30 min to 35 minutes might feel like a micro habit for you. While those same 5 minutes might have been a small habit for someone who does not exercise at all.

How many habits are too many to create at the same time?

In the Academy, we don't do more than ten habits at a time, because that can be overwhelming. Even though we always aim for small habits and by small, I don't mean habits have to necessarily be "small." New habits should represent the next logical step from where you currently are.

When you're just starting with a new behavior, those new habits will be small habits indeed. But as you grow those habits, every incremental step will be a small change compared to your previous point.

The new habit you're starting should ideally be a small change based on your current level. Nonetheless, six or maybe seven at best is the average for healthy eating. That said, they need focus and will not happen on their own. This is why we have a [habit diary](#) that we track. Among other things, we also meet once a week because they will just not happen on their own.

When do you stop tracking your habits?

You stop tracking your habits when it has become a behavior that is almost automatic for you. So if it's something you just do, then you no longer need to track it. If every day when you wake up in the morning you take your walk and you no longer need to think about it because it is just something you do, it has become second nature for you. You no longer need to track it.

Let me now get started with the different categories of habits.

The 31 Small Habits To Lose Weight

Habits Category: Calories

We really care about this category because unless you're on a calorie deficit, meaning you're consuming fewer calories than your body needs for maintenance, then you will not be losing any fat.

If you are to reach your weight loss goal, you need to have a calorie deficit, period, this is science. There's no other way around it. The habit will be to be at a comfortable calorie deficit. You need to be in a deficit to be losing fat, but it has to feel comfortable for you. But if it feels like it's too uncomfortable, then you go into a radical change. That's because it is no longer a small habit.

The healthier your habits, the more you can sustain a higher calorie deficit without it feeling hard.



For instance, if you already eat plenty of vegetables, exercise, meal plan, cook at home, etc., it will be easier for you to decrease your calorie intake without feeling hungry. You will even have more calories to start with because of your higher activity level. So for you, it will be easier to go on a higher calorie deficit, compared to someone who is starting with more unhealthy habits.

This is why the calorie deficit that you choose should go hand-in-hand with a strategy regarding the habits that affect your weight.

1. Do NOT drop your calories at 1300, or 1200, or lower!

I see this mistake all the time! Women think they should be eating 1300 calories a day to lose fat.

Your weight loss calories depend on your starting weight, your starting maintenance calories, on your pre-existing habits, and on your goals.

And for most women, 1300 cal or lower is way low, completely unnecessary, and it will eventually slow you down because you'll get tired of dieting faster and want to quit.

If you want help with getting a calorie deficit, I have a [video](#) where I talked about my [calorie calculator](#). Watch it so you know how to calculate your calories.



However, it's really important to pick a [calorie deficit](#) that makes sense to you. You don't necessarily have to pick the one that you think will get you to your goal the fastest, because that's a radical change.

2. Choose a calorie deficit that is not too slow

You need to pace yourself and be patient if you want to win. But at the same time, you don't want to be too slow, because being too slow can be very demotivating. You'll be weighing yourself week after week and not being to see any real difference on the scale.

Think about it: If your calorie deficit supports losing 0.3 of a pound every week, then you'll need 3-4 weeks to lose a pound of fat. While that is definitely better than nothing, you won't be able to tell at the end of the month if you really lost any weight, especially given that water weight fluctuations mask results on the scale.

This is totally OK to do if you're consciously choosing to go slow. But if you end on a really small deficit, without realizing it, because you maybe underestimate what

you're eating or overestimating your exercise, you'll likely to get disappointed.

Gained 3 lbs OVERNIGHT: Fat or Water Weight?



You step on the scale and get shocked! What happened? Let's do the math...

- 1 **To gain 3 lbs of fat, you'd have to be on a (roughly) 10,500 cal surplus.** If, say, you're maintaining at 2000 cal, you'd have to eat 12500 cal the previous day.
- 2 **You'd have to eat 6 days worth of food in a single day to actually gain 3 lbs of fat.** Because it normally takes you 6 days to consume 12500 cal!
- 3 **Is it possible you ate 6 days worth of food?** That is highly unlikely. Can your stomach even fit it? (don't take this as a personal challenge to find out!)
- 4 **So it's water weight, but maybe it's still possible that a small percentage of those 3 lbs is actually fat? Let's analyze it...**

For every 500 cal you're on a surplus or deficit you're roughly adding or losing a grand total of 0.14 lbs of fat! So for example, an avg fat loss pace for someone who is aiming to lose 1 lb a week would be 0.14 lbs of fat daily.

So even if you had a big meal that put you 1000 cal above maintenance, that's roughly equivalent to 0.28 lbs of fat. So if the scale says you're up 3 lbs, then 90% of this weight gain is simply water fluctuations.

This is a simplistic overview of what's going on in our bodies but ultimately it all comes down to *Calories In - Calories Out*.

Why do you get these water fluctuations? Discover the 9 reasons at [FitnessReloaded.com/water-weight/](https://www.fitnessreloaded.com/water-weight/)



That's why you need a calorie deficit that's not too fast and not too slow. Whatever that's going to be is a personal choice. Please use the calorie calculator to help make a decision about the best calorie deficit for you.

3. Track your food before you eat it, not after



If you are tracking your food, irrespective of whether you're simply writing down what you eat vs actually calorie counting, add what you eat *before* you eat it on your diary or tracker, not after.

For example, if you're using the *myFitnessPal* app and you're about to have a meal, put that meal on *myFitnessPal* before you actually go ahead and eat it.

Don't fall into the thinking of "eat it now, write it down later." A major benefit of tracking or journaling your food is making better decisions: Do you want to put in 200 calories eating this pastry or do you want to save them so that you have extra calories to drink wine and have a piece of chocolate after dinner?

The goal is to make optimized decisions so that you keep your stomach content and your brain happy with your choices.

And that is why at the very least, you want to eat more satisfying food and know how many calories you have left for the day, and then based on that amount, make the best decisions for your weight loss success.

Do I really want to, let's say, eat those crackers right now, or would I rather have more calories so I can have, let's say, a bigger dinner? Do I really want to spend some calories having this glass of wine right now? Or would I rather keep my calories and lose weight a little faster or just use those calories another day?

Also: you want to be honest with yourself about what it is you're eating. You don't want to go ahead and eat and then calculate your calories, then be like, 'oh, no, now I'm on a calorie surplus today,' or 'oh, I didn't meet my deficit because I didn't know what I was eating.' That will just slow you down, demotivate, and frustrate you.

So if you're food journaling, or tracking your meals on an app, remember to do it before you eat, not after.

Habits Category: Planning & Organization



Planning is a family of habits many of us don't really think about when it comes to weight loss. We tend to think about weight loss as simply eating and exercising. We don't think about planning, yet weight loss is a matter of focus.

In fact, 80% of weight loss success is planning and organization! The people who are the most organized will lose more weight.

By being an organized person and planning what to eat ahead of time, you will avoid last-minute emotional decisions that feed unhealthy eating habits, decrease stress over what to eat, and see a huge difference in your outcomes.

4. Planning ahead for the day after (in under 10 minutes)

One of the habits that you could be starting today is to plan what you're going to eat the next day.

I actually have a course that centers right around that. It's the [Meal Planning Habit Formula](#). Right now, it's free to join, so take advantage of that.

It will walk you through how to make daily planning a habit, so that you focus on what you're going to eat the next day. It will encourage you think about the things you don't already know. Like, 'okay, I know what I'm going to have for lunch and I know what I'm going to have for breakfast, but I don't really know what I'm going to have for dinner. What am I going to have for dinner? Maybe I could make this. Maybe I could make this other thing.'

'Maybe tomorrow morning I should go get some groceries, so I can have this delicious dinner idea that just came to my head.' We all know making last-minute decisions about food, especially when you're hungry, is unfavorable for weight loss.

This is a critical habit. Even though it takes ten minutes a day to just think about what you're going to eat the next day, you will lose more weight than running 15 miles a week.

That's how important it is. So, make daily planning a habit.

5. Meal plan twice a week

Another habit that is also in the planning category is meal planning just twice a week. This is what I've found works best for most people: meal planning once, during the weekend, for the first half of your week, and then once more, let's say, on Wednesday or Thursday for the rest of your week.

Usually, planning ahead for the whole week doesn't work because: you don't know what leftovers you're going to have; you don't know if you're going to have some invitations to go out or visit friends. There's a lot of unknowns that will interfere with your weekly plan.

I found that twice a week works for most people. It's a small habit. It's easy to implement. Please make that a habit.

6. Grocery shop once or twice a week.

Grocery shopping is tied to meal planning and if you plan twice a week, it might make sense to get fresh ingredients by shopping twice a week as well.

This way, you're going to have the ingredients you need so that you cook what it is that you planned to cook. You're not going to be in the unfortunate situation of wanting to cook something delicious but lacking the ingredients (then order in a suboptimal meal for weight loss, or be stuck with a TV dinner.)

Habits Category: Nutrition

A lot can change in a year...



What to eat to lose weight - this is exactly what we'll be covering in this section. Not just how to lose weight, but how to lose weight, by eating more, and so that you keep it off!

7. Eat 25 g of fiber twice a week, so that you eat more food and lose more weight

Fiber is a very important habit that less than 5% of Americans meet. The more fiber you eat, the less hungry you'll feel. You'll eat more food and lose more weight.

You will not be losing weight by eating less but by eating more. I know it kind of sounds unbelievable. Like "what? I could be losing weight and not be hungry? I don't believe you!"

Yes, you will not be hungry if you eat really well. But that is an eating pattern that you build up one step at a time. Know that it could take months to build up your eating pattern to meet that level.

Let's pick a small habit like eating 25 grams of fiber twice a week. 25 grams of fiber is actually the minimum requirement for fiber, based on most government health guidelines. Unfortunately, the average American eats around 13 grams or so.

It's very rare that you will meet someone who already meets the 25 grams of fiber every day minimum dose. So, when my clients get started with the Fitness Reloaded program, I start them with 25 grams of fiber twice a week. Now, usually, they meet that straight away and then we gradually start increasing the habit.

We could increase the habit to three or four times a week, or go to 30 grams, 35 grams, etc.

8. Drink one less alcoholic drink a week.



If you're someone who drinks a lot of alcoholic drinks, those drinks really do add up. And the question is, do you really want to get those calories from drinking?

Now, many people are going to be like, "Yes, I want to keep the alcohol."

Well, I'm going to break down the calories of how much you're really getting. Let's say you just have a big glass of wine three times a week and you do this for a year. That's almost 19,000 calories, which is equivalent to 5 pounds.

5 pounds of fat in a year that you're not losing or you're gaining because you're drinking just a glass of wine three times a week.

By the way, that did not include birthdays, holidays and all of that, which might increase your drinking. This is

very light, moderate drinking.

The question is, do you want it? Imagine you have one glass of wine every day of the week. Now double that amount of fat.

It's now no longer 5 pounds, it's now 10 pounds a year that you're gaining (or not losing) because of your daily drinking habit. And this is for wine, I haven't even gotten into cocktails that have double the calories or sometimes three times the calories. One cocktail a week that has 250 calories is like almost three glasses of wine in calories.

So you're like, "Oh, yeah, I don't drink. I just have, you know, two cocktails."

"Yeah, well, two cocktails, maybe 700 calories a week. Let me just do it. I feel good about this."

700 calories a week multiplied by 52 to get the number of annual calories from alcohol. And then if we divide this by 3500 (that's the approximate amount of calories in a pound of fat), that's ten and a half pounds again. You should make a decision: "Is this what I want? Maybe I could be drinking one cocktail less a week and save those calories." That's one small habit to start with and it's definitely worth considering.

9. Eat one piece of fruit every day.

Ideally, you'd have two servings or more, but if you're right now inconsistent with your fruit consumption, if on some days you have a fruit and on some other days you don't, this is the time to aim for one serving a day without fail.

Decide if you want to have it for breakfast, as an afternoon snack, or if you want to have it as an after-dinner dessert. Fruits will help build up your fiber goal.

Most fruits are high in fiber and high in volume, qualities that make them both very satiating for their calorie content. They're really good for health and weight loss.

10. Eat 200 grams (about half a pound) of vegetables a day.



If you eat 200 grams, or half a pound of vegetables on a daily basis, that means you're eating well.

If you double that to 1 pound of vegetables, that's a great amount, and it's really close to what the healthy populations who made the Mediterranean Diet famous used to do.

You don't have to do this every day. It can be twice a week; it can be five times a week. You decide how much and how often based on your starting point. Eat your veggies!

11. Eating one less serving of yellow cheese.

If you're somebody who eats a lot of yellow cheese, well yellow cheese is calorie-dense as most varieties have 120 cal per 28 gr (that's one ounce.) Examples are parmesan, pecorino, machengo, etc.

It's best to treat this type of cheese as dessert. This means you you'll be having small quantities of it, and you won't be cutting big slices.

So, if you're the type of person who eats a lot of cheese, now is the time to start thinking, 'Okay, I'm going to have one serving size less every week' or something like that.

12. Decrease saturated fat to 10% of total calories.



Next, for those of you who track your food, that's an amazing choice. If you use an app like [MyFitnessPal](#), you can select to view the daily grams of saturated fat you're getting.

That is a habit that directly affects your health because saturated fat increases your chances of heart disease. The guidelines say that 10% of your calories or less should be from saturated fat, with the American Heart Association advising for just 5% or 6%.

So what do I mean by 10% of your calories?

Let's say every day your calories are at 1900. 10% of your calories would be 190 calories. Now, if we divide this by nine calories per gram, that gives you 21 grams of saturated fat. (1 gram of fat = 9 calories)

If you're always tracking your food with an app that can give you how much-saturated fat you're getting, check if you do exceed the 10%.

If you do, you might want to start decreasing it. You should start to pay attention to the foods that you are eating that are high in saturated fat.

Hint: As you increase your fiber, you will find that your saturated fat will naturally go down. This is because you are gradually replacing foods that have saturated fat with foods that are high in fiber that don't have saturated fat.

13. Eat legumes two or three times a week.



Legumes is such an important habit that it is part of the Reloaded Seven. Lentils, beans, chickpeas, split-peas, are some examples.

Eating half a cup of those twice a week, or three times a week is a great small habit to start with.

Now, for some people, this is very easy, meaning that they are used to eating those types of food already.

But if you're like the average American, chances are, it's difficult for you and you're not used to it. If that's the case, aim for just once a week and do not increase until you keep this habit up for at least 4 weeks straight.

14. Find one new high-fiber recipe a week.

This is a very important habit that we do at Fitness Reloaded straight away. It's also one of the first 7 habits we start with, the Reloaded Seven, because I want people to find the right recipes that will assist them with their goals. These are delicious recipes with fewer calories but high satiety, that are actually easy to make.

So, choose one high fiber recipe for a week. And that can be for breakfast, lunch, dinner, or even as a dessert or a snack.

To develop this repertoire, you have got to start putting your mind into it. You have got to find that recipe. Or you can transform a current favorite into a high fiber dish - that's another habit.

15. Decrease the amount of oil you use when you cook to 1 T per serving.

One tablespoon per serving should be your standard. If let's say, you're making a soup that has four servings, don't use more than four tablespoons of oil.

Whenever you see a recipe out there that's clearly not made for weight loss, adjust the amount of fat, such as butter, ghee, or oil.

This habit will assist you with weight loss because oil is very calorie-dense without being adequately satiating for the calories. You can hardly see it, but it's very calorie-dense.

16. Eating about 10% of your calories from the high yield group.



At Fitness Reloaded, we do [Calorie Investing](#).

In the "high yield group" of foods, we have foods that are both high in fiber and in volume: 6 grams of fiber (or more) per 100 calories. Examples are strawberries, eggplant, cauliflower, green beans, etc.

However, a prepackaged fiber bar would not belong to the high-yield group.

The foods in the high-yield group have to be high volume, like fruits or vegetables. A fiber bar you got at the store, is a small volume item, so it doesn't meet the high-yield group requirements that ask for both fiber and volume.

Example: If your daily "allowance" is 2000 calories, 15% of your calories will be 300 calories. If you put in 300 calories in the high yield group, you're going to be so stuffed!

Think about it: 1 lb of green beans is 150 cal. Imagine having to eat 2 lbs of food to get those 300 cal! You simply can't eat that much food!

Start with 10%, you can even start with 5%. And clearly, you don't need to eat just one type of vegetable or fruit to meet that 5 or 10%, you can mix and match.

Remember, a small habit is relative to your starting point. From there, you'll be looking at the next step ahead for you.

Habits Category: Exercise

17. Increment your daily steps by 1500 to increase physical activity.

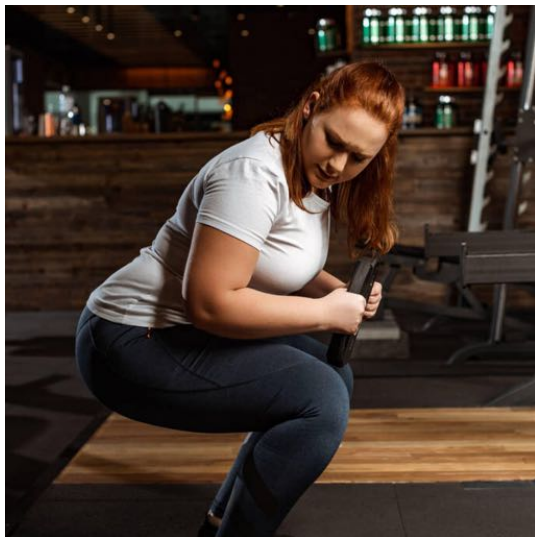
Aim to up your daily steps by 1500. So, let's say if you're currently doing 4,000 steps a day, bump it up to 5,500 steps. Then stick to that for a few weeks before you increase any further. 1500 step increments are a great pace to increase your physical activity.

Step by step, you can keep increasing it till you reach 10,000 steps or more.

However, it's going to take a little bit of time to get there but definitely less time than if you instead tried to go from, say, 4,000 to 10,000 steps in one jump. Going from 4,000 steps to 10,000 steps straight away would be a radical change and not a small habit. You don't want to risk quitting and never getting to permanently increase your steps.

Aim small, get those small wins, and build from there.

18. Strength-train twice a week to increase your muscle mass



Another habit you can take up is strength training for 15 to 30 minutes twice a week. There is nothing crazy here. 15 minutes is something most people can keep up with. Most people can do that twice a week, so you can start doing it right now.

Make that a habit for a couple of months, and then start thinking about increasing the frequency, and/or duration of exercise.

19. Go for a walk after lunch

Go for a walk around the block after lunch.

That's another small habit to meet the steps habit we just talked about. Small walks throughout the day are actually something we do at the Academy, like going for a walk after breakfast, or after lunch, or after dinner. Walking is your best ticket to increase your daily activity level.

4 Reasons Why We Get Fat



The effect of limited willpower, or big appetite is *miniscule* compared to the effect of the environment.

- 1 The Standard American Diet.**
Lower consumption of vegetables, fruits, fiber. Higher consumption of salt, sugar, fat, and meat.
- 2 Lower levels of physical activity.**
Car-dependent lifestyles lower NEAT, a part of our metabolism related to calories needed for activity outside of focused exercise sessions.
- 3 Overabundance of hyperpalatable triggers.**
Even when you try to avoid them, *addictive-like* foods with a combination of salt, sugar, fat drive overeating.
- 4 Difficult to find high-fiber whole foods.**
When not preparing your own meals, it's difficult to meet your goals by getting food at restaurants or even meal kits.



Watch full video on Youtube at start.fitnessreloaded.com/youtube/FitnessReloaded.com

Our environment wants to make us gain excess fat and one of the ways it's doing that is by keeping us sedentary. You have to make your life inconvenient to live more healthily and one of the ways to do that is by strategically including walks after you eat.

It's a great habit. Or you can start, let's say, having some bike-to-work days. If that works for your particular situation, then you can make it a habit once or twice a week.

20. Get social through healthy activities

Used to hanging out with your friends at a bar, coffee shop, or by visiting someone's house? What if you were to switch some of that with an activity?

You could, for example, go hiking with your friends once every other weekend. Instead of being social and grabbing brunch, you can go for a hike and then go have brunch. Better still, you can skip the brunch and just go for a hike and you don't have to do it all the time.

You can do it once every other weekend, which is fine, and it will give you an opportunity to stay social while doing something healthy. It's good for everybody. Adopt this habit.

Habits Category: Mindset

Your brain will either encourage you to start, and continue, or it will discourage you from even starting, or then talk you out of it continuing and instead giving up.

Discover your calories when on a calorie deficit at [FitnessReloaded.com/calorie-calculator/](https://www.fitnessreloaded.com/calorie-calculator/)



You are allowed to unlearn the habits that do not align with your new goals to get healthy and lose weight

You're allowed to reframe losing weight from punishment & something you do to control others' perception of you to self-care and something you do to improve the quality of your life

You're allowed to redefine your identity as someone who is active, and eats healthy nourishing food.

You're allowed to let go of thinking that going from full to overfull and with pain in your stomach is "always fun."

You're allowed to make mistakes, skip your workout overeat, and still brush it off and move on!

*When your "inner critical voice" downplays doing the "right thing" because "it won't matter anyway", you're allowed to **STAND UP** for yourself, and say "no, it does matter."*



21. Use The "But Technique" to silence your inner critic

I have multiple Mindset techniques that I explain in the Academy and I will discuss just a few of them. One of them is the 'but' technique, and I talked about it in my weight loss affirmations video.

What you're doing with the "but" technique is you start with something that is a barrier for you, and you complete that sentence and weaken it with "buts."

So, for example, let's say the barrier is "my friends will disapprove of me if I do not drink." That's something that someone who's afraid of peer pressure would think about.

- But maybe they won't.
- But maybe that's just what I think.
- But, that's not what's going to happen
- But real friends would be supportive of my weight loss goals.
- But my health is more important than what other people might want me to do.

See, I'm completing it now with "but", and this way I weaken that original statement that was a barrier for me. That can be a habit of yours too. You can make it a habit to practice the "but" technique once or twice a week, so that you strengthen your mind, make better decisions, and follow through.

22. Use the "is it true?" technique to overcome your personal barriers

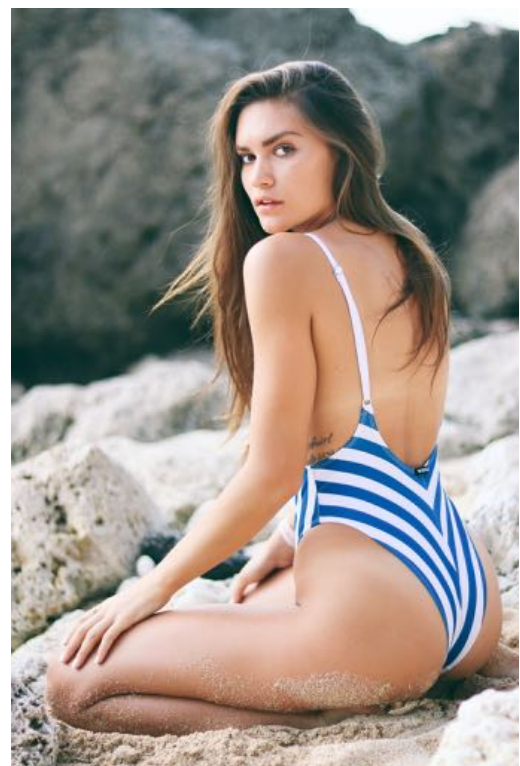
Another technique that I teach is the "Is it true?" **technique**. This is when you actively question a thought or belief that prevents you from executing a healthy habit or following through.

For example, if the thought is: "I don't want to go to this event because people will be judging me for my weight", you can ask yourself "Is it 100% beyond any doubt true that people will judge me for my weight?"

Another example: "It doesn't matter if I overeat, I'm not going to lose weight anyway."

Well, is it 100% true that you're not going to lose weight and hence it doesn't matter?

Note: this needs practice. Especially the "it doesn't matter" thought. It is part of the "Enemy Mindset." That's what I call it. And it holds people back like crazy because they're thinking, "it doesn't matter if I do this, it doesn't matter if I do that other thing," and then they end up not doing all sorts of things, and then they're not going to go anywhere.



23. Use the 10-minute rule to overcome cravings

The 10-minute rule is, you've got a craving but you wait for ten minutes before you go eat it. Put a timer, for 10 minutes, and if you still want it after 10 minutes it's yours to eat!

24. Use the 24 hr rule to overcome cravings

The 24-hour rule is, you get a craving for something, you can totally eat that thing, but you have to wait till the next day. You'll put it in your plan for the next day to eat the thing that you're craving.

Whether it's a croissant, or dessert, or chocolate, whatever it is, you will eat it, but not on that day because you didn't plan for it. However, you will eat it the next day because now you're planning to eat it.

These are two alternate ways that you can quickly use to address some cravings and what makes more sense for you depends on the situation.

25. Write daily at least one reason why weight loss is self-care to you.



Many people associate weight loss with punishment. That is sometimes correlated to the method they're trying to lose weight: fad diets, uber-restrictive ones like keto, fasting, etc.

If you do have a legitimate need to lose weight, then weight loss is the ultimate act of self-care. It's you taking care of your body, prolonging your life, and increasing your quality of life.

If you're taking a lot of positive steps to create positive, good habits so that you lose excess weight, then weight loss is self-care.

Write down the reasons about how you're taking care of your body by losing weight and creating healthy habits. Reflect on at least one reason daily so you don't let anything or any one of those other thoughts stop you.

If you're feeling that you're punishing and forcing yourself to perform certain habits for the sake of weight loss, then that will slow down your progress. Either change your weight loss plan to one that feels better to you and/or change your attitude, and you change your attitude by focusing on why weight loss is self-care for you.

Habits Category: Meal Structure



Sonja's Stats

| | |
|---|---|
| Before 145 lbs | After 120 lbs |
| <i>No exercise</i> | <i>Exercises 3 times a week</i> |
| <i>Did not meal plan</i> | <i>Meal plans weekly</i> |
| <i>Would overeat past the point of being full when stressed</i> | <i>"Overeats" consciously, e.g., if it's a really fine dinner</i> |
| Total Cholesterol: 230 | Total Cholesterol: 198 |

Meal structure is a family of habits that is usually overlooked, in favor of the sexier, "eat this to lose 30 lbs, don't eat that and lose 50 lbs, or follow this amazing exercise program for 6 weeks," etc.

Yet proper meal structure will solve many issues that people face on a daily basis, and will at the very least, give you all day long energy!

26. Increase the size of your meals (and stop skipping meals) to not leave yourself hungry

Having appropriately big meals is one way to manage your appetite and your energy levels throughout the day. Sadly, meal structure is something that's completely overlooked. I don't see people really talking about it, and when they do it's usually to force people to eat breakfast, regardless of whether they're hungry or not in the morning.

An example of increasing the size of your meals would be:

"I will increase my lunch by 150 calories so that I don't get overly hungry in the afternoon."

You could say this if you're someone who eats a very small lunch. Sometimes people even skip lunch.

Of course, you might have a craving, but the reason you have a craving is not because you have a craving for sweets or sugar or salty stuff. It's because you were hungry!

27. Tweak the timing of your meals to make sure you feel adequately content all day long

Sometimes impulsive snacking can be reduced by moving your meals to earlier or later in the day.

Another example: "I'm gonna push dinner from 6 pm to 7 pm so that I don't struggle with cravings at night."

28. Plan for night-time snacking.

Snacking does not always have to be reduced. In fact, it could be part of your plan! Even night-time snacking can have its place in your diet.

So, you like eating at 10:00 p.m.? That's okay, but put it in your planning and schedule it so you can eat guilt-free.

"I'm going to have accounted for 150 calories at 10:00 p.m. in my planning, so I can eat at night, guilt free."

Habits Category: Routine B Prep

At Fitness Reloaded we have Routine A and Routine B. Routine A is your typical weekday, when you go to work and take care of family and eat as you plan.

Routine B is when you're not following your typical set schedule. Weekends are part of Routine B. Weekdays when you're invited to go out to a restaurant is Routine B. Attending a dinner party at a friend's house is Routine B. Going on holidays or on business travel is Routine B.

This unpredictability often leads people who do excellent during the week, slow down their progress because of their weekend.

Routine A is easier to master from a habits-perspective. However, there are things you can do immediately to start improving how well you do in common Routine B scenarios.

29. Plan in advance for restaurants.



Do you know what restaurant you're going to? Look up their menu and pick what to eat in advance. Don't forget to think about dessert and alcohol, don't just focus on your main meal.

30. Plan in advance about when you're eating at a friend's house.

Have an invitation to go to some meet some friends of yours? Find a high-fiber healthy recipe that meets your goals and is dinner party appropriate to bring over. Cook it and take the dish with you. That way, you won't depend on the foods that other people are going to cook and everyone will eat healthier because of you!

Plus, you won't show up empty-handed.

31. Take fruits with you when you go on a road trip.

Like I said before, the environment wants to make you gain weight, so it will be really hard to find good options when you're out and about.

This is why it is really important to bring healthy snacks with you, and fruits are some of the healthiest snacks you can find. Bananas, apples, pears last a long time and are quite satiating!

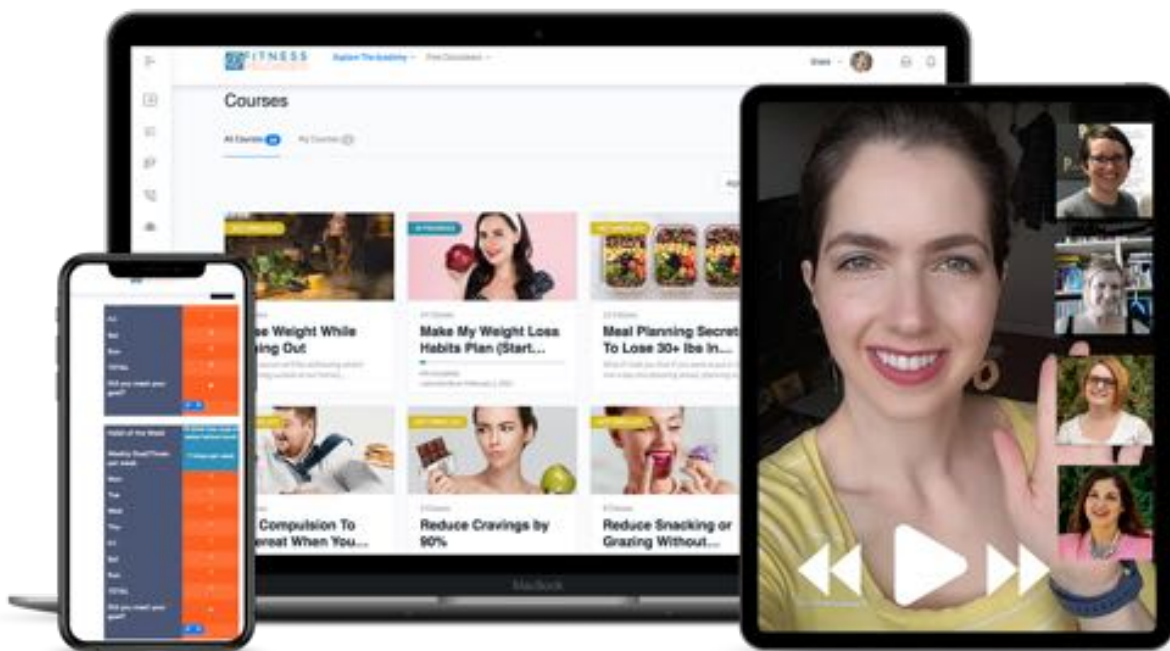
What habits to start with first

I know we've covered a lot today and you might be thinking, "oh, Maria, where do I start? These are too many, I feel completely overwhelmed."

If you're feeling overwhelmed, don't just do nothing. Doing nothing will only prolong the dissatisfaction you're currently feeling.

Instead, pick at least one habit and meet it! Practice it for the next 6 months.

Want to do more habits and advance faster? Come join the Academy and I will help you. I will help you put all these habits into a system so that you know what habits you should be doing each week.



You don't have to do all habits at once, but at the same time, not knowing how to place the habits together is not a reason for you to do nothing. So don't let that stop you from where you want to go.

I wish you best of luck!



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