



TOP 10 TIPS

for Breaking the Fast
Food Habit



TOP 10 TIPS FOR BREAKING THE FAST FOOD HABIT

While fast food outlets keep advertising healthier menu items, a recent study found that most choices have become more fattening over the past 30 years. You're likely to be consuming extra calories and sodium with each order.

Between 1986 and 2016, the average entree gained 100 calories while desserts gained 200. Meanwhile, most side dishes became significantly saltier, according to researchers from Boston University and Tufts University.

It's a serious issue because about one in three Americans eats fast food on any given day. Experts believe that those burgers and fries are making a major contribution to obesity and related conditions including heart disease, diabetes, and certain cancers.

If you think it's time to drive past the drive-through window, consider these suggestions. They'll help you break the fast food habit or cut back.

Cutting Back on Fast Food

If you're hesitant to give up fast food completely, you can still make positive changes. Think about making one less trip each week and making each visit healthier.

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Consider these options:

1. Customize it. Check the menu or fast food nutrition apps to figure out your healthiest options. Look for words like “grilled” and ingredients like “beans” and “whole grains.” Some chains will let you personalize your order so you can leave off bacon and condiments.

2. Shrink portions. Buy the smallest size available. Depending on the restaurant’s policy, you may be able to order a children’s meal even if you’re an adult.

3. Monitor liquid calories. Choose beverages without calories like water or unsweetened iced tea instead of soda or juice. If you drink milk, you may want to make that most of your meal.

Eliminating Fast Food

Eating at chain restaurants can be convenient, but there are proven ways to make healthier food work for any lifestyle. Quitting fast food may be easier than you expect!

Try these strategies:

1. Think ahead. Do you wind up buying a combo meal because your refrigerator is empty? Plan menus for a full day or a week at a time and **keep the ingredients on hand for wholesome meals and snacks.**

2. Stay full. French fries are less tempting when your stomach is full. Sit down for 3 balanced meals a day, plus any snacks you need to keep hunger cravings at bay.

3. Indulge yourself. You can still satisfy your taste buds. Sample exotic fruits and fancy cheeses. Bake your own pita chips and roasted vegetables. You may enjoy them more than ultra-processed onion rings.

4. Learn new recipes. Maybe you eat fast food because it’s cheap as well as quick. If so, browse online for dishes you can put together in less than 15 minutes on a tight budget. Have hummus or a stir fry for dinner.

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5. Scrutinize marketing. Do certain TV ads make you hungry? Turn them off or think twice about their message. Drink a glass of water or take a walk before you give in to your urges. You may find that your cravings fade quickly.

6. Spot personal triggers. Maybe there are other events that stimulate your cravings. Visit the gym after work if that's when you're inclined to stop for take-out. Talk things over with a friend if you tend to use emotional eating to deal with stress.

7. Seek support. It's easier to form any new habit when you reach out to family and friends. Let them know how they can help you. They may want to eat healthier too.

Eating less fast food is one simple change that can help you lose weight and enhance your overall health. Shop for delicious whole foods you can prepare yourself that will contain fewer calories and provide the fiber and nutrients your body needs.





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