

Weight loss

Five food rules to beat weight loss plateaus



3. The 3-meal rule

None of us are perfect. Experience has shown that being too restrictive about eating is not sustainable long-term. We all need to “live a little”. There will always be birthdays, anniversaries, work parties, holidays, and other social functions. To be expected to not indulge in some treat foods (and drinks) is unrealistic. Just make sure the treats don’t become too frequent.

The 3-meal rule is a good way to think about treats. It works like this: of the 21 meals in a week (three meals a day), achieving whole-food healthy meals for 18 of these leaves three meals per week for you to choose what you want to eat. It could be sweet treats, carb-laden pizza or pasta, or some birthday cake. This is entirely up to you, but at least choose something that you really like, and want. And enjoy it! It’s what you do 90% of the time that counts, and enjoying celebrations without guilt is important.

4. Full fridge, empty pantry

Packaged foods, which are often laden with sugar, as well as being nutrient-poor, have no place in your house. They simply need to go. Throw them out or give them away. Not just out of sight but gone from the house itself. Your new kitchen set-up is going to be built around the concept of ‘full fridge, empty pantry’. Some pantry essentials are required, but probably less than you think.

5. FFB Rule: Fluid, Fruit, Bakery (or Bad)

We love this rule. It’s 3pm, you’re working on a long, boring report, your concentration is fading — we’ve all been there, or in a similar situation. This is when many of us will give in to the craving for sugar — we’ll grab a muesli bar, a cookie or a doughnut. FFB rule to the rescue! Start with F for fluid — drink some water or make yourself a cup of herbal tea. This might be all you need to get over that mid-afternoon slump. If that doesn’t help, go for a piece of fruit. Trust us when we say that 9 times out of 10, this will get you back on track. Crisis over. For that ‘1 in 10’ occasion when you just can’t stop thinking about that doughnut, or whatever it is, it’s OK to have it. And make sure you really enjoy it.

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TOP 5 TIPS

- **Eat when you're hungry.** Skipping a meal here and there is OK if you're not hungry.
- **In general, avoid snacks.** You don't need them if you're eating properly and especially if you're trying to lose weight. But if your energy needs are high, then you might. Again, it's individual.
- **Eat mindfully.** Don't eat out of boredom or just because the food is there! These are just extra calories. Ask yourself: Is this hunger or habit? If it's habit, then it's a good one to break.
- **Alcohol is full of calories.** There's not much more to be said about this, other than you can do without it for more than half the week, at least.