

9 Ways to Increase Your Weight Loss Potential in Less than 1 Minute per Week
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Living a healthy lifestyle requires time! Having no time is the **#1** excuse for not following through. Here are 9 strategies to improve your **weight loss potential** that require less than 1 minute each (and some may even SAVE you time).

1. **Running on Empty.** A big mistake I see people making is exercising on an empty stomach. Morning exercisers often do this because they pop out of bed and immediately dive into a workout. The problem here is you are working out after a 12 hour fast which means your blood sugar is low and your energy levels too. You will feel more fatigued during the workout and run out of energy much sooner than if you had eaten more recently. Keep in mind also that fatigue and overexertion can make your workouts less enjoyable, which can negatively impact your motivation to continue. Eating in the hour prior to a workout will give you more energy during your workout. I recommend eating something small and easily digestible (spoonful of peanut butter, wheat toast, Carnation instant breakfast drink, Kashi bar, etc) at least 15 minutes before working out. The other time of day people often exercise on an empty stomach is when they exercise after work but before dinner. This leads to the same problem of fatigue, but also might increase your dinner appetite by further lowering your blood sugar prior to dinner. If you are worried about the extra calories from adding these snacks, you might consider borrowing calories from other times of the day. Eat less at a meal or plan your snacks to be closer to your workout.
2. **Only the Good Days Count.** One habit of diet journalers is that their perceived “average” intake often does not represent their heaviest eating days because “bad” days are the least likely to be journaled. I see journalers routinely skipping weekends, days with parties, holidays and vacations. Overeating on these occasions can significantly contribute to your pace of weight loss, stall it completely, or even cause weight gain. Skipping the worst days also misses an opportunity to improve your eating habits in these tough circumstances. You might consider skipping your reliably good days and spending more effort on journaling on your “bad” days. It won’t cost you any extra time, but will have a much bigger impact on your weight.
3. **Be Gilligan Not the Skipper.** Ahh.. the breakfast skipper. A stubborn lot because they can’t see how adding a meal will actually help with weight loss. It seems counterintuitive. The breakfast skipper is not hungry at breakfast and sees this as an opportunity to eat less. Unfortunately this is a trap. Skipping breakfast is associated with greater intake later in the day. Evenly distribute your calories across the day and never go 3-4 waking hours without having something to eat.
4. **Liquid calories.** If you are drinking any calories, such as juice, sweetened tea, or soda, a great way to cut your total calories down is to switch these out for water. I’m getting less enthused about diet sodas given the recent studies showing they may be increasing our appetites. Try to get used to water, slowly but surely. Some people are good with the “no liquid calories” rule UNTIL... it comes to booze! For alcohol, find a drink of choice that is low in calories. There are several beers available that are very low in calories, and some hard liquors, if used in small portions and mixed with soda, can make lower calorie drinks. Wine is generally better than mixed drinks with sweetened mixes, tonic, or juice. Alcohol calories definitely count and can easily add up to as much or more than a meal itself.

5. Autopilot Exercise. Doing the same workout over and over and over again will actually produce fewer and fewer results over time. Your body gets used to the workout and then becomes more efficient at doing it, meaning you'll burn fewer calories. Increasing the intensity of your workout or changing the activity are ways to avoid lengthening the time of your workout. For example, try to shave 5 minutes off of your 3 mile walk time. Alternatively, instead of walking every day, swim or do the elliptical trainer one day. Again, this costs you no extra time but can add to your calorie expenditure.
6. Trying to live with the Devil. I cannot emphasize this enough. You should not be living with any foods that tempt you to overeat. Identify all foods in the home that you have found yourself overindulging and cross them off the grocery list. It is ok to have these foods outside of the house occasionally, but not to **live with** these foods. They are obnoxious roommates!
7. I'm Famished. Weight control requires very good appetite control. Appetite control means never getting over-hungry or over-full. Being extremely hungry makes controlling your intake very difficult. If you feel like you can go long periods of time without feeling hungry, consider that you might not be sensing your internal hunger signals. Some people do not sense hunger signals as soon as others. For these people it takes extreme hunger to notice hunger at all. If this is you, put your eating on a schedule because your hunger signals may be allowing you to get over-hungry, making you vulnerable to overeating.
8. TV: Friend or Foe? Instead of feeling guilty about TV time, make it activity time. Watch TV while using exercise equipment, doing floor exercises, using dumbbells, doing yoga stretches, anything active. Don't let 30 minutes of TV go by without doing something active, even if just a stretch routine. Another option is to alternate TV shows with active video games. Fun active games include Wii Fit, Dance Dance Revolution, Just Dance, or Wii Sports. You can do these by yourself or with family members. For you competitive types, a sneaky way to beat your family members at games is by squeezing in some practice time when nobody is home! What?! Of course I have never done that! So silly!
9. Call Aunt Sally. Just like the TV, the phone presents a great opportunity to multi-task in some exercise. Have you been avoiding that call to Aunt Sally? You know the one where she talks about her cats and how the next door neighbors have the nerve to park right in front of her house!? AGHH! Or do you have a friend you've been meaning to catch up with? Walk and talk! Get a head phone set that has a microphone so that you don't need to hold the phone to your ear while you walk. Then, take the phone outside and make your calls while walking. You don't have to power walk yourself out of breath through the conversation, just keep your feet moving. Plan to do telephone catch up with walking at least once a week. You'll feel great you got caught up on your calls and squeezed in some physical activity along the way. And of course, Aunt Sally will thank you...

