

GUT CHECK



Lose the Flab Now!

TIRED OF YOUR PIGGISH WAYS? SET A WEIGHT-LOSS GOAL, THEN FOLLOW THE RIGHT STRATEGY TO MAKE YOUR PROGRAM WORK FOR YOU. By Brandon Guarneri

[How Much Do You Want To Lose?] →



Refine Your Bad Habits

Zapping that little gut bulge may be as simple as replacing your morning bagel and large OJ with a bowl of oatmeal. "When you don't have massive amounts of weight to lose, taking it all off comes down to making leaner decisions," says Jim White, R.D., spokesperson for the ADA and owner of Jim White Fitness Studios. Pepperoni pizza while watching the game every Sunday? Four beers every Thursday night when you go out? "Something has to change, so you need to figure out what you can give up," says White. If you can cut just 250 calories a day through smarter choices, you can take off two pounds a month. As far as workouts go, White recommends a combo of higher-intensity, total-body lifting plus a minimum of three 30-minute cardio sessions each week. "The more you do, the faster you'll get there," he says.

Learn Structure

The more weight you need to lose, the easier it actually is to take off. Start by doing intervals instead of steady-state cardio. If you haven't already begun, start lifting weights regularly as well—three to four times a week. The specific program isn't so important at this stage, any of the beginner-friendly programs listed at mensfitness.com will work fine. "Just commit to a program and stick with it," says White. You also need to clean up your diet. Keep a food journal to track how much you eat each day and when, then work on improving the quality of those foods. Cut carbs when possible and opt for less-processed, higher-fiber fare. Don't go cold turkey on your favorite foods—which will only make you irritable and bitter—enjoy them in moderation. Go out for lunch twice monthly instead of twice weekly. Baby steps.

Regain Control of Your Life

Losing half a person may seem insurmountable, but that weight can fly off—with the right strategy. That doesn't mean immediately jumping on a diet. Instead, look for the triggers that caused you to gain weight. They may include family problems, stress at work, even loneliness. Now commit to eliminating them. They're likely the cause of bad habits like coming home and gorging yourself on cookies, says White. Talk with estranged family members, look for a new job—do whatever it takes to initiate positive change. At the same time, commit to a healthy overall lifestyle. Don't skip meals. Cut back on fast food, eat smaller portions, and cook at home. Get plenty of sleep and hit the gym. Start doing cardio and add weights as you're able. Hit it hard, and your efforts should yield between three to five pounds of weight loss per week, at least to start.