

Get Slim & Trim with These Healthy Tips

It is estimated that 66% of Americans are obese or overweight. A recent study¹ from Oxford University quoted in *USA Today* suggests that being 40 pounds overweight may decrease your lifespan by a full decade!

All of us would like to take a magic pill and have the weight fall off overnight, but there is no magic pill, at least not yet anyway. However, there are some supplements that are safe and have shown some benefits in helping promote healthy BMI (Body Mass Index). BMI is based on your weight and height, I consider a healthy BMI to be 21–24 range. Another goal is to keep waist size in a healthy range, 35 and under is a good target.

I am going to share with you valuable information about several dietary supplements that I believe are beneficial based on the preponderance of scientific evidence, my own experience and those of my patients. All of these dietary supplements are safe and free of serious side effects at the recommended dosages, but you should check with your doctor before you begin taking any of them if you have any known health conditions and/or take drugs.

Additionally, a healthy, calorie controlled, low glycemic diet (under 55 rated foods) that includes healthy fats (extra virgin olive oil, omega-3 fish oil, salmon, etc.), lean proteins, fruits (acai, blueberries, etc), legumes, nuts and vegetables (exclude potatoes/French fries), along with exercise, is essential for promoting good health and a healthy BMI. In primate studies, the most effective tool for promoting a long and healthy life is a controlled calorie diet that is nutrient rich, the opposite of the Standard American Diet (SAD). About 1,200 to 1,500 calories per day is optimal for most people versus the typical consumption of 3,000 or higher. The #1 recommendation I have for you beyond eating the healthy foods mentioned above is to eliminate all fried foods and drinks with sugar/corn syrup (soda is the #1 offender). Instead of sugar, use natural sweeteners such as stevia.

There are three main ways supplements work for healthy weight control:

1. Some enhance ***fat burning along with exercise*** by increasing your metabolic furnace.
2. Others reduce ***carbohydrates*** from being absorbed into your bloodstream, preventing excess carbs from turning into fat.
3. Still others assist with ***appetite reduction***, usually high fiber nutrients that either swell up in your gut, convincing your belly (and therefore, your brain) that you are full, or that speak directly to your brain, turning off hunger signals and cravings.

There are some very good natural supplements on the market that can give your weight management program a jump start and help keep you on track. They can even accelerate the process when used correctly. These are the ones I think are the best and the most effective and also have the best scientific validation behind them. If you are considering using a supplement and you don't find it on this list, it's probably unsafe or ineffective.

Supplements that Work

This is the A-list. These work and work well for almost everybody. Try two or three in combination for a triple whammy of benefits. Pick and choose and do some experimentation to find what works best for you. Also try increased dosages of CLA, fiber and 7-Keto if required.

You may find products that have several of these ingredients in them. If it's a brand name that you trust, go for it. Vitacost.com's #1 selling brand is Nutraceutical Sciences Institute® (NSI®). NSI outsells the #2 brand by over 600%. Why? Read the customer reviews and compare the value. NSI is also manufactured in America with the majority of products made in Lexington, NC in a new state-of-the-art GMP level facility with an in-house laboratory for testing.

Believe it or not, some other brands have ZERO analytical testing done for heavy metals (arsenic, mercury, lead and cadmium) and microbiologicals (E-coli, salmonella, etc). In fact, NSI has rejected raw materials after testing for high lead levels and high bacteria levels, whereas other brands would have included such raw materials in their products without proper testing.

Just take a careful look at the dosages and be certain you are getting them at the optimal levels because lower dosages will have little or no effect. It's also a good idea to keep a diary of your hunger and craving levels during the day and to do some semi-scientific research on yourself in order to determine which products work best for you. Then stick with it and with your personal weight management plan.

Those that Assist in Burning Fat

CLA (conjugated linoleic acid): CLA works to increase the body's natural ability to burn fat. Not only has CLA been clinically proven to accelerate the fat burning process, it has also been shown to preserve lean muscle tissue, an essential element in keeping your metabolic rate at its optimum level and preventing blood sugar fluctuations.

An interesting Norwegian study² showed that not only does CLA help reduce body fat and increase lean muscle mass, it also makes rebound weight gain less likely. All the studies show it takes a substantial amount of CLA, somewhere between 3 and 4 grams a day, to produce the desired effect.

Recommended dosage: 2.5–5 grams daily. Look for a product that contains Tonalin™ CLA to ensure you are getting a standardized dosage.

Green tea: The magic ingredient in green tea is EGCG (epigallocatechin gallate). This powerful antioxidant provides a wide variety of beneficial effects, including a role in weight control. Human studies have shown that concentrated green tea extracts result in a 3 to 4 percent increase calorie burn for the average person. The Linus Pauling Institute says that the effect is probably caused by increased fat burning and thermogenesis, which quite literally means it helps turn up the body's natural metabolic furnaces.

Green tea contains caffeine and some have suggested that it is the caffeine which causes an increase in fat burning activity and thermogenesis, but other studies show that with or without caffeine, green tea revs up the metabolism. In addition, animal studies show that EGCG targets dangerous abdominal fat that increases the risk of diabetes and heart disease.

Recommended dosage: If you like green tea, drink as much as you wish. There is really no upper level on its beneficial effects. If you choose to take your green tea as a concentrate in supplement form, take 500 to 1,000 mg daily of green tea for weight control.

Chromium picolinate: This mineral works in a slightly different way than run-of-the-mill fat burners, but it does improve insulin sensitivity, allowing for more effective metabolism. Chromium picolinate has been shown to stimulate fat loss and muscle gain, turning up the metabolic furnaces and improving calorie burn.

Research on chromium picolinate is mixed, but studies on the positive side are quite impressive.

One such study³, from the Health and Medical Research Foundation in San Antonio, Texas, showed that people taking 400 mcg of chromium picolinate day dropped 80 percent more weight than those who did not take the supplement. The same study confirmed that fat loss did not come at the expense of the lean muscle tissue that is so crucial to calorie burning.

Recommended dosage: Take 400 mcg of chromium picolinate daily.

Fish oil: While I'm on the subject of healthy oil, I can't leave out the healthiest oil of all. Fish oil is nature's richest sources of omega-3 fatty acids, which are essential to human health. While fish oil is well-known for promoting healthy heart, joint and cell function, many people fail to realize it is also a well-documented good fat that actually helps burn fat. It also raises the metabolic rate of those who take it, increasing calorie burn, lowering triglycerides and lower circulating insulin, decreasing the risk of diabetes that is so common in overweight people. Australian research shows fish oil is particularly helpful in turning up the fat burners when it is combined with exercise because it improves blood flow to the muscles.

Recommended dosage: Take at least 2–4 grams (2,000–4,000 mg) of fish oil daily. I recommend NSI's Mega EFA® because it is two times more potent when compared to other products. It is also molecularly distilled to remove heavy metals such as mercury. Unfortunately most fish you buy is loaded with mercury, the worst being swordfish, shark and tuna. Salmon, trout and shrimp have the lowest levels. If you consume tuna, make sure to choose the Wild Planet minimal mercury tuna that Vitacost sells—it contains far lower levels compared to others. Wild Planet also has a great wild caught salmon. These are excellent products for promoting healthy BMI.

Resveratrol: This wonder substance found in the skins of red grapes is a major part of the health benefits attributed to drinking red wine. Resveratrol has been called the "longevity nutrient" because of the influence of an enzyme called SIRT1, which has been connected with longevity in mammals on a very low calorie diet.

Since being on a very low calorie diet for a lifetime would not be fun, the SIRT1 stimulators in resveratrol only make our bodies think we've been on a near starvation diet and help sculpt our bodies to reflect that. Some experts think our normal life span should be 120 years and that resveratrol can promote healthy aging.

In his book *The Anti-Aging Pill*, health advocate Bill Sardi calls resveratrol "The French Paradox." He notes that the French have a low obesity rate despite their penchant for fatty foods and rich sauces. The difference, he says, is the French custom of drinking wine with most meals. Red wine contains up to 2 mg per glass, while white wine contains zero.

I don't recommend taking up the French custom to that extent, but I do think Sardi has a point when he credits the resveratrol in wine with keeping weight under control.

In fact, a review of the weight of nearly 5,500 men and women in Wisconsin found that those who drank any alcohol at all tended to be about 5 pounds lighter than non-drinkers. Other research pooh-poohs the caloric effects of red wine by showing that drinking two glasses with an evening meal did not increase body weight. Recent French research⁴ suggests that resveratrol turns up the metabolic furnaces and accelerates glucose metabolism preventing sugars from turning to fat.

Recommended dosage: 100 - 250 mg daily of resveratrol.

7-Keto DHEA (dehydroepiandrosterone): The hormone produced by the adrenal glands is a derivative of DHEA (dehydroepiandrosterone) without DHEA's potentially harmful ability to convert to estrogen and testosterone. DHEA is the most plentiful hormone in the human body, the reservoir, if you will, from which the two major sex hormones are created. It has been called the fountain of youth hormone because of its anti-aging properties. As we age, our natural stores of DHEA decrease until, by the age of 70, we have only about 20 percent of the DHEA we had in our twenties.

7-Keto DHEA is a well-known dietary supplement highly regarded as a way to assist with fat burning. One study⁵ from the Minnesota Applied Research Center says 7-Keto DHEA significantly raises metabolic rate and the ability to burn calories and fat. One human study showed that people who were taking 200 mg of 7-Keto DHEA daily for eight weeks were able to triple the pounds shed over those on placebo. 7-Keto DHEA is also an energy booster, which might help provide the energy for more exercise.

Recommended dosage: 100–200 mg daily of 7-Keto DHEA. I have noticed consumer reviews indicating combining 7-Keto with Tonalin CLA they were able to achieve superior results.

Coleus Forskohlii: This extract of an Indian plant is one of the most powerful fat burners known. Although it has been used in Ayurvedic medicine for centuries, there are no large clinical studies on it. The studies that are available show coleus doesn't cause a significant reduction in weight; it can cause reduction in body fat, by as much as 45 percent in one study. Best of all, it seems to replace body fat with lean muscle tissue.

By reducing body fat and increasing lean muscle mass, as shown in other studies, metabolic rates are increased and it's easier to manage weight and keep it off. The coleus forskohlii plant is the only known plant source of a substance called forskholin. Several small studies conducted by the company that brought forskholin to the United States have substantiated the fat-burning and lean muscle mass building capabilities of this powerful substance. Research on coleus forskohlii is still fairly small, but its effects make it a strong contender for a great weight management supplement.

Recommended dosage: 100–250 mg twice daily of coleus forskohlii. **Caution:** Coleus should not be used if you are taking blood thinners like Coumadin because its cardiovascular benefits include blood thinning. It may also cause interactions with prescription blood pressure medications.

The Appetite Suppressors

Hoodia gordonii: This is a South African cactus-like plant that emerged a few years ago as the hottest new development in weight management supplements. Although the research is

admittedly sketchy, it is fairly clear that a substance in hoodia called P57 works on the hypothalamus, the brain center that controls appetite. Somehow P57 is able to convince your brain that you are full. This effect, called satiety, enables you to eat substantially less with feeling hungry and helps curb cravings.

The popularity of hoodia is probably due to its traditional use by the San Bushmen of South Africa's Kalahari Desert who chewed hoodia to stave off hunger and thirst in times of exceptional drought and famine.

South African researchers working in conjunction with a British supplement company conducted the only human research on hoodia (still unpublished) that showed over time, hoodia users ate 1,000 fewer calories a day than those who received a placebo, which resulted in substantial weight reduction. These results were confirmed by a 2004 Brown University study⁶ in which hoodia-eating laboratory rats reduced their caloric intake by 30 to 50 percent.

I've found that hoodia works best in conjunction with a low intake of simple carbohydrates, which makes it an excellent complement to the Walker Diet shakes. To date, there are no known adverse side effects caused by the use of hoodia, although it has not been subjected to extensive research.

Recommended dosage: 2 grams daily of hoodia gordonii, 1 gram in the morning, 500 mg at midday and 500 mg in the evening. Look for a high quality product sold under a brand name you trust. There have been cases of counterfeit hoodia in the market, so buyer beware.

Glucomannan: This water-soluble fiber comes from the Asian konjac plant. It has gained popularity as a laxative because it can absorb 200 times its weight in water. The large amount of fiber in glucomannan is uniquely effective in promoting weight loss because contributes to a feeling of fullness, also called satiety and it helps usher fats and carbohydrates out of the digestive tract quickly.

In one key study⁷ that was published in the *International Journal of Obesity* more than 20 years ago, researchers found that people who took 1 gram of glucomannan with eight ounces of water an hour before meals were able to drop 5.5 pounds in two months without otherwise changing their eating habits. As a welcome side effect, those same study participants also lowered their LDL or bad cholesterol by 15 to 20 points.

No negative side effects have been associated with glucomannan. In fact, glucomannan is considered so safe it is one of the few supplements that is recommended for children with weight problems. With the fact we need to embrace lifelong healthy eating habits and exercise, glucomannan and fiber are excellent adjuncts that will help with your weight management plan.

Recommended dosage: Take 1 gram with 8 ounces of water an hour before each meal of glucomannan.

Pinolenic Acid: Another supplement that has excellent potential to keep appetite under control is a derivative of the Korean Pine Nut. Pinolenic is a key ingredient in pine nut oil which is extracted from the nuts of the Korean pine, (*Pinus koraiensis*). Pinolenic acid stimulates the release of two of the body's most powerful hunger suppressing hormones:

CCK (cholecystokinin) and GLP-1 (glucagon-like peptide-1). This helps the body digest fats more efficiently, and sends a feeling of satiety or "fullness" to the brain, decreasing the desire to eat. The beauty of pinolenic acid is that it cuts hunger, reducing food intake by as much as 36 percent, according to one study⁸ without any stimulatory effect or serious side effects.

Recommended dosage: 800 mg taken 30 to 60 minutes before your two highest calorie meals of the day of pinolenic acid.

5-HTP (5Hydroxytryptophan): This substance is produced by the amino acid tryptophan (found in small amounts in turkey, other meats and dairy products) that helps produce the soothing brain chemical, serotonin. Serotonin, in addition to relieving anxiety and depression, sends those "I'm full" or satiety signals to the brain while you're eating and keeps you feeling full for hours after a meal.

Italian research confirms 5-HTP's ability to induce early satiety and to reduce the craving for carbohydrates that plagues many of us trying to manage our weight. More Italian research confirms the value of 5-HTP in weight loss, especially for women. Another study showed it that 5-HTP reduced food intake by about 70 percent. By promoting healthy mood, 5-HTP may also relieve some of the underlying emotional causes of food cravings.

Recommended dosage: Take 100 mg 30 to 60 minutes before each meal of 5-HTP. Take another 100 mg if you wish to prevent evening snacking. **Warning:** Do not take 5-HTP if you are taking anti-depressants that alter serotonin called SSRIs because they are already increasing serotonin production. Also, use only top quality products, to avoid potential contaminants.

The Carb Blockers

Phase 2 (phaseolamin): This carbohydrate blocker made from white kidney beans contains a substance, phaseolamin, which neutralizes the digestive enzyme alpha amylase that converts carbohydrates to sugars. Unless those sugars are used by your body, they are stored as fat for future use. Phase 2 helps those carbs move through your digestive system without being absorbed and converted to sugars.

One interesting study⁹ from UCLA actually shows that Phase 2 decreases the glycemic index of white bread. I cannot imagine why anyone would want to eat white bread on a regular basis, but the implication is clear: It lowers the transformation of carbs into glucose as they enter your bloodstream. That's what we're looking in our diet and why I recommend low glycemic healthy foods such as nuts, broccoli and lean proteins. Those subjects in the UCLA study also shed 3.79 pounds in eight weeks by taking 1.5 grams of phaseolamin with meals twice daily, more than double the results of those who got a placebo.

There are no serious side effects associated with Phase 2, although diarrhea has been reported by those taking doses far above the recommended levels. Phaseolamin or Phase 2 is an ingredient in many weight control products.

Recommended dosage: Take 1.5 grams (1,500 mg) of phase 2 daily of Phase 2 15 minutes before meals. Look for a product that contains Phaseolamin 2250™ for optimal effectiveness.

In Conclusion

I can't repeat often enough or strongly enough that these supplements should be combined with a healthy, nutrient rich, calorie controlled diet (1,200–1,500 calories) with low glycemic foods such as nuts, broccoli, salmon, whole grains, etc. providing 25–35 grams of fiber per day. A regular exercise program with 30–60 minutes every other day that is part of a healthy lifestyle is essential. Fast walking, aerobics, biking and other activities that increase your heart rate into the aerobic fat burning range are ideal. Also, you need to give the supplements, diet and exercise a chance to work. It may take up to 2 - 3 months to see an effect. The goal should be for moderate monthly reductions in weight, several pounds per month is great. Keep in mind that someone does not become overweight in one month, it usually takes years.

Also, please remember that these supplements contain powerful nutrients. Use the recommended dosages. You should also take a high quality multi-vitamin such as NSI's Synergy line. Finally, your doctor should be a partner in your weight control program and you should discuss the supplements you want to take with your physician if you are under the care of a doctor for any health conditions or concerns.

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