



10 top diets

...and
what
they're
all
about

by Sean Liphard

Chances are, one of your New Year's resolutions is to lose weight. In fact, at any one time, 45 percent of American women are dieting. Unfortunately, a National Institutes for Health study confirms that 97 percent of people who lose weight wind up gaining it all back within five years. So why do we spend \$40 billion a year on weight loss and dieting? It's all about the quick fix. You gotta look good for the wedding, swimsuit season, or that high school reunion coming up. It's called short-term thinking, and, well, it's just how we operate sometimes.

So, you need to drop a few pounds and you've decided to go on a diet, but there are hundreds to choose from. Where do you begin? How do you choose which one's right for you? Never fear! *H2O* is here to help you with a brief overview of 10 of the top diets around, listed in no particular order.

1.

Atkins Advantage. Developed by the late Dr. Robert Atkins, this diet is all about high protein, high fiber, high intake of vitamins and minerals, low intake of sugar and the elimination of trans fats. The diet works by reducing consumption of carbohydrates. Since the body uses carbohydrates as its preferred energy source, when these are cut out, the body then has to use fat and protein instead. Atkins is a popular diet because you don't have to cut out the food you like best. However, some experts believe that the high amounts of animal fat eaten on Atkins can have a negative effect on cholesterol levels and can lead to cardiac disease.

The website, www.atkins.com, provides recipes, meal plans, acceptable food lists for each phase of the diet, a carb counter, research library, product descriptions, and a step-by-step process on how to follow the diet.

2.

The Thrive Diet.

The Thrive Diet is a long-term healthy eating plan that is designed to help achieve optimal health through stress-busting plant-based whole foods. The plan explains why some foods directly create nutritional stress and how other foods can help reduce it and give you a lean body, sharp mind, and lasting energy. The Thrive Diet features the best whole foods

and explains their benefits, a 12-week whole foods menu plan, and over 75 easy-to-make recipes. The Thrive whole foods diet plan can help you reduce visible signs of aging; improve sleep quality and quicker recovery from exercise; enhance mood; eliminate junk food cravings and hunger; and build a stronger immune system. Brendan Brazier, creator of the The Thrive Diet, is a professional triathlete, author, speaker, and the creator of an award-winning meal replacement and energy bar formula called Vega.

To learn more, visit www.brendanfrazier.com.

3.

The Zone Diet. The Zone Diet is based on the idea that to achieve long-term weight loss you must reduce inflammation within your fat cells. To achieve this, all you have to do is eat the right combination of food, nourish your body with Omega-3 fatty acids it needs and exercise moderately.

For every gram of fat you consume you need to eat twice as many grams of protein and three times that amount in grams of carbohydrates. For example, the recommendation for females is that each meal contain approximately 10 grams of fat, 20 grams of protein and 30 grams of carbohydrates.

The Zone Diet operates as an online membership program and incorporates its own products and supplements. Members get access to online content like recipes, forums and diet programs, and can track their diet. For more information, visit www.zoneliving.com.

4.

Slim-Fast Diet. The Slim-Fast diet helps you reduce calorie intake by providing portion control along with good nutrition. The plan features two daily Slim-Fast Meals-nutritionally-balanced shakes or meal bars-along with a sensible meal and healthy snacks.

The Slim-Fast Diet prides itself on being easy to follow. The calories have already been counted and the nutrition built in to help take the guesswork out of dieting.

First, simply replace your breakfast with a Slim-Fast shake or bar. At lunch, you combine 200 calories of your desired food with a shake or bar. For dinner, enjoy a 500-calorie meal consisting of a plate with 1/2 veggies, 1/4 lean protein, 1/4 starch, and a separate salad and fruit. Calorie controlled healthy snacks are incorporated between meals.

The website, at www.slim-fast.com, provides customized meal plans, expert advice and weight loss tools.



5.

Weight Watchers. Weight Watchers has been helping people lose weight since the first meeting held in the early 1960s. Now, you can go to a meeting or follow the plan online.

The “Four Pillars” of the Weight Watchers approach (behavior, food, exercise, support) promote healthy habits, a supportive environment, and exercise, in addition to making smarter food choices.

Two food plans are offered. The Flex Plan is based on making better food choices by tracking points values. The Core Plan focuses on eating nutritious, satisfying foods without counting or tracking.

Weight Watchers meetings are designed to provide a motivating and informative environment led by a leader who has lost weight through the program and kept it off. Online users get access to interactive tools and videos, more than 1,500 recipes, workouts, and an extensive resource library. For more information, visit www.weightwatchers.com

6.

Nutrisystem. The Nutrisystem program includes a meal plan that allows you to choose from more than 120 prepackaged meals and desserts. You select your foods online or on the phone, and they arrive at your doorstep. The NutriSystem Nourish Women’s Program includes low Glycemic Index carbohydrates and the right amounts of protein and fiber, but are still low in fat. The meals are designed so that you add your own fresh fruits, vegetables, salads and dairy items. You get to eat five times a day on the plan, which helps reduce between meal cravings.

All the meals are portioned, so there is no weighing, measuring or counting calories and points.

Counselors, nutritionists and dieticians are available to answer questions by phone or email for free. For more information, visit www.nutrisystem.com.

7.

The South Beach Diet. The South Beach Diet is broken down into three different Phases. You’ll start in Phase 1 and follow it for two weeks, then move into Phase 2 to continue losing weight. Finally, Phase 3 is meant to last the rest of your life.

During Phase 1 you’ll eat lean meats, chicken, turkey, fish, and shellfish (vegetarians use meat substitutes and tofu), along with eggs, reduced-fat cheese, nuts, beans, and plenty of vegetables. No bread, rice, potatoes, pasta, baked goods, fruit, candy, cake, cookies, ice cream, sugar, beer or alcohol of any kind for two weeks.

Phase 2 reintroduces the right carbs, such as fruit and whole-grain breads and pastas. Once you reach your weight loss goal, you move into Phase 3.

Learn more about the South Beach Diet at www.southbeachdiet.com.

8.

Best Life Diet. Developed by Bob Green (the guy behind Oprah's 90-pound weight loss and marathon training), the Best Life program is a way of living – of eating, exercising, and viewing your life — that is meant to put you at your healthiest. The purpose, in addition to losing weight and keeping it off, is to develop habits that reduce your risk of diabetes, heart disease and other ills. The average number of calories dieters can expect to eat is 1,700 per day.

Subscribe to the three-phase program online and for less than \$5 per week, you'll get personalized daily and weekly meal plans, access to recipes, videos, message boards, newsletters and more.

Best Life is ideal for anyone looking to improve their eating habits and incorporate an exercise plan for weight loss and overall health. Visit www.thebestlife.com for more information.

9.

Jenny Craig. Jenny Craig is a reduced calorie diet that focuses on balanced nutrition (60 percent carbs, 20 percent fat, and 20 percent protein) which follows the Food Guide Pyramid. All membership options are offered at the centers or over the phone and require the purchase of Jenny's Cuisine, which averages \$11-\$15 per day. Basic program fees start at \$6 per week.

The diet consists of 1,200 calories per day, give or take a few hundred calories based on weight and age. You are assisted by a weekly journal and one-on-one sessions with a counselor, who's primary focus is teaching a healthy relationship with food and behavior modification, which includes living a more active lifestyle.

Exercise is not a primary focus, which makes it similar to most commercial diets. For more information, go to www.jennycraig.com.

10.

Maker's Diet. The Maker's Diet, created by Jordan S. Rubins, is based on the dietary guidelines set forth by God in the Bible and focuses on the four components of total health — the physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional.

The 40-day program is an introduction to The Maker's Diet lifestyle where participants learn the value of returning to the whole, unprocessed, natural foods.

The Maker's Diet is designed to attack the three I's — insulin, infection, and inflammation. By balancing insulin, you can improve physical, mental, and emotional health. By reducing infection, you can lessen the toxic burden placed on your body by your daily contact with germs. By lessening inflammation, you can reduce aches and pains and decrease risk factors for such diseases as heart disease and cancer. To learn more, visit www.makersdiet.com.

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