



Ten Tips to Make You Look and Feel Better

With the arrival of warm weather and summer, one's thoughts drift to....ahhhh, swimsuits! A few well-placed strategies can pay off much greater than a bonsai approach to shedding some of the winter insulation:

Make up your mind. Decide you are going to change and accept it. Partial commitment will lead to partial results. Just because you ate well and exercised for a week, don't expect to be at your goal. As the weeks go by, your progress will pick up momentum and changes will become much more visible. Many people blow it on this first point. Consistency is the key.

Think before you eat. When making food choices, honestly assess what you are considering eating. Ask yourself, "Will eating this food get me closer to my goal?" If not, then make a better choice. Listen, everyone loves French fries, donuts, etc., but eating these things on a regular basis will make it very difficult, if not impossible, to attain your desired shape. Eating for pleasure is a distinctly human experience. Our ability to make rationale food choices has been obliterated by the manufacture of foods that serve no purpose other than to taste fabulous. You may be saying, "Well, when I was younger I could eat these things." Well, that was then. This is now. Most people do not get enough daily movement to be able to eat for taste alone. Sorry. Food choices are a habit. Replace poor food choices with good ones, and it will become a new habit. You will find that you feel better when you eat properly, and ultimately will discover that the bad food makes you feel less than wonderful.

Do not buy junk food. Similar to the previous recommendation, this includes the omission of poor food choices from the home front. As the evening wears on, perhaps you develop a bit of a sweet tooth. You saunter to the kitchen for a little snacky-poo and realize, oops, no junk. If you don't have it, you won't eat it. A potentially disastrous encounter avoided.

Do not skip meals. Humans are periodic eaters and continuous metabolizers. The key is to keep your body's furnace burning all day long. Food is fuel for the fire. Without fuel, the fire will not burn as hot. Drastic calorie reduction and long periods without food will lead to a decline in your metabolic rate (due to less calories eaten and processed, declining hormonal levels and low energy). Skipping meals leads to the creation of hunger. Hunger makes people do stupid things. Your ability to make wise food choices becomes severely hampered when hunger kicks in. You begin to feel that whatever cannot outrun you is a viable food option. Smaller, more frequent bouts of eating (4-6 times a day) will help keep hunger at bay by keeping blood sugar levels under control. Additionally, this strategy reduces the likelihood of post-meal crashes that sap your energy.

Be honest with yourself. I'd like to add, if you work with a trainer, be honest with them as well. Half of a cookie is still calories. If one takes bites of something spread throughout the day, it still adds up. Fruit juice has calories. Sugar and cream in coffee and tea has calories. Alcohol has calories. It all counts. Count it.

Weigh and measure food for a week. Ah hah! You knew it was coming. While you may feel this is a total pain in the keister, it is probably one of the most valuable, educational things you can do. Once you begin to learn the caloric content of the foods you typically eat, it becomes much easier to eat the appropriate amount of food. This practice will also provide you with the understanding and visualization of appropriate serving sizes. A serving is not necessarily what they served you at the restaurant. The education you get from this one practice will last you a lifetime and simplify your quest to attain and maintain your ideal body.

Don't just sit there, move! Incorporate more movement into your daily activities. Let's put this into perspective; you spend an hour, maybe two, exercising. At best, this is 1/12 of the day. If you can find a way to integrate more movement

into the rest of your waking hours, just think how much of an impact that can have. Go for a walk at lunch or at a break. Park farther away. Take the stairs. Walk down the hall at work rather than use the intercom. Use the speakerphone at work and pace around the room as you talk. Do not take the path of least resistance.

Include resistance training. “But I don’t want to get big.” Don’t worry, you won’t.

Getting big and bulky takes a lot of work, calories, and time. Even if your goal is fat loss, this aspect of your training is paramount. Resistance exercise burns calories, strengthens bones, reduces risk of heart disease, improves strength and coordination for daily activities, makes you look better, and makes fat loss easier. After all, muscle is called “fat burning machinery.”

Take a multivitamin and mineral formula. People do not eat properly. You don’t eat properly. Even if you eat well, it isn’t good enough. The old, romantic notion that we can easily get everything we need from food is gone. Reality sets in at some point. Americans today don’t move that much. This lowers their caloric requirements to prevent weight gain. Take away food and you take away nutrients in that food. With a goal of fat loss, this implies that calories taken in must be less than what is needed and used. Again, a gap between nutrients in and nutrients out. I know you mean well, but you don’t eat the best foods and you are a little short in the fresh fruit and vegetable department. Finally, studies are continuously emerging that show the benefits of many nutrients with intakes considerably above the RDA. During a fat loss attempt, consider a properly designed multiple vitamin and mineral formula as nutrients, without the calories.

Mix it up. Most of us have certain machines or exercises that we really enjoy, that we are really good at. Well, you get good at something when your body adapts. When your body adapts, you tend to burn less calories doing that activity. So, every two weeks or so, change up your cardio and exercise routines. Training the same trains you to stay the same.

Well, that is it. Ten simple, basic strategies to help you achieve your swimsuit shape quickly and easily. There is no magic solution. It is not dependant upon a special pill; the perfect ratio of protein, carbohydrate, and fat; or a secret sequence of exercises. It takes common sense, discipline, and consistency. If you expect miraculous results in a

week and will give up if you do not see them, then save yourself the trouble. The truth is you must consistently eat properly, and you must include movement and exercise into your life, forever. The good news is it's not that difficult. It just needs to be done.

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