

6 Weight-Loss Secrets from a Health Coach

In any profession, there is knowledge that you can learn through books, classes or research, and there is knowledge that you can only see through first-hand experience with clients. That's where real life meets science. In my work, I've discovered six secrets about why people become stalled in their health and weight loss goals, and how to kickstart great habits – and results – immediately.



1. You won't drink enough water unless you track it. We all know that we have to drink water. Experts have been saying this for years. The problem is that it's easier said than done, and it's the first habit people forget about when they fall off track. When my clients gain or maintain weight from week to week, the first thing I ask about is their water

intake. In nearly every case, their water intake is low. The problem is that water is key to eliminating cravings and curbing hunger. I shoot for 6 Smart Life water bottles a day (approximately 120 fl. ounces) and I make sure that I reach my goal every day by marking a dot on my hand or a piece of paper to count each one. Why? Because when I try to guess how many bottles I've had, I always overestimate the number. To keep myself sipping, I add flavor from fruit, fresh herbs or flavored Stevia drops.



2. Hunger is not a muscle we need to strengthen. Many of us think that the only way to truly lose weight is to learn to deal with hunger. The myth is that hunger cues will subside over time. They won't. The truth is that depriving yourself of food stands in the way of weight loss. When you're hungry, your body goes into stress fat storage mode and your metabolism slows down, which prevents you from dropping pounds. What I learned first-hand is that you need to journal what you eat. Using a simple pocket notebook, a diary or your

smart phone, list your meals and snacks to keep yourself honest about what you actually consume and help yourself avoid skipping meals and feeling hungry. Most of my clients don't lose weight until they try this trick.



3. Eating out stops weight loss. Period. “But it’s a healthy restaurant,” all of my clients say. Or, “it’s the same meal I would’ve made at home.” Actually, it’s not. Restaurants have hidden ingredients, larger portions and preservatives that mess up digestion and slow down weight loss. I help my clients reduce the number of times they eat out by showing them that they can make easy, healthy meals at home. On the weeks that my clients cook at home, they lose more weight and save money. When they eat out, they gain or maintain the same weight. The key to this is to pre-make ingredients that you can mix and match for simple healthy and delicious meals. Also, remember that not every meal has to be so sophisticated; it isn’t the last meal you will ever enjoy in this lifetime. Pairing some veggies with a clean protein or whole grain will work

brilliantly on most nights. Eggs are an easy protein to make last minute for any meal, and stocking up on some frozen black bean veggie burgers is also fast, easy, and good for you.



4. Choose your demon (you only get one). When people decide they are “letting go” and cheating on their eating goals, they overdo it and go for everything in a single meal – alcohol, dessert, fatty protein *and* But you don’t need to cheat all the way. Instead of thinking you’ll be either “good” or “bad” during a meal (or an entire day), choose one vice. Maybe enjoy a bit more alcohol because a friend is sharing a special bottle *or* eat the bread because this restaurant is known for its baker. Decide before you go out which “demon” will be worth the splurge and stick to it. The next day is another “smart life” day, but the next course can even be another “smart life” course. When you indulge on everything, your body won’t lose weight for a few days while it’s detoxing everything you splurged on.



5. Healthy food and snacks must be as simple as junk food.

I've learned that if you don't find ways to make your healthy snacks easily, you'll go back to the convenience of what's readily available: junk. I show my clients new products, frozen meals, snacks, and on-the-go items that are both nutritious and easy to make or eat. These aren't always fresh veggies and fruits, but they're organic, they include few ingredients, and they're so much better than processed options. Try organic veggie burgers, organic frozen vegan meals, organic frozen quinoa and brown rice, organic frozen veggies and fruit, fruit bars made from real fruit, gluten-free and organic black bean chips, quinoa chips, lentil chips or chickpeas. True, chips are still packaged snack food, so you don't want to eat them all at once, but if you need something crunchy, eat a few organic gluten-free black bean chips. The idea is to have some healthy foods on hand that are quick and easy to grab when you have cravings.



6. Your mindset can help you break any plateaus. Most of us know what's good to eat and what's not, but it's challenging to stay motivated long enough for our bodies to reach the point where we can't even tolerate bad food. Consistency is crucial. Just when you think you are plateauing is when change is about to happen. When getting healthy, most of my clients lose 6 to 8 pounds immediately, but then hit a plateau where weight no longer drops off consistently. What happens with weight loss is that your body replaces fat in cells with water first. Water weighs more than fat. It's only as water leaves the cells that you see weight loss. That's normal and it's why you're not going to lose weight every day. Accept that plateaus are natural and re-examine what's holding you back. Wait it out, stick with the plan, re-visit your weight loss tips and secrets, and your body will respond. This type of roadblock is also the time you may need a coach, or someone in your corner, who will guide you through the uncomfortable phases and keep you on track and moving toward your goals.

Surviving the Holiday Season the Smart Life Way!

As you continue on your holiday adventures, I wanted to be sure you were armed with 3 of my favorite supplements. They are especially helpful for digesting heavy meals and keeping your blood sugar balanced if you're eating things your body might not be used to.

My 3 favorite supplements for digestive health:

1. **Chromium Picolinate** – This trace mineral can boost your insulin's response, so is especially good for meals heavy on the carbohydrates.
 2. **Cinnamon** – This power-food has been proven to reduce blood sugar levels and triglycerides in patients with type 2 diabetes, which means that it can be super-effective for those of us with hormonal blood-sugar sensitivities. Sprinkle it on your meals, or pick up a supplement packed with the good stuff.
 3. **Digestive Enzymes** – These enzymes help you break down the food you eat and absorb nutrients better. If you experience indigestion, gas, or bloating, try them out! Rainbow Light is one of my favorite brands.
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4 Mental Tricks To Spring Clean Your Mind

A new season brings a whole host of new opportunities to stretch yourself and make your health dreams come true. Your best foundation for change? A positive attitude. Try these four mind tricks for getting your brain onboard for your healthiest transformation yet.

1. Inspire yourself with morning gratitude. Most experts recommend to end the day reminding yourself of all the positive things in your life. I like to flip the model. I tell Smart Life clients to start the day thinking about what makes them happy, what they're excited about and what goals they've already achieved. It's a great way to kickstart the day's success.

2. Make new connections. Spring comes, you're often in the mood to go out and engage with the world. It's the perfect time to join a new social group, take a new class or start a new project to renew your sense of commitment. Participating in new activities also keeps you busy, supported and less likely to dwell on what you're eating. If you need motivation, ask a friend to join. Or, better yet, connect with an acquaintance you'd like to get closer to, especially someone who's positive and uplifting.

3. Write down your health goals for Spring. All change, big and small, starts with intention. List all the things you want for yourself – weight loss, greater energy, more happiness, less stress. Imagine yourself as if they're attained and keep them in the front of your mind throughout your day. The more connected you are to what you intend to create for yourself, the more likely you are to make smarter choices in every moment.

4. Take a page from Julia Cameron and start a Morning Pages habit. You know that time every morning when you're half awake, half asleep and not quite fully conscious? That's when you have access to your unconscious mind and inner workings. If you listen, they can guide you in your biggest transformation yet. The process is easy and takes only 3 to 4 minutes. Keep your journal by your bed and reach for it while you are still half asleep. Write down any memories you may have of your dreams. Next, write 10 things you're grateful for from yesterday. Next, harness that stream of consciousness by writing one to two pages of whatever crosses your mind. You'll get out those repressed thoughts so you can remind yourself that you're not your thoughts and nothing can hold you back.

Spring Ahead with Clean Eating

Our bodies naturally cleanse every day. But in the modern world, environmental toxins and food additives are putting increasing stress on our organs.

The body protects you from harmful toxins by producing mucous or fat to prevent an immune reaction. But what happens when there are too many toxins in the body and too much mucous as a result? The body can carry up to 15 pounds of mucous, which can lead to excess weight, fatigue, poor digestion, food intolerances and a weakened immune system.

A safe and effective clean eating program clears out the toxins that are stored in the fat cells. By eating clean regularly, you can rejuvenate your body on a cellular level.

To be healthy, your cells need the following:

- Oxygen
- Healthy foods containing nutrients and minerals
- Proper hydration
- Well-functioning detoxification pathways

Simply put, when you are not getting these four building blocks for cell regeneration, you will not feel your best. You may notice issues like joint pain, susceptibility to injuries and infections, digestive disturbances and poor sleep, to name a few.

What Is “Clean Eating?”

This is a phrase that has become very popular in the past few years. Clean eating is not a fad diet, but a way of life. Clean eating means cutting out processed foods and instead, eating organic produce along with organic, hormone-free meat, dairy, and eggs from pasture-raised animals. By choosing ingredients in their most natural, whole state including clean animal or plant based proteins, and preparing them in healthy fats, you reduce inflammation in your body, balance your pH levels, and improve vitality.

To paraphrase Hippocrates, food is medicine.

Following these three steps will get you there:

1. Remove processed foods from your diet.

This is a big umbrella, but it's an ugly one to live under. No more boxed cereal, frozen pizza, or on-the-go prepackaged meals and snacks, like Lunchables. Remember, these foods are supposedly designed to make life “faster,” “easier,” and “more convenient,” not healthier. As often as you can, stick to whole, unprocessed foods, those as close to nature as you can get. Not only are they more nutrient and vitamin dense, but their extra fiber and water content will also keep your metabolism humming and keep you feeling fuller for longer. When you're at the grocery store, ask yourself, “Would my great-grandmother have eaten this? Would she even know what it

is?" This will help you shift to nutrient-rich foods, such as spinach and kale instead of rich, sugary, and calorie-dense foods like ice cream, baked goods and crackers.

2. Lighten up on the inflammatory foods.

Yes, we're talking meat and refined carbs (think steaks and sugars). To be clear, it's not that all meat is bad for you... it's that too much meat is bad for you. A diet high in *conventionally* raised red meat and refined carbs can cause estrogen overload, whether from hormones in the meat or from the type of bacteria cultivated in the gut by people who eat a lot of meat. The "wrong" bacteria – the kind that doesn't metabolize estrogen – is predominantly found in people who consume large amounts of meats and refined carbs. I recommend a diet that includes pastured meats and dairy that lack synthetic hormones and antibiotics, and avoids the "white carbs" (sugar, high fructose corn syrup, and white flour).

3. Avoid "The Dirty Dozen," the most contaminated fruits and vegetables

Conventionally grown fruits and vegetables are often billed as health food, but come with many traces of toxic pesticides. The produce listed below was deemed The Dirty Dozen by the Environmental Working Group because according to testing, they contain the highest number of pesticides. Whenever possible, choose organic or if you've got a yard, start a garden!

Meet The Dirty Dozen:

1. **Apples.** More than 40 pesticides have been found on apples, in apple sauce, and in apple juice. Removing the peel does remove a lot of the toxins, but it also removes most of the fiber and vitamins!
2. **Celery.** If you're making crudité, asparagus and cauliflower are a safer bet.
3. **Strawberries.** Strawberries can carry up to 60 pesticides on their cute red skins, although frozen strawberries often show lower levels.

4. **Peaches.** Mangoes are a safer option if organic peaches aren't available.
 5. **Spinach**
 6. **Lettuce**
 7. **Kale**
 8. **Imported Nectarines.** Tangerines are a safer option, if organic nectarines aren't available.
 9. **Imported Grapes.** Kiwi contains few pesticides and comes in snackable sizes.
 10. **Bell Peppers**
 11. **Potatoes.** Try sweet potatoes for fewer pesticides and a delicious taste!
 12. **Blueberries.** Frozen blueberries are somewhat safer.
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10 Tricks for Tackling Health in 2014

It's easy to slip off track with our health goals during the holiday season, but the New Year is the perfect time for a fresh start. Whatever your fitness level or weight-loss goals, try incorporating one or two of these smart tricks to help you speed your results.

1. **Become "breathless".** Regardless of what types of activities you normally do, make sure to fit in cardio at least twice a week. While less aerobic activities, like yoga or weight lifting, have countless benefits, workouts that leave you breathless help jumpstart your metabolism and drop weight more quickly.
2. **Mix it up.** Some people think we're more likely to stick to a program if we create a weekly schedule and stick to it. Not me. Our lives are too hectic. Instead of

committing to a specific routine – Monday night spinning, Tuesday night yoga, Wednesday night kickboxing, and so on – commit to exercising a certain number of times per week. One week you might take three morning Pilates classes, while the next week, you can only fit in lunchtime Spinning classes. This way, just because you miss your favorite workout, you don't skip the gym altogether.

3. **Add movement, whenever, wherever.** Movement is more about a lifestyle, rather than an hour-a-day commitment in a class or at the gym. It's about squeezing in health every chance you get. Here are a few tricks I love: Take a walk when you're bored. Walk home after work, the gym or dinner out instead of taking a cab or train. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Walk up the escalator in stores. Use bathrooms on different floors at work. Get lunch from a place further away and opt for take-out, not delivery.
4. **Book one "Surprise Myself" exercise class each week.** After I reach my workout goal for the week, I add one more class I didn't plan on taking. I think about it as 'treat' to my health! It varies. Some weeks, I'll take a new instructor; other weeks, I'll try something completely different. I burn more calories and always find new activities I love. If surprising myself doesn't happen, I don't get discouraged because I've already hit my targets.
5. **Upgrade your salads.** Take your health up a notch by not wasting your time on romaine or mixed greens. The smarter choice? Kale, spinach, arugula and watercress, which are higher in vitamins and minerals. Once you've got your base, load it with nutrient- and fiber-dense vegetables. You'll get fuller faster and cut down your calories without feeling deprived. I top mine with flax seed or extra virgin olive oil, lemon juice and herbs, rather than dressings especially when I don't know what's in them!

6. **Make veggies your main plate.** Most people follow the formula: choose your protein then build side dishes around it. I say flip the model and pick your produce first. Start with roasted veggies, salad or veggie soup, then top them with grilled chicken, poached salmon or a cup of whole grain like quinoa. Finally, use spices and herbs to jazz up flavor, rather than butter and salt. It's a great way to try new vegetables or taste combinations, rather than stick with the traditional, boring and tasteless romaine with tomatoes combo (I couldn't stick with that menu either!). Nearly all my clients start with this easy strategy to jumpstart weight loss.
7. **Keep it simple in the kitchen.** It doesn't take a culinary degree, a library of cookbooks or a pantry filled with high-tech gadgets to make a fantastic and healthy meal. Look for simple recipes that call for what you already have in the kitchen or require 5 or fewer ingredients. If you need inspiration, try this trick: Next time you buy fish, ask the salesperson for their fastest, easiest, most flavorful preparation. Same strategy goes with dining out and delivery. Choose entrees with the fewest ingredients and simplest preparation, like grilled fish or chicken with no sauce. Cutting down on just two restaurant meals a week will dramatically change how you look and feel.
8. **Don't listen to your mother (when it comes to eating!).** Sorry, mom, but we don't have to finish what's on our plate. That's the fast track to weight gain. After a meal, you should leave feeling energized from your food, rather than lethargic and stuffed. My favorite trick? I stop eating when I feel that if I had to get up and take an easy exercise class, I could handle it. That's pretty easy to do when you eat slowly, sitting down (versus on your commute) and with the TV off.
9. **Keep healthy snacks ready to go.** Stash them everywhere you might need to nosh – your gym bag, your office, your

handbag, your apartment. Snacking between meals keeps your metabolism revved and blood sugar levels balanced. Plus, when you get to meals feeling like you can eat like a horse, you usually do! Opt for raw vegetables and fresh fruit instead of processed bodega snacks. Or, make your own trail mix and divide it into small storage bags. I mix cocoa nibs, dried fruit, raw almonds and raw cashews. Sometimes I don't feel hungry, but if it's there, it's much better than grabbing a bag of chips or a high-calorie, processed bar.

10. **Remember your motivation.** Why do want to lose weight? To look better in your clothes? To feel more energetic? Or to simply improve your overall health? First, get clear about what you want, and then use that desire to inspire you throughout your journey. Train your brain to think positively and don't let negativity mess with your health (or your head!). Next, eliminate the phrase "I can't" and replace it with a phrase that says, "I can and I will." Use this mantra to stay on track. Mine is "I can do this – I am living the Smart Life." Whenever I start making excuses to skip a workout or cheat on my diet, I say my mantra aloud and instantly feel energized.

What I learned about my

health in 2013...

We all eat, all day and every day, yet for some reason so many people are confused about food. What fascinates me about being a health coach is seeing how we truly are what we eat and how the key to health is each person's individual needs. What I noticed this year with my Smart Life clients is the more they improve their health, the more empowered they feel to pursue the life they want to live.

As I reflect back over the year, I'm inspired by all the changes and epiphanies my clients have shared with me as they've begun to live a Smart Life. I've shared some below and hopefully they'll inspire you, too, as you set new challenges for yourself in 2014.

What I learned about my health in 2013 ...

"... That I have much more control over my health than I ever imagined! I also learned that prioritizing my health truly does make a difference in other areas of my life."

"... A radical new way to look at food. This year I turned 59 and there was no way I wanted to enter my sixth decade as a fat, tired woman. With Ronit's help, I've tried new foods and adopted different diet strategies. Not only have I lost weight, but I have gained so much valuable information on how to eat healthier. I'm eating "smarter" today than ever."

"... To say goodbye to my Weight Watchers app and stop counting calories! I learned to eat healthy whole foods and not only did I finally lose the weight, I also gained freedom from the annoyance of counting points and calories."

" ... Small changes add up to big results. Adopting a healthier lifestyle can seem daunting and impossible, but adding just one simple change every week adds up over the course of a year. I've made small changes in my diet and exercise routines

one step at a time. It's been as simple as adding 10 minutes to my workout, choosing to reduce the amount of animal protein I consume in a week or switching to organic produce. Just one change per week allowed me to embrace a healthier lifestyle. The physical changes were enormous. I look better, but more important, I'm much healthier than I was two years ago with more energy and stamina than I had 10 years ago!"

" ... How much health and happiness go hand in hand. When I made smarter choices about my diet, my mood changed drastically. I felt better about myself and that confidence improved my relationships and my productivity at work. Those little successes kept me motivated to stick with it. The better I felt the healthier I wanted to be."

" ... Staying connected to people who inspire me is important in keeping my goals top of mind. Being part of the Smart Life community not only empowers me but it holds me responsible to me and reminds me to put myself first."

"...2013 has been a wake up call for me... I learned that the most important thing in life is to take care of myself. With Ronit's help, I learned how to nourish my body with whole foods and plenty of fresh vegetables. Trying new spices, herbs and simpler ways of cooking made choosing new foods a breeze. Bring on 2014...I am ready!!!"

5 Reasons to Love Quinoa

Quinoa may be a super food, but most people don't find it super interesting. I disagree! It packs the same amount of protein per serving as milk, while giving you loads of nutrients, vitamins and minerals. It can easily stand alone in meals or be incorporated into a variety of healthy and flavorful recipes.

Not convinced to put this powerful grain into your meal rotation yet? Maybe these five reasons will change your mind:

1. **It super fuels your body with energy.** Cooked quinoa contains approximately 8 grams of protein per cup, according to the USDA. It's also one of the few vegetarian complete proteins, meaning it contains all 9 essential amino acids your body needs. Try it for breakfast or lunch to help you power through tough afternoon workouts or long days at work.
2. **It stimulates healthy digestion.** One cup of quinoa contains a healthy serving of 5 grams of fiber, which improves digestion, lowers cholesterol levels, controls blood sugar and helps you maintain a healthy weight.
3. **It's a nutrient-dense food.** Quinoa is an amazing source of iron, magnesium, calcium, potassium, folate (a B vitamin) and more. In fact, a recent study showed that the grain contains the same concentrated amounts of two flavonoids, quercetin and kaempferol, as found in antioxidant-rich berries like cranberries and lionberries.
4. **It's naturally low in calories.** One cup of quinoa boasts just 222 calories. Because of its high levels of protein and fiber, this healthy carbohydrate doesn't convert quickly to sugar in your body. This means it doesn't spike your blood sugar levels and keeps you feeling fuller longer.
5. **It's a versatile grain.** Breakfast, lunch and dinner?

Check, check and check! Quinoa can be prepared in delicious ways at all mealtimes. And research has shown that this superfood's nutrient profile isn't compromised by boiling, steaming or simmering. Toss it in salads, stir-fries, soup and porridge, or shape it into a veggie burger or a sushi roll.

10 Tricks that Speed Weight Loss

When you're trying to drop pounds, these healthy tips may help you shed them faster. Try one or two! All you've got to lose is weight.

You Want it? Be Smart and Make it Happen

Two friends are chatting about their diets. The first one says, *"I want to be healthy and feel great."* The second one says, *"I intend to be healthy and feel great."*

Which one do you think is going to get healthy and feel great? Yup – the one who intends it.

Wanting is simply *wishing* you can have or do a particular thing it. *Intending* means you're committed to achieving

something by making a plan for success—and sticking to it!

The Fuel for Desired Results

The key to intention is action – try this to build your intention muscle:

- Get clear on what you want. Create a vision board by gathering images and words that pertain to your goal, and gluing them onto a large piece of construction paper. Hang the collage in a spot where you'll see it often.
- Do something to make your desire happen. Let's say you want to eat four servings of vegetables a day. Your first action may be to go to a farmers' market and purchase a few veggies you can cook for dinner.
- Celebrate your achievement! Don't forget to congratulate yourself for meeting your goal.

How to Have a Great Day... Every Day!

Did you know that you can even set an intention to have a great day?

Rather than diving into your morning and hoping you'll achieve your day's big goal, why not take a moment and set yourself up for success?

Try this **"Setting An Intention to Succeed"** exercise used by professional athletes, speakers, politicians, and performers:

- Upon waking, lie in bed and think about what you have planned for your day (or, find a quiet spot to sit and contemplate).
- Think about your desired outcome. Take a deep breath and visualize yourself succeeding.
- Replay your success several times in your mind.
- Next, add other senses, including sounds, smells, and touch. For instance, as you replay your

success, you now also hear the director offering you the gig, or you feel the physical sensation of your finger hitting the “send” button on your latest assignment.

- Lastly, replay the scene again, adding emotions. Feel your elation at getting the part, or your pride at finally finishing your work.

You can perform An Intention to Succeed, throughout the day as desired.

Get even healthier – Begin your transformation!

Do you intend to lose weight, eat healthy, and feel fantastic? Make a plan to succeed by getting the support you need! As a Health Coach, I specialize in helping people make their own healthy changes. Ready to get started living the Smart Life? Schedule a FREE One Hour Consultation with me today—or pass this offer on to someone you care about!