

The Smart Way to Blast Fat

Don't wait for the New Year to start your weight-loss resolutions. Blasting fat and dropping pounds are easy to do year-round (even during the party season) when you understand how your body works.

Below are some easy ways to stop storing—and start releasing—fat to avoid those creeping cold-weather pounds, despite winter blahs, hectic holiday hours and non-stop celebrations.

1. **Switch to SMARTer Caffeine.** That morning mug of coffee sounds like the perfect quick fix to burn fat and spike energy when you're tired. Problem is that drinking caffeine on an empty stomach tells your body to store fat, not release it. Switch to a gentler pick-me-up, like **green tea**, followed by a B vitamin. This more caffeine-friendly lifestyle powers up your **energy** without boosting your waistline.
2. **Keep a consistent meal plan.** Skipping meals or maintaining irregular meal schedules puts you on the fast track for storing fat. When you're depleted, your blood sugar drops, triggering your endocrine system to move leftover sugar to where you store fat (think love handles, muffin tops and thighs). Fat is simply stored glucose. Instead, **schedule your eating** at regular times to keep blood sugar levels balanced and don't rebel. The more you mother yourself this winter, the better you'll look and feel.
3. **Stop avoiding fat in your diet.** Despite what you read in the media, fat is not a four-letter word. But, "low-fat" and "fat-free" might as well be. The ingredients in low- and no-fat foods – chemicals, preservatives and sugars – added to make up for taste, sabotage your body's ability to absorb nutrients, create inflammation and turn your cells into fat-storing machines.

4. **Move after meals.** Don't eat and stay seated after you're finished. Instead, spend 5 minutes away from the table and moving. Even a slow walk or mini stretch session signals your brain, liver and endocrine system that it's time to use what you just ate for fuel. Pronto!
5. **Eat like a European.** Prevent fat storage while you sleep by eating your biggest meal at mid-day. The perfect size lunch is about 400 to 500 calories, then lighten up at dinner.