



“I find that anytime I try to lose weight by eating less, I end up starving and then eating everything in sight by 4pm. How do I reduce my calorie intake without becoming a raving hunger monster?” – Val

This is a great question Val! Since we’re not nutritionists, we enlisted the help of some of our favorite eat-right experts to tackle your question.

Here’s what they said:

1) Fill up on protein and fiber

“Calories are important, but the quality of the food is more significant. For example if you were eating whole grain English muffin with 2 tbsp. of peanut butter for breakfast and decided to cut back on calories and instead have a mini pita pocket with jelly you should be starving! You went from high fiber grains in the English muffin that help keep you full, with good fat and some protein, to a pita that is usually all white flour (which becomes sugar fast) and topped it with more sugar. What is important is to start your day with a filling breakfast and a hearty lunch". -[Sharon Richter](#), Registered Dietitian

“Protein and fiber take longer to digest and keep you fuller longer. Pile on a variety of fresh veggies or serve up fruit, but be sure to include whole grain and or lean protein because the fruit and vegetables alone, though nutrient-dense and low in calories, will not keep you satisfied for long”. -[Lauren O'Connor](#), MS, RD

2) Cut back on calories without starvation

"Snack on foods that are high in water and fiber. For example, for the same number of calories you can have 1/4 cup (1 oz) raisins or an entire large apple (8 oz). The apple will take up more room in your stomach and be absorbed more slowly, so you'll stay fuller for longer. Modify your favorite meals to include more vegetables and fruits. No need to give up pasta or chili, just replace some of the noodles or meat with veggies so that the veggies make up the bulk of the meal. Same goes for dessert: instead of a whole bowl of ice cream, have a small scoop topped with a cup of berries. The berries add bulk, fiber, and replace some of the calorie-dense ice cream". - [Amelia Winslow](#), MS, MPH

"When cutting back on calories, I suggest: 1) Limit starches at dinner. 2) Watch salad dressings, mayo, cheese, etc. and 3) Leave 2 bites at each meal

to gradually cut back (if your portions are too big)". -[Sharon Richter](#), Registered Dietitian

"The key to reducing calories is in the type of foods you choose and how you pair them - not necessarily in the size and amount. For instance, a whole head of lettuce without anything on it is far less caloric than a small brownie or muffin. However, that lettuce alone isn't going to keep you satisfied. So consider adding a few walnuts, some type of fiber-rich whole grain (try quinoa) and /or some tasty lean protein. (A minimal amount balsamic dressing or simply olive oil and lemon will be your best bet - steer clear of calorie laden dressings such as blue cheese or Caesar). – [Lauren O'Connor](#), MS, RD

3) Eat high quality foods

"Pick foods that are low in calories but high in nutrients. Making sure your diet includes mostly foods like vegetables, fruits, beans, low-fat dairy, and lean meats -- which are high in nutritional value -- means you won't have to eat as much to get the nutrients your body needs". - [Amelia Winslow](#), MS, MPH

"Remember, while processed foods such as chips, muffins, scones may be tasty, they won't keep you satisfied for long. They are often full of sugars, salt and fats – all of which keep you craving more. Even the low-fat/low calorie ones will doom you in the end as simple carbohydrates process quickly in the body and you will soon be craving more". Snacks like apple slices with a tbsp. of nut butter, yogurt with whole grain cereal and fresh fruit or low-fat cheese and whole grain crackers are all great examples. Try poached salmon or lean skinless chicken on a bed of mixed greens or with mixed vegetables, or a lean chicken sandwich on whole grain bread with lettuce, tomato and cucumber (easy on the mayo or use hummus or a light brush of olive oil instead) for meals". - [Lauren O'Connor](#), MS, RD

Our last bites of advice?

Don't forget to check in with your hunger level. We've heard many experts say 'if you aren't hungry enough to eat an apple, you aren't really hungry'. And you know what? They're right (as tough as that may be to swallow when staring down that bag of chips).

Did you know that stomach grumbling, headaches and light-headedness are not normal symptoms of hunger? Learn about how you can lose weight, feel full on less calories and avoid 'toxic hunger' in this great article from [The Huffington Post](#) on how eating real, nutrient dense foods and redefining 'hunger' can help you lose weight.

And losing weight doesn't mean you have to stop snacking either, In fact, a recent study from Louisiana State University showed that the more snacks you eat, the less you weigh! Subjects who ate 3 meals plus 4 snacks a day weighed 16 lbs. less (and had smaller waists) than their non-snacking counterparts. Make it work for you with these [under 200 calorie healthy snack ideas](#).

And finally, check out our list of the [8 Best Satisfying, Filling Foods for Weight Loss](#) to help you make every bite count!