

***Low-Calorie  
Dieting***  
FOR  
**DUMMIES<sup>®</sup>**

**by Susan McQuillan, MS, RD**



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## *Dedication*

To Molly, who never misses a meal, but who often has to wait for dinner while her mom is helping other people find better ways to eat.

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# Introduction

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**I**f your love affair with food is out of hand or if you've developed a love-hate relationship with food that makes eating an unpleasant experience, you have the right book in your hands. I've been a dietitian, and a food and nutrition writer and editor, for almost 20 years. I've seen it all when it comes to weight control — every diet, every gimmick, every scheme devised to trick people into thinking that weight loss will come easy if you just buy the right product or read the right book. I'm here to convince you that the only real solution to weight control is to eat right, exercise regularly, and stay away from fad diets. I offer no gimmicks, but I can make this promise: If you're ready to give up on quick-fix diets and commit to a low-calorie lifestyle, you'll shed pounds and maintain a healthier weight for good.

Whether you're trying to lose 15 pounds or 150 (or some number of pounds in between), there's only one sure way to do it. You must eat less and exercise more. If that's all you need to know, then you can close this book and start losing weight. If you need a little more guidance, read on.

## *About This Book*

In this book you can find a low-calorie diet plan, complete with weeks and weeks of calorie-controlled menus and more than 60 optional recipes. (Optional means that the recipes fit right into menu plans, but you don't have to use them if you don't feel like cooking.) You can skip the first five chapters of this book, if you prefer, and go straight to the plan. Or, if you need some time to prepare yourself, you can start reading anywhere in this book and pick up plenty of weight-loss advice and inspiration.

I like to think that as soon as you start reading, you won't be able to put this book down; you'll want to consume every word (so to speak) from cover to cover. Every chapter is an independent, self-contained unit. If one chapter has something that needs explanation or information found in another chapter, you find a reference. You know where to go for more information.

Much of what's in this book may not apply to you right now. Weight loss happens in stages, and this book covers all those stages, so you probably want to find out what you need to know to get through the stage you're in right now. Then, when you're ready to move on to the next stage, you can flip to the appropriate chapter and read more.

That's the great thing about *For Dummies* books. You can open them up to any chapter and start reading; you don't have to start at the beginning and end at the end. In fact, *For Dummies* books never really end. They're reference books that you can keep on your bookshelf to refer to again and again.

## Conventions Used in This Book

This book contains more than 60 recipes and several conventions hold for them. The best way to prepare any dish from a recipe, by the way, is to read the recipe through before you begin, gather all the required equipment and ingredients, and measure and prepare any ingredients as indicated in the ingredient list before moving on to the general directions.

For successful cooking, follow the recipe directions in step-by-step order and be aware of the following conventions:

- ✔ Ingredients are listed in the order in which they're used. Arranging them in this order on your work surface can be helpful.
- ✔ All measurements are level. Flour, sugar, and other dry ingredients are measured in graduated metal or plastic cups that can be filled to the top and leveled off with a metal spatula or the dull side of a knife. Liquid ingredients are measured in a spouted glass or plastic measuring cup with extra room at the top to prevent spilling. Place the measuring cup on a flat surface and fill with liquid, bending to read the measure at eye level, if necessary.
- ✔ Dairy products are usually reduced-fat or fat-free varieties unless otherwise specified.
- ✔ Eggs are large.
- ✔ Onions are yellow unless otherwise specified.
- ✔ Salt is table salt.
- ✔ Pepper is freshly ground black pepper unless otherwise specified.
- ✔ Preheating directions are included in all recipes that call for the use of an oven, grill, or broiler. Allow at least 15 minutes for the oven to come to the correct temperature.
- ✔ All temperatures are Fahrenheit. (Check out Appendix C for information about converting temperatures to Celsius.)
- ✔ A recipe that yields 4 servings may serve four people or it may serve only two or three, depending on the eating habits of your fellow diners. For you and anyone else who is following a low-calorie diet plan, a single serving fits the parameters of this diet.

- ✔ The nutrition information at the end of each recipe is based on the ingredients called for in that recipe. If you change the ingredients, the nutrition information will change too.
- 🍅 If you need or want vegetarian recipes, scan the list of “Recipes in This Chapter” on the first page of each chapter in Part IV. A little tomato in front of the name of a recipe marks that recipe as vegetarian. (See the tomato to the left of this paragraph.)

Here are some other nonrecipe conventions you find in this book:

- ✔ *Italic* emphasizes and highlights new words or terms that are defined in the text.
- ✔ **Boldfaced** text indicates the action part of numbered steps.
- ✔ `Monofont` identifies Web addresses.

When this book was printed, some Web site addresses may have been broken across two lines of text. If you come across one like that, rest assured that I didn't put in any extra characters (such as a hyphen) to indicate the break. When you go to find the site, you can type in exactly what you see in this book, as if the line break doesn't exist.

## *What You're Not to Read*

In a handful of instances in this book, you may find text preceded by a Technical Stuff icon. You can ignore this information if you're not interested in knowing more about the topic at hand. If you're in a hurry, you can also ignore the few sidebars (those shaded gray boxes) you see throughout the book. Although the information in these sidebars is topical and interesting, it's not essential to understanding the subject. Sidebar material and anything marked Technical Stuff both fall into the category of information that is merely nice to know.

## *Foolish Assumptions*

I make very few assumptions about my readers, but I do know that some of you have been down this road before. Using this book may not be your first attempt at losing weight. If that's true, I can assume that you already know a lot about the basics of low-calorie dieting, so I try to keep everything as interesting and eye-opening for you as it is for first-timers.

Regardless of how many diets you've been on in your life, I can assume that right now you're looking for motivation and a good weight-loss plan because you're holding on to a strong vision of a leaner, healthier, you. Rest assured; this plan can help turn your dream into a reality.

## *How This Book Is Organized*

This book contains 17 riveting chapters that have been organized into six parts, including the three appendixes. What follows is a summary of what you can find in each part.

### *Part I: Understanding the Basics of Low-Calorie Dieting*

This part of the book helps you start a low-calorie diet plan by introducing you to easy-to-read weight charts and simple formulas so you can figure out how much weight you can realistically expect to lose and how many calories you need to cut from your diet in order to lose them. This part assists you to evaluate your weight-loss history, understand your metabolism, and see why eating well is so important on a low-calorie diet.

### *Part II: Getting Started: The Four-Week Plan and Beyond*

In this part of the book, you establish your diet and fitness goals and discover how to prepare yourself (and your kitchen) for living a low-cal lifestyle. This part provides the actual diet plan, including four weeks of calorie-controlled daily menus you can follow strictly or use as guides to low-calorie eating. You can find food shopping tips and "alternative" menu plans to help keep your diet interesting. One of the most important chapters in this part helps you examine your attitude and see how it affects both your behavior and your ability to lose weight and maintain a healthier weight. You also find tools to help you improve your eating habits, increase your physical activity to burn more calories, find the motivation you need to stick to your plan, and track your progress.



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## ***Part III: Overcoming Obstacles and Moving On***

Even though food is a central theme for dieters, it's really only one piece of the weight-loss puzzle. Losing weight and living a low-calorie lifestyle is also about facing the issues that drive you to overeating and finding nonfood ways to cope with stress, boredom, and other day-to-day frustrations that may or may not have something to do with your diet. In this part, you discover how to deal with situations that trigger overeating in and away from home. You figure out how to stick to your low-calorie lifestyle, prevent weight gain, and maintain your new, healthier weight after you've reached your goals. You also find resources for helping yourself and getting outside help when self-help isn't enough to keep you on your diet.

## ***Part IV: Trying Time-Tested Low-Calorie Recipes***

This part of the book is what my friends like best because here is where the food is, and my friends are the ones who get to taste most of the recipes before the book goes to print. Besides recipes and good ideas for low-cal breakfasts, lunches, and dinners, you also find plenty of treats and sweets. Along the way, this part helps you figure out just how to fit all this fabulous food into your low-cal diet plan.

## ***Part V: The Part of Tens***

Every *For Dummies* book has this part, which gives the author an opportunity to highlight important information. My favorite chapter in this part is the one that contains weight-loss inspirational stories from men and women who shared their own success stories. In this part you also find the “best of the best” reasons for losing weight and living a low-calorie lifestyle.

## ***Part VI: Appendixes***

Here you find two ways of counting calories — by individual foods and by food groups — plus a useful metric conversion guide.

## Icons Used in This Book

Throughout this book, in the left margins, you find icons, or symbols, that serve as a guide to the type of material you're about to read. Here's what those icons mean:



The Remember icon points out information that has been summarized to make an important point. All information marked with a Remember icon is worth remembering!



The Tip icon marks helpful or practical information. It's not just reading material, it's news you can use. Wherever you see this icon, you can find advice, tips, and shortcuts for eating leaner, thinking smarter, moving more, and feeling better about yourself and your weight-loss plan.



When you see a Warning icon, it doesn't mean you're about to hear bad news or that anything scary is about to happen or that you need to avoid that particular paragraph. Au contraire! Warning icons point out information that can help prevent bad and scary things from happening, so don't step around that paragraph; read it just in case it applies to you.



Any information marked with the Technical Stuff icon is material that is a bit more academic than the rest. You can read it or skip it. It's not essential information, but if you do read it, you may find out something new.

## Where to Go from Here

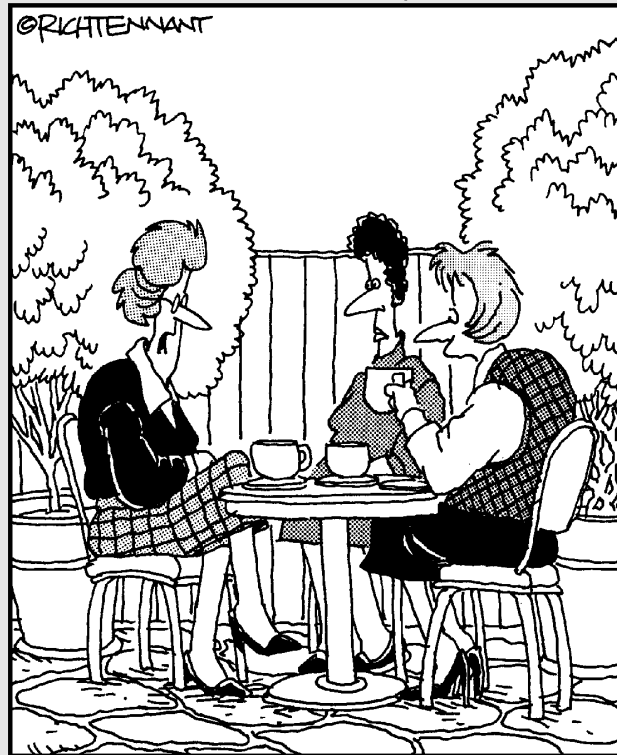
Every dieter is different, so a book like this one has to include a wide breadth of information and a variety of suggestions to help satisfy many needs. Many of the tips and advice in this book can help you. Depending on how long you've been trying to lose weight, you may have heard some of them before.

Your task, if you choose to accept it, is to decide, while you're losing weight, what will and won't work for you in the long run. Start wherever you want and work your way through this book to see what's in it for you. Regardless of where you begin, you'll end up knowing just what it takes to stay at a healthier weight.

# Part I

# Understanding the Basics of Low- Calorie Dieting

**The 5<sup>th</sup> Wave** By Rich Tennant



"Oh, I have a very healthy relationship with food. It's the relationship I have with my scale that's not so good."

### *In this part . . .*

**R**eading this part can help you ease into your low-calorie diet plan. In this part, you find help figuring out how overweight you are, how much weight you need to lose, and how best to approach a low-calorie plan. I hope you come away with a better understanding of how your metabolism works, the role of calories in weight control, and how important planning a nutritious diet at any calorie level is.

## Chapter 1

# Living a Low-Calorie Lifestyle

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### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Making initial decisions about how much weight to lose
  - ▶ Experiencing a new low-calorie way of life
  - ▶ Winning at losing weight with great tools and techniques
  - ▶ Sticking with the plan through trials and tribulations
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**O**n any given day, one out of four Americans is doing something to try to lose weight. They change their diets, join gyms, swallow pills, and even undergo elective surgery in a never-ending attempt to shed those excess pounds. In spite of all these efforts, relatively few people are successful at losing weight and keeping it off. Most diets and weight-loss gimmicks are, at best, short-term solutions for weight control, and short-term means it's only for now, not forever.

By definition, your diet is simply the food you eat from day to day. With or without a plan, you could be following a vegetarian diet, a low-fat diet, a high-fiber diet, or a low-carbohydrate diet. Whatever it is, your current diet is how you choose to eat. A low-calorie diet is another story, though, with an altogether different meaning. To some people, it implies deprivation, suffering, and hunger. I'm here to change that point of view.

To say you're going on a diet implies that, at some point, you'll come off that diet and eat differently. It's temporary, and a temporary way of eating only has temporary effects. Look at it this way: If you have heart disease, your doctor or dietitian will probably recommend a low-fat diet. You can't follow that diet for just six months and expect it to keep your arteries clear forever. You must cut calories to lose weight and, at the same time, develop healthier eating habits. You can't turn back to your old habits if you expect to maintain a healthier weight for the rest of your life.

This chapter introduces the idea that the key to successful weight control is developing a low-calorie lifestyle plan. This chapter also explores the many facets of living a life devoted to lighter eating and better health. In this chapter you can find an overview of the tools you need, the plan's details, and the resources available to help you lose weight without fear of gaining it back. I discuss everything in greater detail throughout the book.

## Deciding How Much Weight to Lose

Think about a time when you were at a comfortable weight. Now, think about how much you weigh right now. The difference between the two is probably the number of pounds you're aiming to lose. That's probably your long-term goal (which means you don't expect it to happen tomorrow, this week, or even this month, but you do expect it to happen eventually). Of course, you can rely on much more scientific ways to determine how much weight you can or need to lose. In fact, government health experts have established standards for healthy weights that you can use to gauge your own weight.



Check with your doctor before you start any weight-loss program to be sure that your weight-loss goals and strategies are appropriate for your age and state of health.

In this book, you can find six easy steps to help you figure out how much weight you need to lose, whether or not your weight is putting you at risk for serious health problems, and how to calculate a safe and effective calorie range within which you can lose excess weight. You can find more info on the first three steps in Chapter 2 and the last three steps in Chapter 3.

**1. Consult the healthy weight range chart in Chapter 2 to figure out how far you are from a healthy weight for your height.**

Using charts and formulas for figuring out how much weight you need to lose, or how much you need to weigh after you lose the weight, helps keep your expectations within realistic limits. Your healthiest weight isn't necessarily the same as someone else's, even if that person is the same height. You may be built differently. That's why, when you look at a healthy weight range chart, you can see a range of acceptable weights for each height listed.

**2. Figure out your Body Mass Index (BMI) from the chart and formula.**

This step helps you figure out whether or not your weight puts you at risk of developing or worsening chronic medical conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and heart disease.

**3. Determine your waist-to-hip ratio.**

This ratio tells you if the way your weight is distributed on your body puts you at higher risk of developing chronic medical conditions.

**4. Figure out your basic calorie needs.**

Knowing this information can help you figure out the minimum number of calories you need in your diet every day.

**5. Calculate the number of calories you can eat and still lose weight.**

This information is vital because it tells you the maximum number of calories you can allow in your diet every day.