

# Your quick-start guide to smarter weight loss

If you've ever felt overwhelmed by **confusing weight loss advice**, you're not alone. There's a lot of noise out there, but the truth? **Healthy living doesn't have to be complicated.**

In this playbook, we're cutting through the myths, keeping things simple and giving you **real, practical strategies** to help you feel your best.



## ..... Here's what's inside: .....

- ✓ **Busting the biggest weight loss myths** — so you can stop second-guessing and start seeing real progress.
- ✓ **10 healthy recipes** — easy, delicious meals that fit into your busy life.
- ✓ **A roadmap to help you toward long-term success** — because real change isn't about quick fixes, it's about **building habits that last**.

The best part? **You don't have to go it alone.**

Whether you're just starting out or getting back on track, support is key. This guide will help you take small, doable steps toward feeling confident, energized and ready to take on the season.

# Let's jump in and make this your season of change.

# Top 10 Weight Loss Myths

## *(and the truth you need to hear)*

### ❌ Myth #1: Carbs are the enemy.

✅ **Truth:** Carbs aren't the bad guy — your body actually **needs** them for energy. But not all carbs work the same way in your body.

Whole, fiber-rich carbs like veggies, legumes and whole grains help keep you full and fuel your day. On the flip side, refined carbs (think white bread and sugary snacks) digest quickly, which can lead to energy crashes. It's about **balance**, **not banishment**.

### ❌ Myth #2: Working out is more important than nutrition.

✅ **Truth:** Movement is amazing for your body, but **what's on your plate matters more for weight loss**. Think of exercise as the **bonus** — it helps you feel strong and energized, but **your food choices make the biggest impact** for weight loss.

### ❌ Myth #3: Eating less is the fastest way to lose weight.

✅ **Truth:** Slashing calories too low **slows your metabolism** and makes weight loss harder. Your body needs **consistent fuel** to keep energy up and hunger in check. Instead of just eating less, focus on **eating smarter** — fueling your body **every 2–3 hours** with the right balance of protein, fiber and healthy fats. This helps keep cravings under control and prevents that “hangry” crash. Your body will thank you.

### ❌ Myth #4: The scale is the best way to track progress.

✅ **Truth:** That number? It **fluctuates constantly** — hydration, hormones, even stress can mess with it. **Real progress** looks like better energy, looser clothes and feeling stronger. Don't let the scale mess with your mindset!

### ❌ Myth #5: You have to eat “clean” 24/7.

✅ **Truth: Perfection isn't the goal — consistency is.** Weight loss happens when you learn how to enjoy all foods in balance. It's all about making mindful choices that align with your goals (and actually enjoying the journey). When a tough choice pops up, try the [Stop. Challenge. Choose.](#) method to stay on track.



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# Top 10 Weight Loss Myths

## *(and the truth you need to hear)* continued

❌ **Myth #6: Late-night eating makes you gain weight.**

✅ **Truth: It's not when you eat — it's what and how much.** If your meals are balanced throughout the day, you're less likely to end up in a nighttime snack spiral. If you are hungry at night, a protein-packed snack can actually help with recovery and better sleep.

❌ **Myth #7: You can figure it out on your own.**

✅ **Truth:** Sure, you *can* go it alone, but why make it harder? A coach helps you navigate challenges, stay motivated and, provides **personalized** guidance. Plus, people that have a coach are 10x more successful than those who do it alone.\*

Weight loss isn't just about knowing what to do — it's about **having the right support to follow through.**

❌ **Myth #8: You don't need a community — this is a solo journey.**

✅ **Truth:** Having people in your corner **changes everything.** Science shows that your environment shapes your choices, thoughts and habits. Whether it's encouragement on a tough day or celebrating wins together, a strong community helps you **stay accountable and keep going** — even when motivation dips.

❌ **Myth #9: Once you lose weight, it's gone forever.**

✅ **Truth: Wish it worked that way!** But keeping weight off is about **building healthy habits that last.** Crash diets = temporary results. Sustainable habits = results that stick. The good news? You don't have to do it perfectly — just **consistently.**

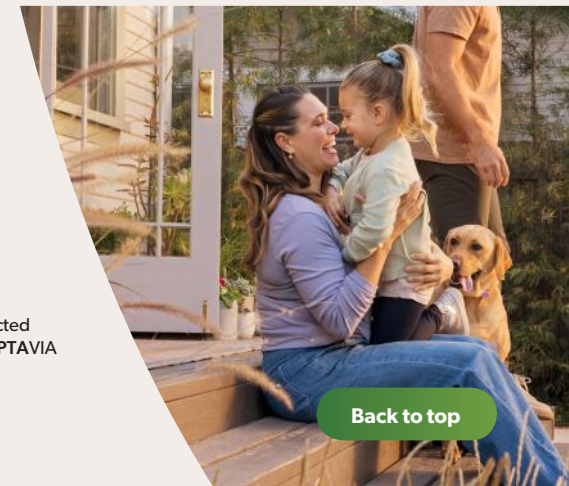
❌ **Myth #10: Steps don't really matter for weight loss.**

✅ **Truth:** Every step adds up! **Non-exercise activity thermogenesis (NEAT)** — all the movement you do outside of structured workouts — plays a huge role in weight loss and overall health. It's not just about burning calories; daily movement helps boost metabolism, improve mood and keep your body feeling strong.

While structured workouts (**exercise activity thermogenesis, or EAT**) are great, it's the movement you do throughout the day that really keeps your progress going. Simple actions like parking farther away, taking the stairs or setting a daily step goal can make a big impact.

The more you move, the more you support your journey — inside and outside the gym.

\*2019 clinical study where participants who had the support of a coach lost up to 10x more weight than the self-directed group. Based on the results of a 16-week clinical study, those who participated in at least 75% of their 23 assigned OPTAVIA coaching calls lost 15.2 lbs. compared to 6.7 pounds for those participating in fewer calls.



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# Now that we've busted those myths...

*let's talk about what works.*

You don't need to overcomplicate healthy eating — **simple, quick and balanced meals** can fuel your body and keep you on track without spending hours in the kitchen.

That's why we've put together **10 healthy recipes you can make in under 20 minutes!** Fresh flavors, easy prep and meals that actually taste good? Yes, please.

And if you're juggling a packed schedule and looking for a weight loss plan that **works in real life**, check out [OPTAVIA.com](https://www.optavia.com).

With **science-backed, nutrient-dense products** that make healthy eating on-the-go effortless — and the support of a **coach and community** — you'll build habits that help you lose weight *and* keep it off long-term.

# Let's go!



## 1 Basil Tuna Lettuce Wraps

**Yield:** 1 serving

**Total Time:** 10 minutes

**Nutrition Per Serving:**

300 calories, 13g fat, 4g carbohydrate, 42g protein

### Ingredients:

- 7-oz. canned tuna, packed in water and drained
- ½ cup diced celery
- 1 tbsp chopped basil
- 1 tbsp regular mayonnaise
- 1 tbsp reduced-fat Greek yogurt
- ⅛ tsp each: salt & pepper
- 5 large green lettuce leaves, washed and dried
- 1 thinly sliced lemon wedge (optional)

### Directions:

1. In a bowl, combine all of the ingredients except the lettuce and lemon, and mix well.
2. Fill lettuce leaves with tuna mixture. Serve with a small lemon wedge if desired.



## 2 Chicken Caesar Wraps

**Yield:** 1 serving (2 wraps per serving)

**Total Time:** 20 minutes

**Nutrition Per Serving:**

360 calories, 15g fat, 4g carbohydrate, 49g protein

### Ingredients:

- 6 oz. grilled chicken breast strips
- 4 large lettuce leaves, like green leaf, red leaf or romaine
- ½ cup cherry tomatoes, quartered
- 1 tbsp Caesar dressing
- 2 tsp slivered toasted almonds
- 1 tbsp shredded parmesan cheese

### Directions:

1. Place two whole lettuce leaves on top of each other on a flat surface; repeat with the other 2 lettuce leaves.
2. Combine the chicken strips, tomatoes, dressing and almonds in a mixing bowl. Toss well to evenly distribute the dressing.
3. Place half of the chicken Caesar filling in the center of each set of lettuce leaves and sprinkle with parmesan cheese.

**Tip:** Look for grilled & ready chicken breast strips in the fresh or frozen section at the grocery store or make your own.

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### 3 Greek-Style Chicken Bowl

**Yield:** 4 servings

**Total Time:** 20 minutes

**Nutrition Per Serving:**

380 calories, 12g fat, 9g carbohydrate, 57g protein

#### Ingredients:

- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tbsp fresh oregano, minced (or 1 tsp dried)
- 4 tbsp lemon juice
- 4 tsp extra virgin olive oil
- 4 tbsp reduced-fat feta
- 1½ lbs. rotisserie chicken breast, skin-removed, chopped
- 2 cups lettuce, washed and torn
- 2 cups riced cauliflower
- 2 cups riced zucchini
- 1 cup diced Roma tomatoes

#### Directions:

1. Combine and cook riced cauliflower and zucchini in microwave or steamer, about 6 to 8 minutes until tender.
2. Combine the garlic, oregano, lemon juice, oil and feta to make the dressing.
3. To serve, neatly arrange a ½ cup of lettuce, one cup of riced cauliflower and zucchini, a ¼ cup of tomatoes and 6 ounces of chicken in a bowl. Drizzle 1½ tablespoons of the dressing over top and serve.



### 4 Jalapeno Chicken Burrito

**Yield:** 1 serving

**Total Time:** 15 minutes

**Nutrition Per Serving:**

260 calories, 14g fat, 11g carbohydrate, 30g protein

#### Ingredients:

- ½ cup finely chopped jalapeño pepper, divided
- ½ cup shredded part-skim mozzarella
- ½ cup thinly sliced green onion
- ½ cup diced Roma tomatoes
- 1 tsp olive oil
- ¼ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp ground black pepper
- 3 oz. cooked, shredded chicken breast

#### Directions:

1. In a small bowl, mix half of the jalapeño pepper with the cheese.
2. On a sheet pan lined with parchment paper, spread the jalapeno cheese mixture into a 6 to 7-inch circle to form a "tortilla."
3. Turn on the broiler in an oven or toaster oven.
4. Broil until crisp, about 5 to 6 minutes, then carefully flip the tortilla and broil for another 2 to 3 minutes until lightly browned and crisp.
5. To make the burrito stuffing: in a small nonstick skillet, heat the olive oil to medium heat and add the green onion. Cook until soft, reduce the heat, add the tomatoes, rest of the jalapeño peppers, salt and pepper.
6. Cook until soft, then stir in the shredded chicken.
7. Fill your cheese tortilla with the chicken mixture and wrap like a burrito. Enjoy warm.

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## 5 Lemon Ricotta Squash & Zucchini “Penne”

**Yield:** 2 servings

**Total Time:** 15 minutes

**Nutrition Per Serving:**

340 calories, 18g fat, 18g carbohydrate, 28g protein

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup zucchini squash
- 1 cup yellow squash
- 1 cup spinach
- 2 cups part-skim ricotta cheese
- 2 tsp lemon juice
- ½ tbsp lemon zest
- ½ tbsp fresh thyme leaves
- 1 clove garlic, grated or pressed
- 4 tbsp reduced-fat parmesan cheese

### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to broil.
2. Halve and then quarter squash lengthways. Cut out and discard the seedy core. Slice the squash at an angle into pieces roughly the same size and shape as penne pasta (1/2-inch by 2-inch pieces).
3. Place squash and spinach in a microwave-safe bowl with 1 to 2 tablespoons water. Cover with plastic wrap or paper towel. Microwave on high until tender, about 45 seconds.
4. Mix together the ricotta cheese, lemon juice, zest, thyme and garlic.
5. Dollop the ricotta mixture into an oven safe dish and arrange with zucchini-spinach mix.
6. Sprinkle with parmesan and broil for 4 to 5 minutes until parmesan is brown and ricotta bubbly.

**Tip:** Try making this recipe in 2 ramekins and broiling as directed for a fun presentation and pre-portioned amounts.



## 6 Low-Carb Lobster Roll

**Yield:** 2 servings

**Total Time:** 15 minutes

**Nutrition Per Serving:**

300 calories, 38g fat, 8g carbohydrate, 12g protein

### Ingredients:

- 2 small hearts romaine lettuce
- 1 tbsp. butter, melted
- ½ cup plain, low-fat Greek yogurt
- 2 tbsp. olive oil-based mayonnaise
- 1 small stalk celery, finely diced
- 2 tsp lemon juice
- 1 tbsp. chopped fresh chives
- ¼ tsp Old Bay seasoning
- ¼ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp pepper
- 12 oz. cooked lobster meat

### Directions:

1. Preheat grill.
2. Slice romaine hearts in half lengthwise. Remove a few of the inner leaves from each half to create a boat-like shape for the lobster filling. Lightly coat the insides and edges of each “boat” with butter and grill cut-side-down to get a slight char and bring out the flavors of the lettuce, about 2 to 3 minutes.
3. In a medium-sized bowl, mix remaining ingredients except for the lobster meat. Once ingredients are well combined, fold in the lobster meat until completely coated.
4. Divide lobster mixture evenly among the boats and serve immediately!

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## 7 Mason Jar Egg Salad

**Yield:** 1 serving

**Total Time:** 15 minutes

**Nutrition Per Serving:**

280 calories, 16g fat, 6g carbohydrate, 25g protein

### Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp low-fat Greek yogurt
- ¾ tsp whole grain mustard
- 1 tbsp water
- ¼ tsp salt
- ⅛ tsp ground black pepper
- 3 hardboiled eggs, peeled and chopped
- ¼ cup finely chopped celery
- ¼ cup finely chopped cucumber
- 1 cup baby arugula
- 1, (24-32 oz.) mason jar

### Directions:

1. In a mixing bowl, combine the Greek yogurt with the mustard, water, salt and pepper; set aside.
2. Layer the dressing, hardboiled eggs, celery, cucumber and arugula in a 24–32 oz. mason jar. Put the lid on the jar and refrigerate until ready to eat.
3. Combine and eat right out of the jar!



## 8 Salmon Poke Bowl

**Yield:** 4 servings

**Total Time:** 30 minutes

**Nutrition Per Serving:**

350 calories, 20g fat, 10g carbohydrate, 33g protein

### Ingredients:

- 1¼ lb. raw boneless, skinless salmon, cut into bite-sized cubes
- 2 scallions, trimmed and minced
- 3 tbsp soy sauce
- 1 tsp sesame oil
- 1 tsp sambal
- 1 tsp sesame seeds, toasted
- 2 cups lettuce
- 1 cup shredded red cabbage
- 1 cup sliced cucumber
- 1 cup halved cherry tomatoes
- ½ cup thinly sliced radishes
- 1 large bell pepper (yellow or orange), sliced
- 1, 0.35-oz. seaweed sheet (optional)

### Directions:

1. In a medium bowl, whisk together the scallions, soy sauce, sesame oil, sambal and sesame seeds. Add salmon and toss to coat.
2. Arrange an equal amount of each vegetable into individual bowls and top with 5 ounces of salmon per bowl. Cut the seaweed sheet into small ribbons and serve on the side.



## 9 Salt & Pepper Shrimp

**Yield:** 4 servings

**Total Time:** 15 minutes

**Nutrition Per Serving:**

310 calories, 10g fat, 7g carbohydrate, 48g protein

### Ingredients:

- ½ tsp white peppercorns
- ½ tsp black peppercorns
- ½ tsp Sichuan peppercorns
- 1 tsp salt
- 2½ tbsp oil, any kind
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 lbs. shrimp, head and shell on or peeled and deveined
- 8 scallions, trimmed and thinly sliced
- 4 fresh Thai chilies, deseeded, deveined, and minced
- 6 cups chopped lettuce, such as Romaine or Iceberg

### Directions:

1. Combine white, black and Sichuan peppercorns into a spice grinder until finely ground. Alternatively, you may use a mortar and pestle to grind. Mix with salt and set aside.
2. Heat oil in a wok or skillet, add garlic and shrimp.
3. When shrimp starts to turn pink, add scallions, Thai chilies and salt-pepper mixture. When shrimp is cooked through, spoon mixture over a bed of lettuce.



## 10 Steak & Arugula with Lemon Parmesan

**Yield:** 4 servings

**Total Time:** 15 minutes

**Nutrition Per Serving:**

290 calories, 14g fat, 3g carbohydrate, 38g protein

### Ingredients:

- 1½ lbs. flank steak
  - ¼ tsp each: salt & pepper
  - 4 cups arugula
  - 2 cups cherry tomatoes
  - ½ cup lemon juice
  - 4 tbsp parmesan cheese
5. Meanwhile, whisk together the lemon juice and parmesan.
  6. Slice steak thinly across the grain.
  7. Gently toss the arugula with the lemon juice and parmesan dressing.
  8. Serve 5 ounces cooked steak on top of about 1 cup dressed arugula and an equally-divided number of tomatoes.

### Directions:

1. Preheat grill.
2. Season steak with salt and pepper.
3. Grill steak on both sides until internal temperature reaches 145°F, about 4 to 5 minutes per side. Remove from heat and allow to rest.
4. Optional: grill the tomatoes about 3 minutes until blistered.

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# Your weight loss roadmap

*Designed for real life™*

**Simple, consistent steps that add up over time.**

**Here's how to make real progress without overcomplicating it:**

- ✓ **Fuel your body right** – Eat balanced meals every **2–3 hours** to keep energy up and cravings in check. Start with the **10 healthy recipes** in this guide!
- ✓ **Move more** – Every step counts! Whether it's a walk, stretching or just taking the stairs, **daily movement supports weight loss.**
- ✓ **Build habits that stick** – Focus on **one small change at a time.** Maybe it's drinking more water, getting better sleep or tracking progress beyond the scale.
- ✓ **Get the right support** – You don't have to do this alone! A **coach and community** can keep you accountable, motivated and on track.

## So, what now?

Try a new recipe. Take a few extra steps today. Start with **one small habit** that moves you forward. **And if you're ready for extra support, head to [OPTAVIA.com](https://www.optavia.com) to [connect with a coach.](#)**



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"Within my first 30 days on the plan, I knew this was exactly what I needed! A program that promotes continuous growth and empowerment through **education, structure and community**? A total no-brainer!"

*Tracy M.*

"The **OPTAVIA** community is like no other — **filled with positivity, support** and people striving for the same goal: lifelong transformation and renewed health. Being part of this has changed everything for me!"

*Patricia F.*



"I don't think about food the way I used to. I had no idea **my mindset** was changing along with my body. With **my coach guiding me** through the transition, I feel amazing — and now fitness is part of my life too. I'm seriously a completely different person!"

*Stephanie M.*



# Let's do this!

\*Average weight loss on the Optimal Weight 5 & 1 Plan® is 12 pounds. Clients are in weight loss, on average, for 12 weeks.