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## Simple Ways to Cut 500 Calories

These 24 calorie-blasting strategies will help you lose weight and burn more fat all day long

By Holly C. Corbett

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Mix and Match These Moves to Cut 500 Calories

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### At Dinner

**Downsize your plates.** Rather than depriving yourself of food to drop pounds, simply use smaller plates. "People eat as much as is on their dish rather than the amount that their body actually needs," says Jacob Teitelbaum, MD, author of *Beat Sugar Addiction Now!* "If you shrink the size of your dishes by a quarter, such as going from a 12-inch plate to a 9-inch plate, you'll cut 500 calories without feeling deprived." The research backs it up: People serving themselves ice cream in larger bowls ate 31 percent more than their counterparts eating from smaller bowls—and both groups reported feeling full, according to the *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*.

**Wait to have seconds.** Once you've downsized to smaller plates, Dr. Teitelbaum recommends giving yourself permission to eat as much as you want, but waiting 20 to 30 minutes to have a second helping. "You almost never go back because you've given your body time to register that you're feeling full, so you easily save hundreds of calories." Even if you *do* opt for seconds, you're likely to get a smaller helping because hunger hormones won't be driving your appetite.

**Slim your sides.** Instead of dipping chips in fat-packed sour cream, try serving baked tortilla chips or whole wheat pita wedges with low-fat refried beans and chunky salsa. It's a tasty way to sneak in an extra serving of veggies and cut 109 calories. Or trade a side of traditional potato salad for sliced tomatoes, cucumbers, and onions tossed with fat-free Italian dressing to cut 258 calories.

### Eating Dessert

**Make over your sweets.** You won't miss belt-busting peach cobbler or banana splits if you have other good-for-you options to choose from. Save up to 400 calories by making grilled fruit kebabs: Slice one peach and one small banana into quarters, thread four pieces fruit each onto two skewers, and brush with one tbsp honey each. Grill each side for about 4 minutes, or until flesh is tender but still firm. Sprinkle on cinnamon. Or, if you want to have your cake, cut a thin slice of pound cake, layer on berries and top with light whipped cream for a decadent-tasting dessert for less than 150 calories.



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**Skip the oil.** Replace oil with applesauce when baking to slim down. "Two tablespoons of oil is about 200 calories, while 4 tablespoons of applesauce is only 40—you have to double the applesauce to oil ratio in recipes," says Marjorie Nolan, RD, CND, CPT and national spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association. Make the switch and save 160 calories without sacrificing flavor, and top your treat with a dollop of light whipped cream instead of premium vanilla ice cream to save another 220 calories.

## Dining Out

**Leave something on your plate.** Restaurant dishes are up to 250 percent larger than a normal portion size, so simply leaving a quarter of the meal on your plate can save up to 500 calories. Leaving a few bites of any potato or noodle dish cuts up to 100 calories alone because they almost always have added butter, oils or other fats, says Susan Kleiner, RD, PhD, co-author of *The Good Mood Diet*. And skip the extras, such as the bread basket, to keep from breaking your calorie bank. Or, if you're at a Mexican restaurant, forgo the tortilla chips—they can equal more calories than your entire meal.

**Know before you go.** Before you head to a chain restaurant, check out the nutrition information on its web site – diners who saw nutrition information before selecting their meals ate an average of 52 fewer calories, according to the *American Journal of Public Health*. Moreover, you'll be able to make smarter meal choices. Instead of having Chili's Steak and Portobello Fajitas for 1130 calories, you can choose Chili's Classic Chicken Fajitas for just 360 calories—a savings of almost 800!

## At the Office

**Take a stand.** "You can burn up to an extra 500 calories a day without doing a lot of activity simply by standing rather than sitting," says John Timmerman, a certified personal trainer at Trillium Fitness in Syracuse, New York. "It can make the difference between burning 120 calories an hour versus 60 calories." If you can't get away from your desk, try standing to make a phone call or read a report. Even shutting your office door to squeeze in 5 minutes of pushups or jumping jacks can burn another 50 calories.

**Have a ball.** "Trading your desk chair for a stability ball helps you burn extra calories because you're forced to use your core muscles to stay stable," says Marjorie Nolan, RD, CND, CPT and national spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association. "You could burn up to 350 extra calories over an eight-hour workday while helping to tone your stomach and boost circulation."

**Drink up.** It's no secret that swapping water for soda can save you hundreds of calories—about 300 a day if you drink two cans. But drinking 20 to 60 ounces of water daily might also help boost your metabolism so you burn even more calories, says Greta Blackburn, founder of FitCamps and co-author of the new book, *The Immortality Edge*. "If you're not getting enough water, your kidneys turn to your liver for help, which takes away from your fat-burning ability and slows metabolism." To make water more appealing, try adding sliced cucumbers, or low-calorie flavor packets that offer fizz and a shot of vitamins, such as the new orange-flavored **eBoost**.

## Watching TV

**Don't eat and watch.** "People who snack in front of the television consume an average of 288 extra calories a day because they're eating mindlessly," says Dr. Teitelbaum. If you want to snack, turn off the TV, serve yourself on a dish, and really pay attention to what you're putting in your mouth to slash calories.

**Try commercial cardio.** "Doing some kind of cardio, such as jumping rope or jogging in place, burns about 10 calories a minute," says Marjorie Nolan, RD, CND, CPT and national spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association. "If you watch

an hour of TV a night and add cardio moves during the 10 commercial breaks that typically air, you could blast up to 300 extra calories without missing your favorite shows." Adding "commercial cardio" and nixing mindless snacking cuts more than 500 calories.

## On a Saturday

**Sleep in.** "Studies show people who get less than 6 hours of sleep eat up to 300 calories more during the day because a lack of sleep triggers the production of the hunger hormone, ghrelin," says Marjorie Nolan, RD, CND, CPT and national spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association. Each extra hour of sleep could save you 100 calories. So don't set your alarm on Saturday, and if you snooze, you lose.

**Clean house.** Spend 2 hours getting organized by cleaning your garage or vacuuming and dusting the house to slash about 408 calories. Wear extra layers and switch the hands you use to sweat even more.

**Get foot loose.** Go out with your friend and move to some live music, or just blast your favorite tunes and dance around your house. Rocking out like this for an hour torches 445 calories—and you'll be having fun so it won't feel like exercise.

**Go for a ride.** Biking is great impact-free cardio—plus you have to engage your core muscles to stay balanced. One hour of biking at an easy pace blasts 272 calories—pedal just twice a week, and that's more than 6 pounds dropped in a year. To find a bike trail near you, check out [trailink.com](http://trailink.com).

**Run some errands.** Spend an afternoon food shopping and unloading groceries to burn close to 500 calories. Cook dinner to burn 136 more.

## During Your Workout

**Switch it up.** You can burn up to an *additional* 250 calories in a half-hour, or 500 in an hour, by incorporating intervals versus exercising at the same pace, says Nolan. Whether you're swimming laps, running, riding a stationary bike, or using the treadmill, you can increase the calorie burn by picking up the pace to the point where you are so out of breath that you can't even talk for 30 seconds, then slow down for one and half minutes to recover. "You know you're doing the 30-second pushes right when you're grunting or you want to scream," says Blackburn. Start with a 5-minute warm up, repeat these 30-second intervals eight times, and then recover for 10 minutes.

**Take 15.** "Even if you're really pressed for time, you can usually find 15 minutes in your day to exercise," says Nolan. For the days when you don't have time to spare, try doing three 5-minute circuits using free weights. "The key is to get your heart rate up while using as many muscle groups as possible to torch up to 250 calories in just 15 minutes." If you can find two 15-minute chunks in your day to do these moves, you can blast up to 500 calories. Do three sets of this circuit:

**90 Seconds:** Squat with a bicep curl, and stand to go straight into an overhead shoulder press. Repeat. **90 Seconds:** Lunge forward with right leg while raising weights out to side to shoulder level, hold for one second, bring leg back and arms down to return to starting position. Alternate legs and repeat. **120 Seconds:** Do a row while standing on right leg to engage your core muscles, repeat for one minute then switch to left leg.