By Gina Roberts-Grey

Out with pals? Order first and you'll order healthier. Easy trick!

HEALTH NEWS WE LOVE

10 Sneaky Ways to Lose Weight

Without, y'know, actually dieting.

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The first rule of weight loss: Do not talk about weight loss. "Let's be honest, nobody wants to hear about your thighs, your portion size, your fear of carbs, or your vegan-on-Friday rule," says Ramani Durvasula, Ph.D., a clinical psychologist and professor at California State University, Los Angeles. "It's a buzzkill—plus, having a super-restrictive attitude isn't sustainable." After all, she points out, you wouldn't dive into an Olympic-level workout right away—you'd start slow and then slowly build up your fitness. "Do the same with your eating habits, and you'll be less likely to get discouraged," says Durvasula. Here, 10 tricks that will make the process painless.

WHEN OUT WITH FRIENDS, ORDER FIRST

If you do, you're more likely to choose a meal that's in line with your healthy-eating goals. When groups of people eat together, they tend to select similar items, one study found. "We want to fit in with the people we're dining with," says lead researcher Brenna Ellison, Ph.D., a food economist at the University of Illinois. So if your friend orders cheese fries, you'll tend to do the same—even if you had the best spinach-salad intentions. If ordering first isn't an option, try steering the conversation away from discussions about food. Instead of saying "What are you having?" bring up work, the weather, whatever, and you'll feel less pressured to order a fattening meal.

SET THE MOOD

Compared with bright, loud environments, candlelight and jazz lead people to eat about 18 percent less, or about 120 fewer calories per meal. Why is that? The relaxed atmosphere slows down your chewing, and "you end up taking an average of eight minutes longer to eat," says Brian Wansink, Ph.D., director of Cornell University's Food and Brand Lab and author of *Mindless Eating: Why We Eat More Than We Think*. That may be just long enough for your brain to realize that your stomach is full.

USE CHOPSTICKS

Unlike standard silverware, chopsticks make it nearly impossible to shovel food into your mouth. "Because of the amount of food you can grab," Wansink says, "chopsticks slow you down and make you eat less food with every bite."

REMEMBER, VEGGIES FIRST

Here's a strange-but-true finding: The three foods that you see first at a buffet will end up comprising about 66 percent of the food you take back to your table, according to one Cornell University study. We tend to load up on the things that initially tempt us, Wansink explains. So start off at the salad section—and much of that 66 percent will be *good* for you.

"THE CRAZY WAY I LOST WEIGHT"

Four women share the unexpected methods they used to drop 8, 10, even 50 pounds—without counting even one tiny little calorie.

I CHANGED JOBS	I DRANK MORE WATER	I DRANK LESS WINE	I GOT HAPPY
"I'd been in a really bad environment and gained stress weight. My new job is perfect! I feel so much more valued. I lost eight pounds, my skin is clearer, and, most important, I'm much more confident now."—*Nicole Allison, 27*	"...I started drinking 65 ounces of water each day to keep my skin hydrated. Now my complexion looks great and so does my waist! Water totally fills you up. I rarely cheat anymore."—*Sophia Chabbott, 33*	"Instead of a nightly glass with dinner, I've limited myself to two drinks a week—*max*. I was just trying to be healthier, but it tipped the scales in my favor. I ended up losing 10 pounds!"—*Magda Walczak, 33*	"I spent eight years in a toxic relationship. Food was the only thing that made me happy. After we broke up, I turned to other things—friends, family—and lost 50 pounds that I've kept off ever since."—*Teddie Hood, 31*

sides) and pair it with only *two* other things to eat and drink. So if a piece of bread and one glass of wine are your two preferred entrée pals, skip appetizers and dessert. If you want the artichoke dip and tiramisu, avoid the bread basket and beverages other than water. "On average, people who use the rule of two report eating about 25 percent less because it makes you rethink what you're ordering or eating," says Wansink. And keep in mind: You're more likely to order what you see first (it's why some restaurants showcase certain items), so choose carefully.

do when we think the food is unhealthy, according to University of Toronto researchers. One quick fix: Imagine the dish without the healthy food or description, suggests Wansink. For instance, leave out the vegetables in vegetable lasagna and you're still eating lasagna—pasta, cheese, and a heavy cream sauce.

DITCH COLD CEREALS

Louisiana State University researchers found that women who eat a warm bowl of oatmeal served with fat-free milk feel 28 percent less hungry for up to four

"Watching people return to a buffet makes you think it's more normal to go for seconds, thirds, and fourths."

NEVER LEAVE FOOD WHERE YOU CAN SEE IT

Being within eyesight of a banquet of food makes you eat 15 percent more—regardless of whether you're at home or a restaurant, Wansink has found. "Seeing it fills your thoughts with food," he says. "And watching people return to a buffet makes you think it's more normal to go for seconds, thirds, and fourths." If you can, move food completely out of sight—"you don't want to catch the action in your peripheral vision either," says Wansink. At home, leave serving dishes on the counter instead of the table, and sit facing away from the spread.

FOLLOW THE "RULE OF TWO"

When dining out, select whatever reasonable main entrée you want (plus included

PLACE A NAPKIN ON YOUR LAP

People who do this before eating tend to have a healthier body mass index, according to Cornell University researchers. That's because using a napkin reflects good table manners, says Wansink, and careful eaters often pay more attention to what they're eating—and, as a result, how many calories they're consuming.

IGNORE HEALTHY BUZZWORDS

"Organic," "all natural," "low fat," "a full serving of vegetables"—research shows that food descriptions that include veggies or other seemingly healthy attributes often make us believe that we're consuming fewer calories than we actually are. In fact, we eat about 35 percent *more* than we

hours later compared with when they pour their breakfast from a box. Oatmeal's fiber (which takes longer to digest) is the secret, says study coauthor Frank Greenway, M.D.

FILL YOUR INSTAGRAM WITH HEALTHY PICS

And follow friends who do the same. Researchers from England's University of Leeds found that people eat fewer calories—and make better choices—after seeing shots of nutritious foods. "Visual cues prime you to eat right," says Durvasula. The idea works at home or the office too—swap the candy bowl for fresh fruit. And just like that you're eating healthier. Ⓖ

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