

1

Do you always eat “healthy”?

A funny thing happens when you focus on making careful diet decisions. If you just “think” of your meal as a light choice, it can cause your brain to make more of the hormone ghrelin, reports a study from Yale University.

“More ghrelin makes you feel less full and signals your metabolism to slow down,” says study author and PhD candidate Alia Crum. To keep your ghrelin balanced, focus on the more indulgent parts of your meal—say, the nuts and cheese on your salad, rather than the lettuce. It also helps to pick foods that are both healthy and seem like a treat, like a warm bowl of soup with crusty whole-grain bread.

2

Do you pay with plastic?

Carrying cash may feel a little last century, but people who use a credit card when grocery shopping buy significantly more unhealthy, calorie-dense food than people who pay cash, according to a study in the *Journal of Consumer Research*. Junk-food buyers were perfectly aware of the extra calories and cost of those treats, but since they didn’t feel the immediate hit in the wallet, they gave in more easily to impulse buys, explains study co-author Kalpesh Desai,

PhD, associate professor of marketing at Binghamton University. Keep dollars on hand for snack breaks—you might just save on calories.

3

Do you think about exercise a lot?

There’s a downside to that, says a new French study: Simply thinking about exercise can cause you to eat 50 percent more. Why? People assume that the upcoming workout gives them license to snack. Avoid excessive munching with a pre-gym snack of no more than 150 calories, advises Keri Glassman, RD, author of *The Snack Factor Diet*. Try two slices of turkey with whole-grain crackers.

4

Are you laser-focused at work?

Sit for just a few hours and your body stops making a fat-inhibiting enzyme called lipase, researchers at the University of Missouri–Columbia found. Stand and stretch every

hour, and you’ll boost your metabolism by about 13 percent, says research published in *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. Or, fidget all day (tap your feet or bounce in your chair) and increase calorie burn by 54 percent.

5

Do you sleep too little?

“Not enough shut-eye puts your body into a carb- and fat-craving survival mode,” says Michael Breus, PhD, author of *The Sleep Doctor’s Diet Plan*. A study in *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* found that women who slept fewer than four hours ate 300 more calories and 21 more grams of fat the next day. Try this to gauge your sleep needs: For a week, go to bed seven and a half hours before you need to get up. If you awaken before the alarm, you can get by with less sleep. But if you hit snooze, you may need eight, even nine, hours a night to wake up refreshed, recharged, and ready to burn some fat. **H**



Eat an apple every day to give your slimdown a boost.



EAT YOUR WAY THIN

Which foods jump-start weight loss? Pros share their secrets.

“An apple is about 85 percent water and contains a flavonoid called quercetin, which is an anti-inflammatory and has been shown to boost performance and energy.” —Tracy Anderson, celebrity trainer and creator of the *Metamorphosis* by Tracy Anderson DVD series

“I sprinkle ground flax seeds on yogurt. Studies find that their omega-3s help with fat loss.” —Denise Austin, host of *Denise Austin: Shape Up & Shed Pounds on DVD*

“Oatmeal is low in sugar and high in fiber. Top it with fresh berries, nuts, and low-fat milk, and I guarantee you’ll be full until lunchtime.” —Keri M. Gans, RD, author of *The Small Change Diet*

“I use coconut oil when baking. It’s packed with lauric acid, which may help increase your metabolic rate.” —Christine Avanti, CN, author of *Skinny Chicks Eat Real Food*

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