YES YOU CAN:
- Get healthier!
- Slim down!
- Feel great!

Our readertoasted EAT SMART PLAN delivers results

HEALTH SPECIAL
Get more from your doctor visit

UPGRADE YOUR LOOK
Wear colors that suit you

CLEAR THE CLUTTER
- Fast and easy storage solutions
- Multitasking furniture and more

Warm up winter days with SWEET treats
Try the Reality-Checked Diet

These three readers got results. You can, too!

Some diets are hard to stick to—they’re too strict or complicated, or they involve meals with ingredients you’ve never heard of. But this is a diet you can follow. How do we know? Because it’s been reality-checked by readers like you. We sent almost 100 dieters menus and exercise DVDs for three months and set up a chat room online so they could encourage one another. Read how this plan helped three successful testers, then try it yourself and peel off the pounds!

How the diet works

Tackle weight loss by pursuing these weekly goals.

| Week 1: | Track your eating and exercise habits. |
| Week 2: | Start your day right. |
| Week 3: | Eat for energy at lunchtime. |
| Week 4: | Plan a healthful dinner. |
| Week 5: | Snack smart. |
| Week 6: | Lose liquid calories. |
| Week 7: | Tame junk-food cravings. |
| Week 8: | Take control of your portions. |
| Week 9: | Focus on fruits and veggies. |
| Week 10: | Set an achievable workout goal. |
| Week 11: | Add even more exercise. |
| Week 12: | Pump up your workout. |

MEET THREE WOMEN WHO TRIED THE DIET!

We chose three winning diet testers to come to New York City for a photo shoot, a frank talk about how the Reality-Checked Diet worked for them—and some fun in the Big Apple.

The Au, You, Reality-Checked Diet was developed by registered dietitian Dawn Jackson Blatner.
“I lost 20 pounds!”
Gloria Villarreal, 34, found that she could have her burger and lose weight too.

START WEIGHT: 240
END WEIGHT: 220 and still losing
HER STORY: As a stay-at-home mom, Gloria ate healthfully and exercised. When she returned to work seven years ago, she relied on fast food. And exercise? Forget about it. “The weight kept coming,” she says. “I needed to get organized and set up a routine.”
WHY THIS DIET WORKED FOR ME: “I didn’t think I could stick to a diet with no fast food. Imagine my surprise when I saw McDonald’s in the Reality-Checked Diet. I was able to have my burger for lunch, which kept me from quitting.”

“I’m sleeping better than I have in years!”
Vicki Fox, 57, found that more exercise and a better diet improved her health.

START WEIGHT: 140
END WEIGHT: 128
HER STORY: Vicki always struggled to put on weight until after her third child was born. “I didn’t lose any of the 30 pounds I gained with the pregnancy. Over the last 17 years, I’ve added another 10.”
WHY THIS DIET WORKED FOR ME: “When it comes to exercise, I knew what was good for me—just wasn’t doing it. Thanks to the 10 Minute Solution Target Toning for Beginners DVD, I’ve found exercising can make me feel great!”

“We did it together!”
Our diet testers touched base regularly in the Reality-Checked Diet chat room and found that support is key to weight loss.

“I lowered my cholesterol!”
Gianna Shetterly, 37, lost weight and shaved 27 points off her cholesterol score.

START WEIGHT: 205
END WEIGHT: 188 and still losing
HER STORY: During Gianna’s first marriage, she felt pressure from her husband to be thin, and developed an eating disorder as a result. After meeting her current husband, she began to gain weight. “Our lifestyle became very busy, and fast food was much easier than cooking, then two kids came along. It’s a pretty typical story from there!”
WHY THIS DIET WORKED FOR ME: “What kept me on track was having a weekly challenge—or a menu or idea to get me through the next week.”

Turn the page to see how the diet works!
Follow the 12-week plan
Make simple changes, and then build on your success

**Week 1**

**Track your habits**
Write down everything you eat and drink this week in a food log. Don’t worry if it’s not healthful; the point is to become aware of your habits.

**You told us!**
Some of our successful dieters found the food log so helpful, they kept it up for the entire three months—and beyond!

**DOCUMENT WHAT YOU EAT**
- Find a small notebook that is easy to carry in your purse or bag.
- Whenever you eat or drink anything—big or small—record it (nonjudgmentally).
- Also record any exercise—what you did and for how long.

At the end of the week, answer these questions to identify the habits that cause you to gain weight. This will make it easier for you to break your pattern.

- Do I eat three healthful and balanced meals each day?
- Do I eat smart portion sizes for my meals and snacks?
- Do I choose healthful snacks (no more than twice a day)?
- Do I eat at least 2 cups of fruit and 2½ cups of vegetables each day?
- Do I drink beverages with fewer than 15 calories per 8 ounces?
- Do I eat less than 150 calories’ worth of junk food per day?
- Do I eat only when I am hungry, not because I’m stressed or bored?

If any of these questions gets an answer of “no,” that’s an area you need to improve on, so keep an eye out for relevant tips throughout the diet plan.

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**Week 2**

**Start your day right**
Eating breakfast kick-starts your metabolism, and a balanced breakfast will help you feel fuller throughout the day so you’ll consume fewer calories overall. Try these seven tasty options.

**BREAKFAST #1**
Raspberry-Granola Yogurt
- Top 6 oz. low-fat vanilla yogurt with 1 cup fresh or frozen raspberries and 1 granola bar, crushed.

**BREAKFAST #2**
Peanut Butter-and-Banana Waffles
- Top 2 frozen whole-grain waffles with 2 tsp. peanut butter and 1 small banana, sliced.

**BREAKFAST #3**
Apricot-Nut Oatmeal
- Top 1 packet instant plain oatmeal with ½ cup dried apricots, chopped, and 1 oz. dry-roasted almonds, chopped.

**BREAKFAST #4**
Cherry Smoothie
- In a blender, mix 1 cup low-fat milk, 1 cup frozen cherries and ½ cup dry oatmeal.

**BREAKFAST #5**
Creamy Apple-Cinnamon Toast
- Top 2 pieces whole-grain toast with 1 cup low-fat cottage cheese; 1 medium apple, sliced; and a dash of cinnamon.

**BREAKFAST #6**
Swiss Broccoli Scramble
- In a nonstick frying pan, scramble 1 cup egg substitute (or 8 egg whites) with ½ tsp. low-fat Swiss cheese, chopped, and 1 cup cooked broccoli, chopped.

Serve with 1 piece whole-grain bread spread with 1 tsp. trans-fat-free margarine.

**BREAKFAST #7**
Spicy Breakfast Burrito
- In a nonstick frying pan, scramble 1 cup egg substitute (or 8 egg whites) with ½ cup canned black beans, rinsed and drained, and 2 Tbsp. spicy salsa. Spoon into a warmed whole-wheat tortilla. Roll up and eat.

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**Did you know?**
Women who eat breakfast are less likely to be overweight or obese than those who skip the first meal of the day.
Source: Journal of the American Dietetic Association
**Week 3**

**Eat for energy at lunchtime**
Keep up your good breakfast habits this week, and make eating a healthy lunch your new goal. A well-balanced midday meal will keep you feeling full, creating less temptation for calorie-laden snacking.

**LUNCH #1**
California Turkey Club
- Spread 2 Tbsp. of mashed avocado on 2 slices whole-grain bread. Top with 2 slices of cooked turkey bacon, 3 slices turkey, 3 lettuce leaves and 2 tomato slices.

**LUNCH #2**
Barbecue Chicken Wrap
- Stuff 1 large whole-grain tortilla with 4 oz. precooked chicken strips, 2 Tbsp. barbecue sauce, and 1 cup shredded mix of cabbage, carrot, broccoli and cauliflower (such as broccoli slaw). Wrap and serve.

**LUNCH #3**
Tuna Salad with Grapes and Pistachios
- Mix 3 oz. packet of tuna with 2 Tbsp. low-fat Italian dressing, ¼ cup dry-roasted pistachios and ¼ cup red grapes, halved. Spoon mixture on top of 3 cups bagged mixed greens.

**LUNCH #4**
Quick Stop: McDonald's
- Order a hamburger with side salad and ½ packet low-fat balsamic vinaigrette dressing. Get Apple Dippers with low-fat caramel for dessert.

**LUNCH #5**
White Bean-and-Pesto Pita
- Mix ½ cup canned white beans, drained and rinsed,

**Week 4**

**Plan a healthful dinner**
It's time to move on to the final meal of the day. Your goal this week is to eat a healthful dinner each night. Here are seven meals to choose from; double, triple or quadruple the recipes so you can serve them to your family.

**DINNER #1**
Italiano Flatbread Pizza
- Warm 1 flatbread in 350°F oven for 7 minutes. Top with ¼ cup pizza sauce, 2 oz. veggie pepperoni, ¼ cup mozzarella and ¼ cup canned artichokes. Return flatbread to oven briefly to melt cheese.

**DINNER #2**
Sesame Shrimp Noodle Bowl
- Combine 3 oz. cooked whole-wheat spaghetti with 3 oz. frozen precooked shrimp (thawed) and 1 cup frozen stir-fry vegetables (warmed). Toss with 1 Tbsp. sesame oil and 1 Tbsp. low-sodium soy sauce.

**DINNER #3**
Black Bean Taco Salad
- Toss ¼ cup canned black beans, rinsed and drained, with ½ avocado, chopped; 3 cups mixed greens; ½ cup salsa; and 1 oz. tortilla chips.

**DINNER #4**
Quick Stop: Wendy's
- Order the Ultimate Chicken Grill sandwich with a side of mandarin oranges.

**DINNER #5**
Barbecued Salmon, Green Beans and Potato
- Spread 2 Tbsp. barbecue sauce on 1 (4 oz.) salmon fillet. Cook in broiler or on grill for 8 to 10 minutes. Serve alongside 1 cup green beans with 2 Tbsp. slivered almonds, and 1 small potato with 1 Tbsp. low-fat sour cream.

**DINNER #6**
Cilantro-Peanut Stir-Fry
- Sauté ¼ cup brown rice (cooked); 1½ cups stir-fry vegetables; ¼ cup cilantro, chopped; and ¼ cup dry-roasted peanuts, chopped. When all ingredients are tender, remove from heat and serve.

**DINNER #7**
Better-Than-Chicken-Parmesan Sandwich with Zucchini
- Top 1 whole-grain hamburger bun with 1 breaded soy “chicken” patty (warmed), ¼ cup pizza sauce and 2 Tbsp. Parmesan. Sauté 1⅛ cups zucchini for 5 minutes and top with 1 tsp. dried oregano.

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Week 5

Snack smart
This week, add one 150-calorie snack between breakfast and lunch, and another between lunch and dinner. Mix and match these healthy snacks:

- 100-calorie bag popcorn and 3 oz. low-sodium V8 juice
- 1 1/2 Tbsp. peanut butter with celery for dipping
- 1 small pear or apple and 1 piece string cheese
- 6 oz. low-fat plain yogurt and 1/2 cup berries
- 35 to 40 pistachios
- 4 oz. low-fat cottage cheese and 4 oz. cut-up fruit (in its own juice)

Did you know?
The more diet soda you drink, the more likely you are to become overweight, according to recent research.

Source: University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio

Week 6

Lose liquid calories
With a few wrong drink choices, more than 1,000 calories per day can trickle in. So choose beverages that have 15 calories or less. Drink diet sodas only occasionally.

QUENCH YOUR THIRST WITHOUT BLOWING YOUR DIET
Try these slimming sippers if you want more than water.

Instead of... Try...
Sweetened iced tea Plain seltzer with a squeeze of lemon or lime.

A fruity drink
A Crystal Light on the Go packet in 16 oz. of water.

Cola
A mixture of 8 oz. cooled Celestial Seasonings Morning Thunder tea, 8 oz. seltzer and 1 tsp. honey.

Week 7

Tame junk-food cravings
You've made it past the halfway point! After six weeks of healthy eating, cravings for the junk food you left behind may be creeping up. This week, tame those hankerings with calorie-conscious sweet and salty treats.

Sweet and smooth
- Diet root beer float (1/2 cup low-fat vanilla ice cream and diet soda)
- Small (12 oz.) vanilla skim latte

Sweet and crunchy
- 1 small sliced apple with 1 oz. low-fat caramel dip
- 1 cup crunchy cereal (such as Kashi GoLean Crunch)
- 100-calorie bag of popcorn
- Whole-grain tortilla with melted string cheese
- 1 Tbsp. peanut butter on half a 100-calorie English muffin
- 100-calorie pack of cookies
- Salt and crunchy
- 100-calorie bag of popcorn with a sprinkle of salt
- 20 almonds
- 100-calorie pack of chips
- Chocolate
- Portioned ice cream sandwich
- (such as The Skinny Cow)
- Fat-free chocolate pudding cup with 1/2 cup raspberries
- Chocolate-mint patty (such as York Peppermint Pattie)
- 6 Hershey's Kisses

Week 8

Take control of your portions
Even healthful foods can cause weight gain if eaten in excess. For example, nuts are nutritious, but just one cup has about 800 calories—more than a Big Mac! So this week don't just eyeball your food, measure it. Or follow our shortcuts below.

1 cup vegetables or fruits = your fist
1 1/2 oz. cheese = 4 stacked dice
1/2 cup cooked pasta or rice = a baseball
1 baked potato = a computer mouse
1 pancake = a compact disc
3 oz. meat, fish or poultry = a deck of cards
2 Tbsp. peanut butter = a Ping-Pong ball
1 tsp. margarine or butter = 1 die

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Week 9

Focus on fruits and veggies
Fruits and vegetables are a dieter’s best friend: One serving of veggies has only 20 calories, and a serving of fruit has 60 calories. They are also filling because of their high water and fiber content. That means you won’t be as hungry for higher-calorie foods.

GET MORE FRUIT
• Keep plastic sandwich bags filled with grab-and-go fruit such as grapes, strawberries and peeled oranges.
• Display a fruit bowl on the counter. If you see the fruit, you will be more likely to eat it.
• Eat fruit for dessert. Try grilled bananas and pineapples, baked apples with cinnamon and a dash of brown sugar, or berries with low-fat frozen yogurt.
• Blend fresh or frozen fruit with a 6 oz. container of low-fat plain or vanilla yogurt for a naturally sweet and nutritious breakfast shake.

GET MORE VEGETABLES
• Buy frozen veggies; they’re already cleaned, cut and ready to cook.
• Add extra veggies to meals you already make, such as stir-fries, pizza, pasta and sandwiches.
• Experiment with herbs, seasonings, spices, and low-fat marinades and dressings to keep veggies tasty and different.

Week 10

Set an achievable workout goal
This week, burn extra calories with two 20-minute workouts (40 minutes of added exercise). Our diet testers used 10 Minute Solution Fat Blasting Dance Mix DVD ($15; www.collagevideo.com). Always consult a physician before starting any exercise program.

WORK IT WITH THESE 12 WORKOUTS
Pick two of these 20-minute exercise sessions per week.
1. Do two segments of 10 Minute Solution Fat Blasting Dance Mix DVD.
2. Walk after lunch.
3. Ride a bike during the weekend.
4. Blast your favorite music in the living room and get moving!
5. Jump rope—you’ll feel like a kid again.
6. Walk after dinner with the family.
7. Take a weekend walk with a neighbor, friend or family member.
8. Walk your dog (or someone else’s!).
9. Exercise on the elliptical machine (if you are not a member of a gym, ask for a free trial coupon).
10. Follow your favorite exercise video (just 20 minutes is fine this week).
11. Work out with an exercise program on TV (check your local listings).
12. Try a DIY exercise routine while watching your favorite TV show (for example, march or jog in place, alternating with jumping jacks).

Week 11

Add more exercise
Now that you’ve worked 40 minutes of exercise into your weekly routine, it’s time to increase the frequency and the duration to three 30-minute cardio workouts (90 minutes total this week). Continue to do the exercises you most enjoyed from last week, and tack on an extra 10 minutes to each session.

When you exercise, you...
• Improve your heart health by controlling cholesterol levels and lowering your risk of high blood pressure
• Keep bones and muscles strong
• Live longer
• Sleep better
• Lower your risk of developing type 2 diabetes
• Reduce the risk of certain cancers
• Manage your mood and stress
• Feel more energy throughout the day

Week 12

Pump up your workout
Congratulations! You’ve made it to the final week!
The past two weeks have focused on cardiovascular (aerobic) exercise to burn fat and calories. The final week of the diet adds one 10-minute strength-training session to your three 30-minute workouts. Strength training will boost your metabolic rate by increasing your muscle mass. Muscles are active tissue and burn calories throughout the day, even while you’re sleeping—so the more muscle you have, the more calories you burn. Activities like Pilates and weight lifting are great for building muscle.

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