

## SESSION 9 20 TIPS

The following are tips that anyone can do to bring their weight under control, that do not involve diet or exercise, shots, pills, or potions. This is not intended to replace a good diet and mild to moderate exercise programs in order to achieve long term weight management. But Dr. Steelman has learned that too often, people embark on a severe diet only to later become overwhelmed by the frustration of not eating enough or missing their favorite foods. The end of the diet frequently brings a period of gluttony followed by feelings of guilt, resentment, and lowered self-esteem.

These tips are designed to bring about small changes in eating behavior and help establish better control over your eating choices. They will fit nicely with almost any type of dietary approach!

*Note: You are not expected to enact all 20 tips at once. The idea is to be aware of how such little things can make a huge difference in the way you look at food and eat.*

1. **Sit down!** Studies have shown that people tend to eat more when standing up. For example, if you are standing at the kitchen counter talking with your spouse or friend while munching on some snacks you are apt to eat more than if you sat down at the table.
2. **Eat from a place setting!** Any time you feel the urge to snack...get out a plate, knife, fork, spoon, and glass. Fill the glass, and put the food you want to eat on the plate...even if it's just a handful of potato chips. When you are through eating, wash the dishes and put them away. Notice that you are not being asked to refrain from eating any particular food...only that you eat it from a plate while sitting down. Remember, you can never eat enough of something you don't want to satisfy you.
3. **Use the On-Line diary!** I just can't stress enough the importance of a diary. Keeping a diary like this does three things that are advantageous. First it prevents you from eating, without even thinking about it...secondly the diary may point out certain triggers or patterns in your eating... and thirdly, it will keep you aware that you are making choices and gives you a sense of control. People who keep a diary develop a feeling of empowerment over food instead of being a victim to weak will power.
4. **Eat without distractions!** Too many people sit down in front of the TV, with some snack food and before they know it, have eaten far more than they ever intended. While you are distracted by TV, radio or even reading...it is all too easy to space out and eat too much. Therefore when you eat, concentrate fully on eating not on the other activities. Not only will you tend to eat less, but you will

probably enjoy it more. You can focus on the taste, the texture and other pleasurable aspects of eating this way.

5. **Use a smaller plate!** Part of the satisfaction from eating comes from visual signals our brain receives. Putting food on a smaller plate makes it appear to be a larger amount of food. This visual input to the brain actually signals our appetite center to become as satisfied as if we had eaten a larger amount.

6. **Eat buffet style!** Leave the serving dishes on the kitchen counter and have everyone serve their plates buffet style. This decreases the likelihood of your overdoing it by filling your plate with seconds only to realize thirty minutes later you have eaten twice as much as you really needed.

7. **Put your fork down between bites!** The practice of putting your eating utensils down while chewing a bite of food decreases the rate at which you eat. Since there is a lag time in between food entering our stomach and feelings of fullness and satisfaction reaching our brain, anything that slows the eating process will tend to help us eat less and feel more satisfied at the same time.

8. **Set a timer!** If the urge to eat strikes you between meals, set the oven timer or alarm on your watch for ten minutes. Say to yourself that when the timer goes off you can eat something if you still want it. Most urges to eat only last ten to fifteen minutes and by the time the timer goes off the urge will have passed. You can kill two birds with one stone and drink a glass of ice water during this ten minutes...ice water stops stomach growling.

9. **Increase activity!** We just can't say this enough. That's why darsi has a section on it, why it's in every part of the program. By increasing activity I don't mean beginning an exercise program, but rather increasing the amount of calories you burn in your daily activities. For example standing burns more calories than sitting. So stand when talking on the phone, or any of the other ideas that we have given you during this program...like parking a little ways away from the store, and walking across the parking lot. Now use you head....don't do this if it's dark at night, and you're in an area where you're not safe. But you know what were saying....increase activity!

10. **Have a pre-planned snack.** If between meal snacking is a problem for you it might be wise for you to pre-plan a between meal snack. A common scenario is for a dieter to swear they are going to entirely avoid snacking between meals. But, then...they decide they'll have just one cookie...just one! Then it's just one more...and one more...you know the routine. A useful strategy to combat this is to have a pre-planned snack which is more nutritious in nature. For example a person might decide to have a snack between supper and bedtime, say about 8:30...and this snack will be some fruit and some low fat cottage cheese. When the urge hits them at 7:30, it's going to be a lot easier to control, if you know that you can eat at 8:30 and what the snack is going to be.

11. **Soup!** A bowl of low calorie soup, like vegetable soup, helps decrease the amount of food it takes to satisfy your appetite center. The liquid volume of the soup expands your stomach and begins signaling your brain's appetite center that you are filling up...and because soup is hot and eaten with a spoon it forces us to slow down our rate of eating.

12. **Take a break!** There is a ten to fifteen minute lag period between when we actually eat and when the brain receives the signal that we have eaten. You have had the experience of eating just enough Thanksgiving dinner only to notice fifteen or twenty minutes later that you now felt stuffed to the gills. One way to solve this problem is take a break of five minutes during the meal. Right in the middle of the meal put your fork down and engage someone in conversation, or enter contemplative meditation, or even do a small chore. After a break, return to your meal. You may find that your appetite is greatly diminished and that you eat less.

13. **Leave something on your plate!** We mean food too. Get used to seeing a bit of food left on your plate. It is not good to be a member of the clean plate club any longer!

14. **Put some calories in the bank!** If you know you are going to an event where overeating is likely...such as a Christmas party or dinner at a favorite restaurant...prepare in advance by eating a little less each day for several days before the event. The calories you saved are placed in a calorie bank and may be withdrawn to spend when the big event arrives. Saving a few calories for several days in advance does not leave you feeling deprived and set you up for a binge the way starving yourself on the day of the event does.

15. **Designated eating place!** Pick out one place in your house which will become your designated eating place. Do not eat in any other location but this one. It should be a table in the dining room or kitchen area. When you eat in a given location, your mind begins associating that location with food, then the living room or the bedroom will not trigger your appetite any longer.

16. **Rearrange the refrigerator.** Put your favorite high-calorie foods in the back of the refrigerator, making it more difficult to see and reach them. This decreases the likelihood that you will be over-stimulated anytime you open the door. Like-wise rearrange your cabinet space so that snack type foods are hard to get at...it works. Try it.

17. **Use opaque containers.** The old phrase 'out of sight, out of mind' applies when we are talking about food. That's one of the reasons that putting foods in the back of the refrigerator and other hard to get to locations works. But it is also helpful to make food harder to see, by storing it in opaque containers. Cookies in a clear glass container that you can readily see are much more enticing than

cookies in a non see through container. Same cookies, but if you don't see them, you're not nearly as tempted.

18. **Order first!** When you go to a restaurant with a group of people, try to be the first person to order. Stop asking other people, "What are you going to have?" Then you won't be tempted when other people order higher calorie foods.

19. **Put it on the side!** Ask to have salad dressing, gravies, sauces, et cetera brought to you on the side. Then you can choose to use it or not, and how much.

20. **Shop with a list!** Make your shopping list before you go to the store. And make your list after you've just eaten. You're not hungry then, and it's a good time to put together a list. You'll only list the things you need.

**Remember** these tips are designed to bring about small changes in your eating choices. They fit nicely with almost any type of dietary approach. We can provide you with the tools to help create a better lifestyle and a better weight....it's up to you to use them with persistence, diligence and enthusiasm.