

Beating the "Freshman 15"

Worried about the "Freshman 15" weight gain? Think it's supposed to be part of the curriculum? Well, think again, because it's not. Follow these tips for a no-brainer way to beat this common freshman experience.

Don't diet and don't panic.



Panicking pushes you to short-term extreme diets and restrictions. Water for breakfast, fruit for lunch and salad for dinner, sets you up for a late-night pizza or a run to a fast food joint. Instead take a more logical approach. Feed yourself three solid meals during the day to keep your energy up. This will help you avoid late night binges, a common reason for unwanted pounds.

Eat only when you're truly hungry.



Do your study breaks always take you to the pantry or the snack stash? Are the late night munchies becoming predictable? Does boredom send you looking for a food fix? If so, you may be eating when you're not physically hungry. This kind of eating is another reason college students are prone to extra pounds. Instead, always check in with your stomach to see if you are hungry before eating. Try drinking water, if you're not hungry, try to find other study-break habits that don't involve food. Encourage your roommates to make the late night binging thing a rarity. Focus your socializing around a brisk walk & other fun-things non-food, fun things to do. Break the boredom with food-less activities.

Fruits and 'veggies' are key.



When the urge to snack hits you, choose baby carrots or other raw

veggies with a low-fat dip or strawberries with a spoonful of vanilla yogurt. Eat lots of these low-calorie, high-nutrition foods. Everyone needs 5 to 11 servings of fruits and vegetables everyday! Studies show that people who eat lots of vegetables and fresh fruits and weigh less. Make healthy food choices as much as you can. But make sure you allow yourself some less nutritious choices if you really want them. If you're not eating enough fruits and/or vegetables, ask a campus health care professional for help.

Alcohol has calories?



Yes it does . . . and lots of them too. Drinking is a major source of extra calories. How to cope? After each alcoholic drink, have a glass of water. You'll rehydrate *and* slow down your drinking too. If you routinely drink more than 2-3 drinks a week, examine why. If you want to cut down, ask a campus mental health professional for some assistance.

Forget the scale numbers.



Don't weigh yourself. Focus on a healthy lifestyle instead. In addition to good nutrition, move your body regularly. That walk across campus is a good start. Add some higher intensity cardio activities 3-5 times a week. Don't forget the weight training, 2-3 times a week. Make your exercise fun and practical! Bike or roller blade to campus. Join an intramural team or an activity-based student club (like the ski or karate club, for example). Make sure you're enjoying the activities, or you won't stick with them. Note the benefits you get, other than the weight control. Are you less stressed? Do you feel better about yourself? Are you more energetic? However you choose to move, do it as regularly as you can.