20 Ways to Think THIN

1. Make a list of the reasons why you want to lose weight before you begin your diet. While you are dieting, read your reasons to help maintain your willpower and focus.

2. Keep a food diary to help you become aware of why you overeat. Record food quantity, type, calories (if known), time of meal, and how you feel during the meal. List the reason you are eating, such as hunger, mealtime, social occasion, etc. Read over your diary to see if a pattern occurs during times of overeating. Use this tool for planning meals and eliminating unnecessary snacking.

3. Weigh yourself 1 or 2 times each week. Weighing too often can be discouraging if you don't see results on the scale everyday. Likewise, weighing too infrequently can lead to unknown weight gain. Recognize the need to weigh yourself periodically to maintain weight once you have reached your desired weight.

4. Take a "before" picture. You will be able to see the difference that weight loss makes when you achieve your weight goal.

5. Set reasonable goals. Weight reduction of $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 pound per week is sufficient. You didn't gain weight overnight, so be realistic with the time needed to lose that unwanted fat. Focus on having small weight loss goals of 5 to 10 pounds. Once you achieve a goal, reward yourself and continue on. Keep your focus.

6. Make a shopping list before going to the grocery store. Stick to the list to avoid buying foods you don't need such as cookies and chips. Be sure to add in plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, for both meals and snacks.

7. Never grocery shop when hungry. Foods you don't need will have extra appeal when you are hungry. Resist the impulse to buy high-fat and high-sugar snack foods.

8. Be realistic about your food choices. Many foods can fit into a diet. Be aware of portion size and how often you eat certain foods. Don't make food more tempting by eliminating it from your diet.

9. Turn off the television when eating. Enjoy your mealtime without the distraction of television. You may find that snacking during television viewing is a habit, not hunger.

10. Chew your food well. Take small bites that cover only 1/3 to 1/2 of your fork or spoon. Rest your utensils on your plate between mouthfuls to slow down the rate of eating. This will give your body time to recognize satiety or a full belly.

11. Brush your teeth immediately after meals. The mint flavor in the toothpaste will help to get rid of the taste of food so you won't think about eating as much.

12. Observe people eating when at a restaurant. Do many people have their face close to the plate, eat too fast, and barely chew their food? How does this look to you? Think of how pleasant it is to watch someone who eats slowly, takes small bites, and sits upright to dine.

13. Restrict the number of places you eat. Don't take food to the bedroom or study. This will reduce the number of places you associate with food and eating.

14. Avoid skipping meals. Missing meals leads to overeating at the next meal. Your body will think you are starving if you only eat 1 or 2 times a day. Incorporate multiple small meals and snacks into your daily routine. Just limit portions and calories each time.

15. Eat before social functions with food. You won't be tempted to overeat high-fat, high-sugar foods served at many social occasions. Use a small plate and take very small portions, to taste. Try to take one or two bites of buffet items just to sample them.

16. Get involved in family projects and community activities. Watch less television. Many people eat out of boredom. Find a new hobby during sitting time at home instead of snacking. Keeping your hands and mind occupied is a great distraction to thinking about food.

17. Don't attach your weight to a specific date or event. Your goal should be long-term weight reduction and control. Losing 10 pounds for an event or to fit into an outfit is the wrong approach. Lose the weight to feel better and improve your health. Work on changing unhealthy eating habits and food selections.

18. Remake recipes. Get the unnecessary fat out of your favorite recipes. Don't add that extra butter for seasoning. Substitute low-fat dairy items for regular, but high-fat, whole milk, cream, and butter.

19. Serve food from the kitchen onto your plate. Try to use less "family style" dining to help with portion control. This will also eliminate the urge to take second servings of foods.

20. Take a walk or do some kind of exercise instead of eating. Contrary to popular belief, exercise doesn't make you hungrier. It makes you feel better, feel good about yourself, and sleep better - all things that overeating never does.