

5 SLIM-DOWN SECRETS

Whether your shorts are feeling a little snug or you want to look better in a bathing suit, readers reveal the weight-loss tricks that worked for them—and will work for you too! BY MARCY LOVITCH



SHOT ON LOCATION AT OMNI AMELIA ISLAND PLANTATION RESORT IN FLORIDA.



1. / GET A FREE COACH

Exercise partners don't just make you show up for an a.m. hike and watch your form in plank position. They mentally motivate you too: "Women have a stronger drive to seek social connections, and that support is especially effective for helping us stick to exercise programs," says Barbara Brehm-Curtis, EdD, an exercise science professor at Smith College. Up your game with:

A Friend or Coworker To keep off the 10 pounds she lost, Malaika, 42, a mom of two in Chicago, has Wednesday lunchtime gym meet-ups with her friend Teshera. They run or swim laps, then do 20 minutes of strength training. "One of the best parts is spending quality, child-free time together," she says. If you can't hit the gym, climb office stairs or power walk at lunch.

Your Husband "Our workouts double as dates," says Charisma, 39, a mother of two in Los Angeles. "We hire a sitter and go for a run." Since men and women have different levels of strength, Ryan Beauchesne, a certified personal trainer at Sports Club/LA in Boston, suggests leveling the playing field. Sweat side-by-side on cardio machines or sign up for a salsa, boot camp or Spin class.

Your Kids "I started running with my 10-year-old daughter, Campbell," says Rosalyn, 41, a mom of two in Coppell, TX. "During those 2 miles, I learn about what she fears, what makes her happy and more." The jogs even inspired her younger daughter, Caroline, 7, to join them on runs and in 5K races.

2. / SNEAK IN MORE STEPS

When their activity tracker says they might not make 10,000 strides for the day, these women reach the mark with a few tricks.

“I’ll walk the three long hallways or around the parking lot at the nursing home where I work. I’ve even marched in place while doing dishes.”
—Janet, 42, Ludlow, VT, mom of five, lost 122 pounds

“Doing laps around my living room instead of sitting to watch an episode of my favorite TV show can do it. Sometimes, I’ll put on music and dance with the kids for a good chunk of time—it’s kind of silly but I get in a lot of steps that way!”
—Amanda, 35, San Antonio, TX, mom of three, lost 100 pounds

“I take the laundry up the stairs a little at a time so I have to make several trips a day, sweep the floors or take the dog for a much longer walk around the neighborhood.”
—Deborah, 47, Orange, CT, mom of three, lost 5 pounds

3. / FIND YOUR MOTIVATION

Check out where readers get the inspiration to keep moving. You might come across a little incentive of your own.

20% Family

“My mother passed away from pancreatic cancer at 49, so I know how important it is to be around for my loved ones. I’ve started running 5K races, I’m healthy and I feel great!”

—Dora, 44, Jacksonville, FL, mom of four, lost 35 pounds

17% Weight Loss

16% Getting Healthy

11% Overcome an Injury or Illness



14% Mental or Emotional Benefits

“Walking my 5 miles is pretty much the only time I have for myself. I listen to my favorite music, make plans and think about things without any interruptions.”

—Susie, 46, Bradenton, FL, mom of two, lost 30 pounds



6% Improved Appearance

“I want to be able to show off my shape. I’d love to run in spandex and a fitted top instead of sweatpants and a big tee.”

—Michelle, 39, Bronx, NY, mother of three, lost 20 pounds

6% Group Exercise or Sport

4% Pets



9% Friends or Companionship

“I take six Zumba classes a week. It’s a time for me to socialize with classmates. We support one another and stay fit at the same time!”

—Yvette, 47, Las Vegas, NV, mom of one, lost 10 pounds



familycircle.com

Go to familycircle.com/howlostit to read amazing weight-loss success stories.

Source: Familycircle.com Momster survey

4. / GET A GO-TO BREAKFAST


People who eat the most important meal of the day may be more likely to keep weight off than those who don't. Readers' top picks include:



OATMEAL 24%


"The fiber boost can help you feel full longer," says Cincinnati-based nutritionist Becky Hand, RD, a spokesperson for SparkPeople.com. Steer clear of the flavored instant kind, which is often high in sugar. Add your own fresh fruit instead.

Source: Familycircle.com Momster survey




CEREAL 15%

Stick with shredded wheat, whole wheat flakes or toasted oats. You want a whole-grain, fiber-rich version that has 5 grams of sugar or less per serving. Milk offers protein, and a serving of fruit on top helps keep you satiated till lunch.



YOGURT 10%

Stir in some flaxseeds, oats or almonds (not too much!) for added fiber, taste and crunch.



EGGS 16%

Scrambled, sunny-side up or hard-boiled, they can cut your daily food intake by approximately 400 calories, research says. The high-quality proteins fill you up, curbing your desire for carbs later.



SMOOTHIE 11%

Kick-start your day with a dose of fruit—just be sure to add in protein with yogurt, milk or even powder.

OTHER 24%

5. / FIND A MEAL GAME CHANGER

These simple switches helped readers shed unwanted pounds.

Don't Break for Fast Food

It's still easy to veer off the nutritional track at the drive-thru, even though many are offering more healthy choices than ever. A ready-made salad can clock in at around 500 calories—without dressing. “I gave up eating fast food two to three days a week and now have it maybe every six months,” says Melissa, 40, a mom of two in Melbourne, FL, who lost 30 pounds.

Snack Smarter

“Instead of having chips and sweets always at the ready, I put grapes, bananas and baby carrots in bright-colored bowls in the kitchen,” says

Melody, 52, a La Plata, MD, mom of three who lost 25 pounds. Eliminating the temptation of junk food and placing fruits and veggies front and center is a calorie-saver. “From what to eat and how much of it to have, a person makes upwards of 200 food decisions a day,” explains Wendy Bazilian, DrPH, co-author of *The SuperFoodsRx Diet*. “Having what's easy to grab also be healthy counts.”

Get Bowled Over

Research shows eating soup can help you consume fewer calories over the course of the day—no surprise to Juliet, 46, a mom of two in

Dallas, who lost 30 pounds. She swears that cooking up healthy soups full of veggies and legumes is key to maintaining her weight.

Skip the Sweets

“I stopped having dessert after dinner or a late-night snack of chocolate chip cookies,” says Laura, 44, a mom of two in Chicago who lost 10 pounds. If you're a sugar junkie, start by taking two nights off. “It will change how you automatically think of dessert as a post-meal activity,” says Bazilian. Quell cravings with berries, a baked apple sprinkled with sugar or a cup of mint or ginger tea with a teaspoon of honey.

