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Diabetes Health Center



Best Type 2 Diabetes Strategies for Women

By Barbara Brody
WebMD Feature

Reviewed by [Brunilda Nazario, MD](#)

Losing weight can turn your type 2 diabetes around. You might end up needing less medicine for it, or maybe even none at all.

Follow these experts' tips and get ready to win at losing.



[Best and Worst Meals for Diabetes-Savvy Dining](#)

1. Don't settle.

Like most Americans, this probably isn't the first time you've tried to lose weight. But experience isn't always a good thing. You may have picked up some habits along the way that are actually making it harder.

Maybe you've crash-dieted before. But this time, demand results that last. It will take longer, but it's worth it. What ultimately makes the difference is finding a plan you commit to for life: not a diet, but a way of eating that's delicious without undermining you.

Or maybe you think that dieting means drinking calorie-free soda and eating sugar-free cookies and fat-free potato chips? Not true.

Research shows that the particular [diet](#) you choose isn't all that important, as long as it's safe, it's OK with your doctor, and it cuts down on calories. What matters is whether you can stick with the changes you make, and layer in exercise to help keep it off for good. It starts with flipping your thinking from "diet" to "lifestyle."

2. Pump some iron.

Muscle burns up lots of calories. So give your [metabolism](#) a major kick by starting [strength training](#).

"The more muscle you have, the more calories you'll burn, even when you're resting or sleeping," says Wayne Westcott, PhD, an instructor of exercise science at Quincy College. "Resistance exercise has also been shown to improve blood sugar control and reduce insulin resistance."

To reap all these benefits, Westcott recommends lifting free weights, using weight machines at the gym, or [working out](#) with resistance bands at least twice a week. [Yoga](#) and other activities that use your own body weight also count. Have a trainer show you how to do the moves. Keep doing your usual [aerobic activities](#) (such as [walking](#) or [swimming](#)), too.

You will not bulk up. You're training your muscles to your advantage.

3. Outsmart your craving for sweets.

When your sweet tooth is raging, don't ignore it. But don't be ruled by it, either.

A few squares of good-quality dark chocolate (65% cocoa or higher) are a good pick because they have [antioxidants](#) along with theobromine, a natural appetite suppressant, Scott Isaacs, MD, writes in his book, *Beat Overeating Now!*

If chocolate isn't your thing, he says it's OK to have a very small amount (less than 100 calories) of whatever treat you're craving as long as you pair those gummy bears or jelly beans with a healthier food, such as a piece of fruit, to curb the impact on your blood sugar and insulin levels.

If it's going to be too hard to have such a tiny serving, pick something naturally sweet, like fruit.

4. Figure out what's eating you.

Does a bad day usually end with you devouring a pint of ice cream? If [stress](#) is affecting what you eat, it's one of the biggest diet hurdles you'll face.

The trick is learning to deal with life's ups and downs, without eating your way through them.

New York nutritionist Carolyn Brown, RD, recommends joining a support group, or consulting a therapist. "I refer clients to therapy all the time," she says. "I really believe it's one of the best things anyone can do for themselves."

Other things that help tame stress are exercise, [meditation](#), and spending time with people you care about. A stress management class is another option.

5. Rest up.

Prize [sleep](#), no matter how busy you get. It's not just about feeling better (but you will).

"All of your [hunger](#) hormones reset themselves while you're sleeping," Brown says. Like many health experts, she recommends getting 7 to 8 hours of shut-eye each night.

Sleep deprivation is linked to cravings for high-sugar and high-carbohydrate foods, Isaacs writes in *Beat Overeating Now!* He recommends practicing good sleep habits, like skipping [caffeine](#) in the afternoon, and going to bed early when you need to.

Still exhausted? Your doctor can check that you don't have a sleep problem, such as [sleep apnea](#).

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SOURCES:

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Wayne Westcott, PhD, instructor of exercise science, Quincy College, Quincy, MA.

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