



Need to Lose a Few Pounds Fast? Here's How

Exercise and a healthy diet are the keys to losing weight before a big event

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WebMD the Magazine - Feature

Each month *WebMD Magazine* puts your questions about fitness to top exercise and motivational experts. This month, Katie Coakley, 30, a travel public relations professional from Vail, Colo., seeks help on dropping weight quickly before a big trip. She gets advice from Jennifer Cohen, author of *No Gym Required: Unleash Your Inner Rock Star* and fitness director of The Yorkville Club in Toronto.

Katie's Q: I've been battling my weight my whole life. There are times when I get in the swing of things and pay attention to my workouts -- and then my schedule gets crazy at work or something else gets disrupted, and 10 to 15 pounds later, I've undone all my hard work. Now I have a big work trip to New York coming up in a month, and I'll be seeing a lot of professional colleagues. I want to look good for them -- this is an image-oriented business!

To help Coakley fast-track her workout results, WebMD asked fitness expert Jennifer Cohen to weigh in. Her mantra: You can get fit anytime, anywhere, no excuses. You can get great results on your own if you're willing to commit. That means amping up the cardio -- if you're doing half an hour a day, do 45 minutes. If you're doing 45, do an hour. "And you have to be eating healthy -- lots of fruits and vegetables, with regular small meals to keep your metabolism hopping," says Cohen. "But if you need a few extra tricks, here's what I call the real-people version of how celebrities get red-carpet ready."

Sip tea for weight loss

Drinking hot herbal tea throughout the day keeps you full without adding lots of calories. In the winter months, you're always craving comfort food to keep you warm, and tea satiates that craving.

An apple a day keeps the weight away

Apples are Cohen's No. 1 go-to food for losing weight. They have a lot of fiber and take a long time to chew. An 80-calorie apple will make you feel full for quite awhile.

Watch your diet at restaurants

When you eat out, tell the waiter not to bring the bread basket (Katie's confessed downfall) or the dessert menu or the cheese tray. You can even ask ahead of time for half your entrée to be wrapped to go.

Do the plank exercise

Lying flat on your stomach, push yourself up onto your elbows and your toes, with your back straight, abs tight, and nose pointing at the floor. Hold this posture for one minute. Do three one-minute planks every day, and you'll see much better and faster results than with crunches.

Do lunge exercises, too

In your office or living room, do "walking lunges." Take a five-minute break and lunge across the floor to the wall, then back again. Or do the same thing while watching TV or talking on the phone.

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