

## **WINTER WEIGHT LOSS STRATEGIES**

**- from the *Chooz to Looz* weight loss program-**

### Stop the annual seasonal 'yo-yo' syndrome

Many people trying to control their weight often find the biggest challenges to be during the colder months and the festive season. Often, weight gain results during these times. When it is time for New Year resolutions to be made, or for warmer weather clothes to come out of mothballs, many people realize that they have gained a few kilos.

Spring and the New Year are often the times when people start new diets to shed the extra weight they have put on. It is better to prevent the weight gain in the first place, rather than, year in, year out, try to undo the damage.

The information that follows, covers specifically, 'Winter Strategies' so you can continue to lose weight or if you have reached your goal, how to maintain it so that you can prevent the 'kilo creep'.

If you are trying to lose or control your weight, it's important to stay motivated over the winter months. We need to consider a number of factors which may change and ultimately affect our progress if we do not deal with them in the most appropriate way. These factors include our state of mind, the temperature, our dietary intake and our exercise level.

All of these factors are discussed, at length, following...

### **State of mind**

Many people feel more depressed in winter, as it is dark more hours of the day and often wet and cold outdoors. As a result many of us stay inside more often and socialize less which can influence eating and exercise habits. If you feel depressed, aim to do things that cheer you up, a hot bubble bath, a lengthy chat on the phone or a cupboard clean out might do the trick. What wouldn't or can't you do in summer that you can do now? Perhaps redecorate the house, put those photos in some albums or learn to cook a new, tasty, healthy casserole or soup. Make the most of winter!

### **Temperature**

As the cold weather approaches, our body temperature may drop. Be careful that you do not get cold as being cold can trigger the appetite. Digesting food actually increases the body temperature but there are plenty

of other ways to warm up without eating. Stay warm by wearing extra clothes, having a warm drink, a hot bath or by turning the heater on.

## **Body Awareness**

Many people have lower body awareness when they wear more clothes, as in winter our bodies are often under 'wraps' and what we don't see we may forget about. Exercise helps us stay aware, as does looking in the mirror now and then and trying on firm fitting clothing sometimes. (Many people who prefer to wear loose fitting clothes like comfy tracksuits in winter will especially benefit from this.)

Try to stay aware of the body and of the desire to lose weight, then when spring is upon us, you can break out of your winter cocoon like a butterfly with a new slimmer silhouette.

## **Diet**

### **General tips**

We often eat differently in winter. Salads and some fruits may be out of season and/or not as appealing. The smell of pies, pastries and hot chips may lure you in shopping malls or at your office or home. It is easier to avoid temptation if you have some alternative, appealing, healthier options available.

There are many 'winter and weight friendly' hot meal options you can choose as the temperatures drop, including some takeaways, restaurant meals, readymade supermarket meals, and as well, 'easy to prepare', healthy homemade meals. When possible though, homemade is generally best...

You can save time, energy and money by preparing several meals at once and just refrigerating or freezing for later. So when you're able, plan ahead to prepare a few meals so you have at least a meal or two 'up your sleeve' to grab in an instant, when your inclination to cook is low or you are out of time or fresh ingredients. If you have more time on the weekend, for example, perhaps plan a 'cook up' or weekend cooking marathon of dishes that freeze well, for ½ day or so, every couple of weeks!

The convenience of getting home hungry and knowing you have a meal premade means you don't have to think about what to have for dinner. For many people wanting to manage their weight in winter, this also helps prevent extra snacking to satisfy hunger, while you are preparing a meal and beats grabbing hot chips on the way home or dialing for pizza!

Many winter type foods freeze well and can be reheated such as Muffins, soups, casseroles, curries, stews, pasta or bolognaise sauces and desserts.

Having a few options in your fridge or freezer will also ensure meal variety so you don't get bored and then you'll be less likely to 'slip up.' And with your soups and main courses, make sure you include plenty of non-starchy vegetables to fill up. Some of these menu alternatives are outlined below, and may be more appropriate for the colder months. You may like to vary your menu plans accordingly, and use some of the ideas mentioned above and below.

### **WINTER FRIENDLY Breakfast menus & tips**

Cold cornflakes or toast may not cut it when the temperatures are heading to zero. To warm up from the inside, start your day with a filling, warm and nutritious breakfast. Whether you have to fly out the door or can linger over a cooked breakfast, there are some ideas following that may take your fancy. If you have an early start and haven't got time to eat at home or can't stomach food for an hour or so, there are some breakfasts you can take with you to eat on the way or later.

Here are some alternative WINTER-FRIENDLY breakfasts to add flexibility, warmth, variety and nutrition...

-Maybe have hot cereal like porridge with dried fruit, frozen berries or banana added or heat up some milk to pour onto your regular cereal.

-Or if you prefer, choose wholegrain toast, muffins or crumpets and top with protein like grilled cheese, egg or baked beans.

-On mornings where you have the time perhaps include an egg dish. Eggs can be prepared in so many ways, poached, boiled, dry fried or even made into an omelette. You could even grill or fry up some tomatoes and/or mushrooms with it and/or cook up fresh or frozen baby spinach to complement your meal while the eggs are cooking ( or the baked beans are warming up), and at the same time add extra nutrients and fibre, which will keep you going till lunchtime! If you have the time and

-Or, make pancakes! Wholemeal and low fat of course, with tasty toppings like low fat cream cheese and 'no sugar' maple syrup or jam; or warmed up frozen berries with low fat 'ricotta cream' or yoghurt. (Whole meal pancakes can be made using egg, skim milk and whole meal self-raising flour. Cook in a non-stick pan or use an oil spray)

-If you're in a rush, and / or start early, and are not hungry first thing, and have to 'grab and go,' perhaps take a homemade \*healthy, low sugar, low fat muffin or two or a slice of cake or banana bread (from your freezer) with you to have on the way, at work when you arrive or at your first break. You could even zap it in the microwave and warm it up before enjoying on your journey or after you arrive, with a hot drink. ☺ And yes, this is still ok if you are trying to lose weight or have Diabetes – as long as you choose the right recipes.

-Alternatively, have alternative breakfast options that you can transport and prepare quickly at work using what is available. You may just need to leave a little earlier if you plan to have breakfast before you begin. If you have a fridge, toaster and a microwave at work, these give you many options. Consider single serve porridge sachets, yoghurt and fruit, or toast with 'lite' cream cheese or peanut paste and no sugar jam.

## **LUNCH Ideas**

TO NOT BE TEMPTED by the sight or smell of hot pies, pasties and chips, you have to find something better! You can't take something away without replacing it with something else first; otherwise...you'll miss it!

Try some of the yummy, hot and filling, lunch ideas that follow. They will tickle you tastebuds and fill you up...

-Try a toasted sandwich or a wrap ( wholegrain of course) including lean protein like fish, chicken, meat , beans or low fat cheese, and compliment with some soup. Have a low kilojoule packet or tinned soup or better still, heat up some homemade 'free' vegetable soup and include this with your sandwich. If it's chilly, vegetables in a soup may be more appealing and filling than salad on a sandwich, wrap or roll. You can make a soup on the weekend, or whenever you have free time, and freeze some for later to save time. You can then easily thaw out the soup in the morning and take it with you if you go out to work, to heat up for lunch.

-Depending on your circumstances, you may like to have a baked potato with a filling such as grated cheese, cottage cheese and salad or baked beans.

-Alternatively, reheat 'leftovers' from a previous evening meal... for example, pasta or rice with a casserole, stew, bolognaise sauce or curry and make sure to include plenty of vegetables and some lean protein.

## **Main Meal of the day**

Driving home after a long, busy day, do you ever grab a high fat takeaway on the road or when you get home, dial for pizza or snack on whatever is available because you can't be bothered to cook or haven't got the time or ingredients?

If your answer is 'Yes' then read on....These top tips will help you get back in control...

-Have hot, filling, high fibre nutritious foods and meals available. Include lots of 'free' vegetables in comforting winter dishes like soups, casseroles, curries, chillies and spaghetti sauce dishes. Not only are they nutritious but they will help you stop overeating by helping you feel full.

-Spice it up. Include curries and chili dishes to warm you up from the inside. Vary the ways you flavour your foods by experimenting with different herbs and spices. This will help you avoid boredom and prevent you from adding too much fat (butter, margarine or oil) or salt to add flavour to your meals.

-Cook in bulk and have regular cooking marathons on a day when you are not working or have more free time. Freeze extra serves made ahead of time and then you can reheat when required. This way if you have a busy day, all you need to do when you arrive home hungry, is to defrost and warm up a 'ready' made meal.

-For easy desserts you may like to try hot custards or rice pudding (using skim milk and sweetener) or stewed or baked fruits topped with yoghurt or low fat ice-cream. Alternatively treat yourself and make recipes like Quick and Easy Cheesecake with hot berry Sauce, Apple and sultana strudel or Orange cottage and custard cake.

***For easy to make comforting winter meals , snacks and desserts that can be made ahead of time and frozen like soups, casseroles and curries and delicious and weight friendly muffins, cakes and desserts, grab a copy of my book, The Australian Healthy Cooking Guide, available as a print or eBook. Print copies are available at the clinics and print copies and eBooks can be purchased off my website [www.healthy-guide.com](http://www.healthy-guide.com)***

***For more information on the Chooz to Looz program available via individual counselling in clinic and Skype counselling options visit [www.healthy-guide.com](http://www.healthy-guide.com)***



## Winter menu alternatives

### **Breakfast**

Hot cereal like porridge or heat up some milk to pour onto your cereal, or choose toast/ muffins /crumpets and grill some cheese and tomato on top or have an egg or baked beans  
OR Warm homemade banana bread, a healthy muffin or healthy pancakes

### **Lunches**

Try toasted sandwiches or a wrap and possibly include soups. For example, heat up some homemade 'free' vegetable soup and include this as well as a sandwich. You may like to try baked beans or eggs on toast as a warm alternative.

Depending on your circumstances, you may like to have a baked potato/ Rice/Pasta with a filling/ topping such as grated cheese or cottage cheese or baked beans/ tinned beans and top with salad. Or, you could reheat your casserole, curry or bolognaise sauce from the night before and add a little or pasta or rice to complete the meal.

### **Main Meal**

Aim to increase hot, filling, high fibre nutritious foods. Have lots of free vegetables in soups, casseroles, curries, chilies and spaghetti sauce dishes. Cook in bulk and have regular cooking marathons so you can freeze ahead of time and reheat when required.

### **Desserts**

You may like to try hot custards or rice pudding ( using sweetener), stewed or baked fruits, or reheated frozen berries topped with sweetened ricotta( or cottage) cheese cream. For a treat, try a special dessert recipe from the Australian Healthy Cooking Guide.

# Exercise

You may need to modify your exercise program to suit the dark, cooler, wet days ahead. Darkness, rain and cold temperatures can influence our choice of exercise or even discourage us from exercising at all.

## **How to manage exercise in winter**

Walking alone or exercising alone outdoors when dark, cold and possibly rainy may not be an appropriate or enjoyable option. You may like to consider another person, family member, neighbor or even a dog to exercise with you or you may decide to exercise during day light hours.

You may choose another option and exercise at home, possibly at night time, if you work during the day. Consider using an exercise machine like a treadmill, an exercise bike or a Stairmaster. You can often ride these machines while participating in another activity, like watching TV, listening to music or reading a book.

You may decide to first of all hire one of these machines and then possibly later buy if suited to you.

Another alternative would be to buy or borrow exercise DVD's, and play these at a time that suits you.

Another alternative would be to choose to go out and exercise indoors at an exercise venue such as a fitness centre or a swimming pool.

If you enjoy exercising outdoors in winter, you may still be able to walk, cycle or do other activities outdoors on the weekend, during day light hours, when the weather is good (particularly if you work).

Most importantly, consider having a flexible, varied exercise program throughout the year.

It needs to be flexible in that you have many options and 'fall back' plans. It also needs to be varied so that you reduce your risk of boredom or injury and you increase the effectiveness of the exercise by using many different muscle groups.