

Follow These Five Key Steps To Get Lean

Don't settle for just losing weight - get lean. Lean is strong, svelte and sexy, and it starts with a hard-working metabolism. Follow these five simple tips to increase your sluggish metabolism and slim down.

1. Hydrate in the morning

After a long night of sleep, your body is dehydrated. The best way to offset this is to drink cold water. According to a study published in the Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism, drinking 17 ounces of water in the morning speeds up metabolism by 30 percent.

2. Don't skip breakfast

The sooner you can eat breakfast upon waking up, the better. This will help "break the fast" and jump-start your metabolism. Eat a combination of complex carbohydrates and protein. It takes 30 percent more energy (in the form of calories) to break down protein than it takes to break down fats and carbs. To get your engine revving, try to start the day with protein.

3. ELMO: Eat Little Meals Often

Not only does eating smaller meals more often keep your blood sugar level from bottoming out, but eating every three to four hours also will keep your metabolism fired up all day long.

4. Strength training to increase lean muscle levels

Everybody - women, men, young and old - should be strength training regularly to build lean muscle. Building lean muscle is like finding the body's fountain of youth, slowing down the physical effects of aging. Adding lean muscle to your body significantly increases your metabolic rate. Muscle is more metabolically active than fat, burning three times more calories than fat does. Lean muscle also takes up a third less space on your body, so you look leaner. Research shows strength training two to three times each week is the best way to increase your lean muscle level. Want to know how much lean muscle you have on your body? You can check your lean muscle levels with a body composition measurement test.

5. No eating late at night.

Many people take in too many calories in the evening, just when their metabolism has begun to slow down. You can get yourself lean more quickly by eliminating additional calories after 8 p.m., or about three hours before going to sleep. Eliminate those TV-time snacks and you'll soon notice an improvement in your body composition. If you have trouble doing this, here's simple trick: Since eating after brushing your teeth for bed is widely accepted to be bad hygiene, try brushing and flossing earlier than usual.

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