

[IMAGE]

Keep Obesity Out of the No. 1 Spot

By Editorial Staff

Behind smoking, obesity is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States – and the way we're going as a nation, it soon might be No. 1. Here are four easy ways to make sure you or someone you know doesn't end up a statistic. It's a daily plan to improve your life by keeping your weight at a healthy level.

1. Motion Matters: You can't beat exercise when it comes to weight management, and for two simple reasons that bear constant repeating: 1) The more calories you burn, the more weight you'll lose; and 2) muscle feeds metabolism, which burns calories even when you're not doing anything (even while you're sleeping). Plus, the more you exercise, the less time you have to sit on the couch, snacking on obesity-promoting chips, sweets and other nutrient-deficient foods.

Action Step: Don't think you have time to exercise regularly? Here's a simple strategy for sitting less and moving more.

2. Portion Potion: Actually, there's no magic trick or potion when it comes to portion control – it's a simple formula of "don't overeat" that prevents packing on the calories / pounds. Often, we overeat because we haven't eaten enough throughout the day; by the time we do, we're so famished that we eat whatever we see (and too much of it).

Action Step: Here's a great slideshow you can use as a guide to portion control and healthy eating.

3. Sound Asleep: If you think sleep doesn't impact weight, think again. Production of hormones that regulate appetite suppression and fat storage are influenced by sleep. What's more, poor sleep can lead to stress, fatigue and more awake time – factors that can severely compromise your diet and fitness plan. Face it: Sleep poorly and you're setting a dangerous course for weight gain.

obesity - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark *Action Step:* Develop a nighttime routine to ensure you get the sleep your body and mind need.

4. Stress Solution: It's fitting that we end with a discussion about stress, because if you think about it, stress impacts your ability to achieve all of the above: exercise, proper eating and restorative sleep. Stressed out? You might obsess about what's bothering you instead of sleeping; or you may try to relieve your stress by indulging in your favorite comfort foods – to excess. When we're stressed, you may find it more difficult to get to the gym or stick to your exercise routine.

Action Step: Try [these 10 great ways](#) to reduce stress. Trust us, you're worth it.

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