

Mmm, real meals: Women who stay slim eat actual meals—and savor them to boot.



Real Secrets to Forever Weight Loss

Here's what we've learned from your inspiring success stories.

By Shaun Chavis **WE'VE NOTICED** that the women in our "I Did It!" stories (see page 53 for this month's) have more than success in common: they use the same simple strategies to keep pounds away. Put the following ideas to work for you.

SECRET #1
They work out first thing. Many of the women we've written about exercise way-early (often before 6 a.m.). Why then? Making fitness the first thing they do guar-

antees it won't get bumped from their daily to-do lists.
HOW TO DO IT: Try the tricks that our women use—keep a gym bag stocked and by the front door, and put your workout clothes near the bed before you go to sleep.

SECRET #2
They eat real meals. Skipping meals? Not an option for our weight-loss winners ... anymore. Many actually did try to starve themselves before, which backfired and

led to weight gain. But they've found that a routine of regular meals is vital to success.

HOW TO DO IT: Plan your meals. Some women cook ahead on weekends to make healthy-weekday eating easy. Others rely on good-for-you prepared meals. Most important, make your plan easy to do so you'll stick with it.

SECRET #3
One diet doesn't fit all. We've seen women lose 50 pounds or more using Weight Watchers, Slim-Fast, SparkPeople.com, contests, and good ol' calorie counting. Lesson? The plan that works is the one *you* can live with. What's key is to know yourself.
HOW TO DO IT: Don't give up if one diet fails you. If a program sounds like drudgery or deprivation, skip it and find one that gives you positive vibes—something you can do for the long haul.

SECRET #4
They love to race. Almost half of the women in our slim club do 10Ks, marathons, or triathlons. And they say that training for an event helps them to exercise routinely, especially after they reach their weight goals.
HOW TO DO IT: Just getting started? Check out Health.com/marathon for training schedules to get you up to speed. Then look for a local event you like.

SECRET #5
They talk. A lot. About their success, that is. One thing that keeps them on track is sharing their tricks with others. Among our success-story sisterhood: personal trainers, a Weight Watchers leader, and a boot camp creator.
HOW TO DO IT: Stay on track by finding ways to help others—even if you're just trading tips with your book club. **Q**

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