

## Good Housekeeping

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### Food Diary To Lose Weight

If you're serious about losing weight, but not sure how to get started, Good Housekeeping has a foolproof solution – keeping a food diary. It's true. Keeping a journal of all the food you eat really can help you shed unwanted pounds.

"I kept a food diary for three days. I weighed and measured every single thing that I ate, and wrote down everything I took in, including drinks. And I thought I took in 1,500 calories, when actually I took in over 2,500 calories a day," says Stacy Genovese.

"Food journals are great for turbo-charging weight-loss because when you write down everything you eat, you become more aware of how much you are putting in your mouth," says Sarah Felix, Diet/Fitness Editor, Good Housekeeping.

Ready to take the plunge but not sure how? Nutritionist **Lisa Young**, who runs the Web site, [www.portionteller.com](http://www.portionteller.com), has a few suggestions.

"I've created a set of visuals to help people estimate how much food they are eating so that when they write it down, they can get a better handle on how many calories they're eating," **Young explains**. So, for example, three ounces of fish or chicken would look like a deck of cards. One cup of pasta would look something like a baseball. Two tablespoons of oil or salad dressing would look like a shot glass.

So, what should you write in your food diary? "There are four things you need to write down no matter what. What you ate, how much you ate, the number of calories in whatever you ate and the time you ate," says Felix.

Once you begin to see a pattern, you're ready to make some changes. "Keeping track of your diet is great. And you know what? It keeps you so focused. It's an additional tool that you can always look back and refer to," says Diana Abdel-Rahman, who keeps a food diary to monitor her diet.

A final note: When researchers from Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Research followed more than 2,000 dieters who were encouraged to record meals and snacks, they found that keeping a food diary was the single best predictor of whether a participant would drop weight.

To learn more, check out the January issue of Good Housekeeping or visit [www.goodhousekeeping.com](http://www.goodhousekeeping.com).