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30 Ways to Outsmart Temptation

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Temptation is lurking everywhere we turn. Doughnuts in the break room at the office. Pizza in the fridge when you arrive home. A warm bed in the morning when it's time to head to the gym. On your quest for a healthy life, you'll frequently encounter the beast called temptation. Slay him once, and he returns stronger and smarter. Slay him again, and he rises from the ashes to lure you away from your good habits. But fear not. You'll win the battle and the war with these 30 tactics to outsmart temptation.

1 **Take a deep breath. When you're stressed or anxious, instead of reaching for a bag of chips, focus on your breath. A few slow, steady breaths through the nose can calm frazzled nerves. Add a mantra: Inhale peace, exhale tension.**

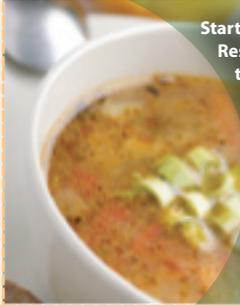
2 **Perk up your pizza. Ask for light cheese, plenty of veggies and lean protein. Blot the grease, don't eat the crust and stop after one or two slices. Better yet: Make your own pie at home with wheat crust (you can use premade crust).**

3 **Downsize. Instead of buying—and ultimately eating—an entire pint of ice cream, buy a box of low-cal frozen treats. They're instantly portion controlled, and you'll feel like you're spoiling yourself.**

4 **Stick to the perimeter. The closer to the center of the supermarket you venture, the more processed and unhealthy foods you'll find. Whole, healthful foods are usually along the outside edges of the store.**



5 **Mix up some milk. If you're craving creamy chocolate treats and nothing else will do, mix up a cup of lowfat milk with some chocolate syrup, then slowly savor each rich, sweet sip. Bonus: You'll get a boost of calcium.**



6 **Start with soup. Research has found that eating a broth-based soup at the beginning of a meal can help prevent overeating. Soups are high-volume foods but often low in calories. Choose low-sodium varieties or make your own.**

7 **Phone a friend. When you want to blow your calorie bank, quit your gym membership or eat a tube of cookie dough, tell a supportive friend. He or she will distract you until the urge passes.**

8 **Move your alarm clock. Do you hit snooze a few times before getting out of bed? Is waking up for morning workouts a struggle? Place your alarm clock on the other side of the room to break the snooze bar habit.**

9 **Craving something creamy? Go for Greek-style yogurt. Even the fat-free varieties are thick, rich and creamy—with a bit of tang for extra flavor. Use it to top tacos, mix it into smoothies, or lightly sweeten and put a dollop on fruit.**



10 **Track your calories. Knowing that you have to log that candy bar, extra-large fries or second can of soda means you'll think twice before chowing down. Look up calorie counts of junk foods to help discourage cravings.**

11 **Out of sight, out of mind. If something tempts you, get rid of it or avoid it. That might mean ridding the pantry of junk food, changing the channel to avoid fast-food ads or taking an alternate route so you don't walk past the bakery.**

12 **Distance yourself. When you're feeling the pull of something verboten, move away. Don't sit next to the buffet table, find something to do with your hands at cocktail parties and don't let co-workers leave doughnuts near your desk.**

13 **Bring on a better banana split. Split a banana, add three "scoops" of watermelon and top with strawberries, chopped nuts and a drizzle of vanilla yogurt. Don't forget the cherry on top!**

14 **Brush your teeth. A mouth full of minty freshness will wipe away any memory of your craving. If it doesn't, take a bite. Toothpaste is a sure way to make any food taste bad, and your pearly whites will thank you.**

15 **Spritz it up. The next time you're out for cocktails, ask the bartender to cut your drink with seltzer or club soda. You'll save calories, and the bubbles add a festive touch.**

16 **Drink water. Thirst is often mistaken for hunger. When you feel an overwhelming urge to snack, drink a glass of water and wait 20 minutes. Your "hunger" pangs will likely recede.**

17 **Envision the consequences. What will this indulgence do to your plan? How far will it set you back? Will you be able to bounce back quickly, or will it take weeks of work?**

18 **Make time for tea. Herbal and flavored teas pack plenty of flavor with few to no calories. Choose a sweet fruity variety to curb the afternoon munchies. Tea is packed with antioxidants, too.**



19 **Write it down. Trying to weigh the pros and cons of a decision is tough. Make a list, then start counting: How many pros and how many cons? The answer should be evident to you.**

20 **Wing it. Skip deep-fried wings and cook up boneless chicken breast chunks doused in hot sauce. Make your own blue cheese dressing with low-fat yogurt instead of mayo and add lots of celery for dipping.**

21 **Start a new hobby. Many people eat when they're bored. Whether you take up knitting, table tennis or scrapbooking, finding something to do with your hands and your mind can help you quell the urge to graze or binge.**



22 **Fake the fries. Swap the "fries" for some "bakes." Cut a potato (or sweet potato or butternut squash) into wedges, sprinkle with oil and spices and bake at 450 degrees Fahrenheit for at least 30 minutes, flipping halfway.**

23 **Give up on takeout. Instead of calling to order dinner on busy nights, stop by the supermarket to buy a premium frozen meal. It will cost less than takeout, cook in no time flat and still satisfy your palate.**

24 **Face your fear. When you feel strong enough, bring that temptation home. Knowing you have the strength to resist it can make you feel even more powerful. Just because the cookies are in the pantry doesn't mean you have to eat them.**

25 **Be wasteful. Faced with an oversize meal or treat, we want to eat every bite. Savor a few tastes, set a limit and send the rest away. Throw it in the garbage, cover it with salt or drizzle on some ketchup. Just don't eat it.**

26 **Minimize your meatballs. Meatballs at a restaurant can weigh up to 8 ounces—more than twice a serving of meat. Make your own with extra lean turkey or beef and make them the size of a die. Six should equal a 3-ounce portion.**

27 **Be a kid again. Choose from the children's menu when dining at a restaurant. You'll eat less and save money.**

28 **Pack a gym bag. If your clothes, shoes, MP3 player and water bottle are ready and waiting, it's harder to skip the gym. When you get home, don't forget to restock your bag for tomorrow!**

29 **Build a better burger. Nix the cheese to save 50 calories and 3 grams of fat or more. Swap beef for a veggie burger, use wheat buns not white and pile on the tasty, low-cal toppings: onions, pickles, tomatoes, lettuce and mustard.**



30 **Give in to temptation. There's room for treats in a healthy lifestyle. Eat sensibly, budget your calories and control your portion, and there's no reason why you can't indulge in a treat from time to time.**

