

## The secrets of the skinny

Written by Marcia Humphrey  
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It's the beginning of a new year, which is usually the time when we resolve to be different than we were the previous year. We often make grand plans to accomplish lofty goals, and then unrealistically expect to accomplish them all within a month. (*Not!*) This year I'd like to suggest that you consider the following: slow and steady wins the race. That philosophy can apply to nearly everything on your list of resolutions. If you set realistic goals as part of your lifestyle, you can have positive, lasting results.

Speaking of lasting results, many people start the New Year off with the goal of shedding those extra, unwanted pounds and keeping them off. I, along with two girlfriends, have decided to be accountability partners in our shared goal of sustained fitness. Our agreement includes weekly weigh-ins and fines for weight gain. In addition, to give me an extra edge (don't tell my girlfriends), I have signed up for the Special K Challenge [www.specialk.com](http://www.specialk.com), a helpful and customizable weight management plan (*it's also one of my favorite cereals*). If you are among those who want sustained weight-loss results, consider following the top secrets of skinny folks and start doing what they do. Their strategies focus on consistent, *steady* habits that yield winning results. Interested in joining us?

**Eat At Home.** You know it's true; the more you eat out at restaurants, the more weight you gain. Thin folks usually eat out about 2 times per week. Keep the temptation to a minimum by stocking up on healthy frozen meals-either that you have previously made or ready-made from the store. Another option is to make half of the meal takeout. For a lightning fast dinner, pick-up chicken from your favorite take-out spot and chop it over a premixed bag of salad (easy on the dressing). *Yum!*

**Eat Smaller Portions.** You do not, I repeat, you do not have to clean your plate every time, no matter where you are eating. At a restaurant, ask the waiter to serve only half of your meal, and request that the other half go in a doggy bag.

**Eat Whole Grains.** Whole grains are more nutritious and more filling than white bread, white rice, and other refined foods. Try couscous if you never have, and for a delicious snack, pop

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your own popcorn.

**Eat Your Fruits and Veggies.** Most skinny people eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables at least five times a week. If your fresh produce usually wilts before you eat it, buy it frozen and sneak it into your meal. A mixture of frozen fruits makes outstanding smoothies and spinach or carrots in your pasta sauce are delicious and nutritious.

**Get Moving.** Consider joining a gym if your budget allows. If not, move at home; exercise along with the cable fitness channel, borrow various exercise videos from the library, grab your child's hula-hoop, or dance your way skinny. To get started, set the timer and do ten-minute intervals.

**Get Your Sleep.** Studies show people who get only about four hours of sleep per night, tend to have nearly a 25% increase in appetite. Sleepless nights often lead to stressful days, which can trigger binge eating. Need help falling asleep? Try these natural relaxers: a tablespoon of honey, a bowl of oatmeal, or a handful of almonds. Avoid the foods that can keep you tossing and turning, such as spicy foods, alcohol, and milk chocolate (dark chocolate is fine).

Slow and steady wins the race. Challenge yourself this year to consider the wisdom in those simple words. Focus more on the *steady*-keep moving, keep making wise choices, keep progressing-and you will surely be a winner. Happy New Year and God Bless You. Enjoy!

Marcia Humphrey is an interior decorator and home stager who specializes in achieving high style at low costs. A native of Michigan, she and her husband, Lonnie, have three children.