

## The Pros and Cons of Popular Weight Loss Systems

One of the challenges facing every dieter is deciding which of the many weight loss systems out there is right for their specific circumstances. To help make this choice a little easier, here are some of the most popular diet programs today, with some information about how each works.

**Counting Calories** The formula for weight loss is easy in theory: the number of calories burned in a day must be higher than the amount of calories consumed in food. One of the most consistently successful weight loss systems is to count your calories so that you don't eat more than you need to lose weight at a reasonable rate. Advantages: No food is absolutely restricted; you can eat anything you want, in reasonable amounts. Scientifically proven, meets nutritional guidelines. Disadvantages: Counting calories is time consuming. It requires keeping careful track of everything you eat during the day and looking up calorie guidelines.

**Counting Points** Weight Watchers and similar programs help simplify the process of counting calories by using points instead. This can make it easier to keep track of your goals for eating and exercise. Special Weight Watchers brand food comes marked with the point values, and any food with a nutritional label can easily be converted to points. Furthermore, a supportive group environment keeps people motivated and engaged in their weight loss. Advantages: Weight Watchers is one of the most successful weight loss programs, with more members losing weight and keeping it off than most other plans. You have the flexibility to eat whatever you want in moderation, and nutrition, exercise, and healthy choices are emphasized. Disadvantages: This commercial program can be costly, especially for people whose weight loss will take some time to achieve. Also, the group environment may make some people uncomfortable.

**Restricting Carbohydrates** Weight loss systems such as Atkins and South Beach work by strongly reducing the amount of carbohydrates that you are allowed to consume. The idea is that a high level of carbohydrates increases the amount of food that is converted to fat, and that sugars can slow the metabolism. Advantages: These types of weight loss programs allow people to eat as much proteins and fibers as they want without counting. Hunger pangs are minimized and weight loss is usually steady and reasonably fast. Disadvantages: Carb restricted weight loss systems have not been scientifically proven to help achieve or maintain weight loss. Many doctors speak out against the dangers of cutting an important food group from your diet. Although people are not supposed to go overboard on fats on these diets, many do, calling it the "cheese and bacon diet." This can lead to high blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

### About the Author

Check out my list of 21 sure fire ways to lose weight and claim your free secrets of successful weight loss newsletter.

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