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How many calories per day to lose weight

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If you're looking for how many calories per day to lose weight the answer is not as straightforward as you might think since every individual has different caloric needs. But it is possible to calculate your requirement of calories per day to lose weight.

What is a Calorie?

A 'calorie' represents the amount of energy required to raise the temperature of one gram of water by one degree centigrade. Of course, a calorie is not the only measure of food energy used worldwide. The World Health Organization recommends use of kilojoules. One calorie is equal to 4.184 kilojoules. Some countries use kilojoules in the nutritional info on food labels while others use calories. Some products include both. Even though I come from a country that uses kilojoules I tend to think in calories. Scientists have calculated one pound of fat is equal to 3,500 calories.

So how many calories per day to lose weight do you require?

The minimum number of calories per day should be 1200. Less than that causes the the body to go into 'starvation mode'. This means that your body interprets the lack of food as a famine so it slows your metabolism (metabolism refers to the ability to burn calories) and retains fat stores in order to survive for longer. Hence, crash diets involving less than 1200 calories per day only work short term (like a week or two at most). While you may think that's all you need if you're only looking to lose a couple of pounds, you need to keep in mind that crash diets also tend to have short term results. In other words, you quickly regain the weight lost plus more.

Every individuals calorie needs are different. There are many factors that affect how many calories per day to lose weight are required including;

- Age
- Gender
- Weight
- Height
- Activity level

Lets deal with these one at a time.

1. **AGE:** Individuals in their mid twenties require an average of 2300 calories per day, as we get older, that amount reduces partly due to physiological changes in our body, partly because as we age, we tend to become less active and our bodies just naturally tend to increase fat content which burns less calories than muscle.
2. **GENDER:** Males require 5-10% more calories than females of the same size. This is due to the fact that men have greater muscle mass than females. But if a woman is pregnant or breast feeding she requires around the same amount as a male of the same size.
3. **WEIGHT:** The heavier we are the more calories we require to maintain our weight. Even fat cells need calories to maintain themselves. For this reason, as we lose weight our calorie requirement reduces accordingly. This is one of the reasons that we reach a 'weight loss plateau' and need to mix up our routine a little to get past it.
4. **HEIGHT:** Again, the taller we are the more we tend to weigh, the more muscle we have (to cover bone structure etc), thus our calorie needs are higher.
5. **ACTIVITY LEVEL:** And this, of course, is probably the most crucial factor. It doesn't just refer to what we traditionally think of as 'exercise'... this is only one aspect of it. It also refers to lifestyle, careers etc. For example; A builder or brick layer will not need to cut as many calories per day to lose weight as someone who sits at a desk all day because their calorie needs are higher. I don't have a drivers license (never have had one) and because of that I tend to catch public transport or walk everywhere which means that on

average I walk at least 2 or 3 miles per day... this is a lifestyle example of something that results in higher calorie needs.



On average, 60-65% of calorie intake is expended in bodily functions such as breathing, blood purification, heart beating, maintaining body temperature, etc. Another 10% is expended in digestion. The rest is used to supply energy to the body.

As you can see, determining how many calories per day to lose weight are required is not a simple question to answer.

You can use the BMR (Basal Metabolic Rate) calculator below to calculate roughly how many calories per day your body needs to maintain itself.

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As mentioned earlier, scientists have calculated that one pound of fat is equal to 3,500 calories. So in order to lose one pound per week without extra exercise you need to reduce your daily calorie intake by 500 calories. Extra exercise in conjunction with reduced calories will result in even greater weight loss... even if it's only taking a 15 minute walk per day.

If you're looking for foods to eat that will allow you to reduce your calories without reducing actual food intake then there are a couple of things to keep in mind. First of all, close to nature is much lower in calories than processed. For example, a piece of fruit is higher in nutrients and lower in calories than a cookie, cake or snack bar. Take a look at these [calorie free noodles](#) for a product you can substitute for noodles that are traditionally high in calories. Why are they calorie free? Because they're made with 100% dietary fiber mixed with water. Fiber passes through the body without being converted to energy. In fact, the body is incapable of converting fiber to energy. So that is why they are effectively calorie free. Find out more about [miracle noodles](#).



So there you have it! Now you have the means to calculate how many calories per day to lose weight you

require. Good luck in your weight loss goals.

You can also find this article published on [How many calories per day to lose weight](#), and on the tag pages [Nutrition For Weight Loss](#).