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EASY  
**FOOD SWAPS**  
TO KICKSTART  
**YOUR**  
**WEIGHT LOSS**

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Just because you're trying to lose weight, it doesn't mean you have to sacrifice all the good foods you usually love eating. Being too strict on your diet and trying to avoid too many of your favorite foods all at once can be overwhelming. I encourage my clients to focus on making small, simple changes, which makes healthier eating more manageable and sustainable over the long haul. With the following easy tweaks, you will save calories, you will slim down and you will love what the scale says...

**1. Swap out pasta for “Zoodles” noodles.**

This swap is tasty, healthy and fun to make. Instead of loading your body with too many carbs in one meal, you'll be feeding it delicious, nutrient and fiber-rich veggies your body is craving. It's an easy swap to make, too—and making “zoodles” from yellow squash and zucchini is a fun kitchen creation.

**2. Another swap for pasta is spaghetti squash**

Spaghetti squash is a tasty, veggie-filled pasta replacement, which is low in calories and high in fiber. In addition to making this swap, you will be saving calories and getting generous helpings of vitamin C, folate, and magnesium, which will increase your energy.

**3. Swap out candy bars for 70% dark chocolate.**

Swap out the chocolate candy bars made by the manufacturers that aren't so good for you by choosing chocolate bars that have a cacao content of at least 70%. You'll get maximum nutritional power and only a small amount of sugar. Keep in mind, the darker your chocolate, the less sugar and milk and the more antioxidant-packed cacao it contains.

**4. Swap out a muffin for a whole-wheat muffin**

As healthy as a raisin bran muffin may sound, don't be fooled and think it's a good idea to eat this for breakfast. The calorie content of a healthy sounding muffin can reach as high as 400 calories. You can replace a muffin for an English muffin, which has less than one third of the calories and more fiber. You can add a tablespoon of peanut butter for added protein and healthy fat and still save about half the calories of a muffin.

## **5. A Swap for Fruit Smoothies**

Smoothies are a great breakfast or meal option-- It's just best to make your own or learn how to order a smoothie wisely. My healthy homemade smoothie concoction contains a source of protein, a fiber rich carb, no sugar added and a healthy fat source with added superfoods, such as ginger, spirulina, turmeric and maca powder. For healthy smoothie recipes, check out my website: [pattyrd.com](http://pattyrd.com)

## **6. A Swap for Low Fat Cheese**

Your body will benefit more from fresh goat cheese or feta as opposed to low fat cheese brands, which are filled with additives and preservatives, not to mention not much flavor. Goat and Feta cheese contain conjugated linoleic acid (CLA), which may help your body burn more fat.

## **7. A Swap for Nuts**

You can still enjoy your nuts – but don't go nuts eating them! Why? Just a small handful has at least 170 calories?? If you are trying to lose weight, I suggest diluting them with something that has a lot of volume, such as a high fiber cereal or air-popped popcorn.

## **8. A Swap for Sour Cream**

Plain Greek yogurt and sour cream are so similar in taste and texture that you really have no excuse not to use the lean, protein-packed alternative to fattening sour cream. As a quesadilla or taco-topper, salad dressing base, or chip dip, a dollop of Greek yogurt can save you from eating a load of saturated fat while increasing your protein intake.

## **9. A Swap for White Rice**

Cauliflower, better known as the skinny starch, delivers almost a day's worth of vitamin C for only 27 calories per cup. (Compare that to white rice, which clock in at 205 calories per cup.)

## **10. A Swap for Salad Dressing**

If you don't over spray, vegetable-oil sprays will save you plenty of calories. Just a few spritzes have about 10 calories, which is enough to coat your salad without weighting it down. One tablespoon of

regular salad dressing has more than a hundred calories of pure fat --  
and who can stop at one tablespoon?