

Figure Out Your Daily Calorie Quota



Calories add up to pounds. So one way to watch your weight is to determine how many calories you should eat each day.

The following formula is designed to produce weight loss of approximately 1 pound per week—a safe amount that's most likely to *stay* off.

1. Determine your goal weight.
2. Multiply that figure by 12 if you are moderately active. (That is, if you bicycle, walk, swim, or participate in similar activities three or more times a week.) If you are more active than average, (that is, if you participate in aerobic dance, circuit weight training, racquetball, jogging, or other vigorous activities three or more times a week or work at a physically demanding job) multiply by 15. If you are fairly inactive, tend to lose weight slowly, or are over age 45, multiply by 10. (If you rarely, if ever, do anything more strenuous than sewing, reading, or playing cards, you are inactive.)

3. For example: Desirable weight = 130 pounds; activity level = (fairly inactive); $130 \times 10 = 1,300$ calories per day.
4. To figure out how many calories a week you should be eating, multiply the daily total by 7. It's more realistic and practical to try to average a certain number of calories per week than to try to hit an exact number per day, because we all have days when we eat more—or less—than average.

Note: In general, it is best not to eat less than 1,200 calories per day. You need this many calories to avoid nutritional deficiencies or serious health consequences. Also, the figures used above are rough estimates to figure out calorie needs. Follow your doctor's advice for how many calories you need.