



The diet industry's job isn't to tell you the truth – it's to make money and they make their money off failure, not success. If diets really worked, it wouldn't be a 70 billion dollar industry. But the truth is, millions of people go on diets every year and many of them fail to reach their weight loss goals. You may lose weight by cutting out all the foods you enjoy – yes, I'm talking to you, delicious bread – but that weight loss is only temporary. Depriving your body causes your metabolism to slow down, which then makes it harder to lose weight. It may also lead to an unhealthy dieting/binging cycle since your body is trying to make up for the limited calories. This leads to an endless cycle of gaining weight → feeling guilty → restricting intake → losing weight → binge eating to compensate for restricting → gaining weight → repeat...

DIETS DON'T WORK

People think going on a diet will help them lose weight, but it's actually the opposite. When you follow fad diets, like no carbs or a juice cleanse, you lose the weight in a short period of time, which causes your body to think it's in a state of starvation, which then causes your body to hold on to every calorie for survival. You spend your whole life trying to lose weight with these crazy diets, and let's be honest, where has that gotten you?

The irony is, forcing yourself to lose weight will actually prevent you from losing weight. Calorie counting and overly restricted diets ruin the pleasure of eating and fueling the body. Eating doesn't need to be a chore! Instead of asking "can I eat this?" ask yourself, "how will eating this make me feel?". Your goal should be health, not weight loss.

Incorporating a healthy lifestyle with mindful food choices to nourish your body removes the feeling of guilt from eating.

WHAT ABOUT DETOXES?

If you're looking to detox your system, don't waste your time or money on juices, powders, or teas. Your liver is an expert at getting rid of toxins no matter what you eat. However, one possible benefit from a detox is the additional exercise you will get as you race to the bathroom several times a day. The only detox you should be doing is a social media cleanse. While some social media accounts may boost your body confidence, many do the opposite. Social media displays everyone's best moments on a highlight reel, and that's the last thing you need when you're feeling down. Take control of your feed and unsubscribe from anyone posting content that makes you feel like you're not good enough. The more time you waste on these accounts, the more self-conscious and less productive you will become.

GET MOVING!

While what you fuel your body with is important, what you do with your body also makes an impact on your overall health. Exercise should be a choice, not a punishment, and you shouldn't feel guilty for not working out. Instead of thinking of exercise as something you 'have to do' think of it as something you 'get to do' and make it fun. Choose an exercise that you ACTUALLY enjoy. I like yoga, circuit training, and pilates. What do you enjoy?

And remember, 'feeling fat' has nothing to do with your weight and everything to do with how you feel about yourself. Learn to love your body and fuel it with healthy foods.

HERE ARE SOME HELPFUL TIPS TO GET YOU STARTED:

1. Eat a minimum of five fruits and vegetables a day, and limit the amount of processed, high-fat, and sugary foods.
2. Drink water, coffee, or tea instead of fruit juices or soft drinks. Try to reduce the amount of added sugar by asking for unsweetened tea and limit the amount added to your coffee.
3. Get up and move! Don't sit for too long and move your body. Try to start with at least 90 minutes of moderate exercise a week, including activities that you enjoy. Stick to a routine because consistency is key in forming a new habit.
4. Become aware of your thoughts. Forgive yourself for not being 'perfect' and focus on your long term health goals and how you will achieve them.
5. Start making changes SLOWLY. Always remember, the tortoise won the race! Set specific, measurable goals that can be achieved in a particular amount of time. Be clear with your intentions and do it consistently. Over time, the change will require less effort.

LASTLY, BE KIND TO YOURSELF

Try to be consistent with the good days, but don't quit if you have a bad day. While being healthy is important, don't give up on the simple pleasures in life, like going out to ice-cream with your friends, just to look perfect in a bikini or swim shorts. Accepting your body does not mean you're giving up; it means you're making an effort to nourish rather than restrict it. You will radiate with self-confidence, and that is what truly makes you attractive.

RESOURCES ON CAMPUS:

Your life doesn't have to revolve around food and if you're feeling stuck, you may need to talk to a professional. There are several resources available for you on campus. Make an appointment with a therapist or Registered Dietitian at the Engemann Student Health Center. The cost is covered by your USC Student Health Fee!

USC Student Health Workshops <https://studenthealth.usc.edu/?s=>

Mindful USC <https://mindful.usc.edu/class-descriptions/>