

# End-of-Summer Slimdown

ALLOW THESE NUTRITION TIPS TO TRANSFORM HOW YOU LOOK AND FEEL AS THE SEASON SHIFTS.

By Ashley Ryan

Summer is the perfect time to indulge. Whether it's ice-cold treats, refreshing cocktails by the pool or delicious burgers and hot dogs at a nearby baseball game, temptation abounds as we soak up the California sunshine. But, with indulgence, you just might see some weight gain—even if what you're enjoying seems light and fresh.

"Summer doesn't have to mean weight gain or metabolic chaos, but the casual accumulation of small indulgences can really add up," says Bianca Gillett, Director of Fitness and recreation at Newport Beach Country Club. "Being mindful but not obsessing is key."

If you're trying to slim down before the holidays roll around, discover the role that nutrition can play in your journey and why it just might be more important than how often you hit the gym.

## SUMMER'S BIGGEST OBSTACLES

There are so many places—and treats—that tempt us during the summertime. While many believe winter is the most dangerous season for foodies, filled with comfort foods and clothes that provide more coverage to hide the excess pounds, the warmer months can be just as tough.

"Weight loss is 70-80% about what you eat and 20-30% about how you move," Gillett says. "So I'd

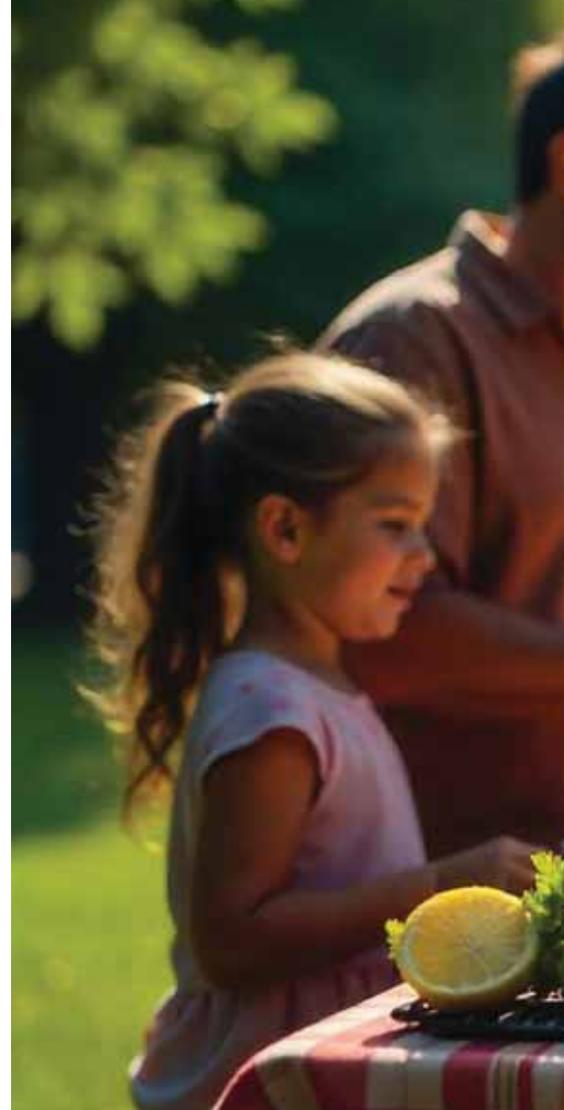
argue that nutrition is more critical than exercise."

Some of the things that have the biggest impact are overeating at social events like barbecues and maintaining a "vacation-eating mentality," with many abandoning their usual eating habits in favor of living it up while traveling. But these patterns can linger long after the event or trip is over, leading to a slight jump on the scale. The more parties or vacations you enjoy, the more true that may be.

Summertime can also be dangerous as the hotter temperatures and busy schedules can lead diners to skip meals or eat more snacks than balanced plates, opt for colder foods that are heavily processed or drink alcohol more frequently.

"A diet high in processed foods and sugar can spike insulin levels, increase hunger and promote fat storage," she explains. "For anyone trying to lose weight, cutting out processed foods and sugar as much as possible is usually the first recommendation from health professionals."

There are a few misconceptions to keep in mind. First of all, don't rely solely on cutting carbs. "Carbs themselves don't make you fat—excess calories do," Gillett says. "Whole carbs like fruits, vegetables, legumes and whole grains are nutrient-dense and support health. The real problem is refined carbs and sugar, which spike



insulin and are easy to overeat. It is better to focus on quality carbs and portion control, not carb elimination."

She also notes that not all carbs are considered equal, despite what many think. Different ingredients can impact your body in different ways, no matter how many calories you ingest. Similarly, not all "healthy foods" are low in calories. For example, although nuts and avocados may be healthier options, they are also calorie-dense and can lead to weight gain if you don't keep portion size in mind.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF NUTRITION

According to Gillett, weight loss requires a calorie deficit. But it's also easier to consume fewer calories than it is to eat whatever you want and try to burn it off later in the gym. "A single slice of pizza might be 300-400 calories. To burn that through exercise, you would need to run for 30-45 minutes. In contrast, simply skipping the slice of pizza instantly saves you calories," she explains.

In addition, you can lose weight without exercising. "Although I would not recommend that. Because if you want to lose weight, fat



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mass, and gain lean muscle. You need to make the necessary dietary changes and weight train to build muscle.” “Personally, I like to follow the 80/20 rule daily: 80% of my day is eating whole, nutrient-dense foods that support better appetite control and fat metabolism while 20% can be from processed—or “fun” foods—that contain sugar,” Gillett says.

There are plenty of ways you can stay on track though. Introduce structure into your day-to-day, with a consistent meal schedule featuring protein-rich dishes and lots of vegetables. Eat before you feel starved and make sure that you’re actually hungry, not dehydrated; drink half your body weight in ounces every day.

Gillett also suggests skipping processed foods whenever possible. Opt for whole foods instead, such as grilled lean proteins, salads or nuts and seeds. You can also replace ice cream with other frozen treats made at home, like chocolate-covered fruit, for a tasty snack that is lower in calories. Switching up your drinks can make a huge difference as well. Moderate your alcohol consumption and alternate with water. Setting drink limits for yourself can be

helpful. Or simply substitute summer cocktails for a delicious trending mocktail, sparkling water, herbal iced tea or even juice diluted with water.

But, if you do choose to satiate your appetite with burgers, ice cream and sugary cocktails, don’t punish yourself—and don’t restrict yourself to detox afterward either. “Just return

to normal eating habits,” Gillett says. “The body rebounds well with consistency. ... Like I mentioned before, 80/20 is a good approach. Enjoy summer foods in moderation, but make healthy choices most of the time.”

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