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Five Ways Pistachios Can Be Part of a Calorie-Reduced Diet



If you're trying to dislodge a few—or a lot—of pounds that have overstayed their welcome on your tummy, hips or thighs, we've got good news for you. Delicious nuts, like pistachios, can be part of a calorie-reduced diet that promotes healthy weight loss.

Here are 5 ways these little green nuts can be part of your calorie-reduced eating plan.



1. Pistachios Up the Fullness Factor

Studies show that individuals who include nuts in their diet are generally thinner than those who don't, and that nut eaters may be less likely to gain weight over time.^{1,2,3,4,5}

Pistachios contain three key nutrients that play a role in satiety or how full you feel after eating: protein, unsaturated fat and fiber. All three of these nutrients have been shown to help keep hunger at bay and increase the satisfaction of a calorie-reduced diet.^{1,2,3}

Three key factors that keep hunger at bay:

- ✓ Protein
- ✓ Unsaturated fat
- ✓ Fiber

Sticking to a lower-calorie diet isn't that bad, as long as you're not ravenous. Research shows that any diet that reduces calorie intake will promote weight loss, but adhering to a diet is the major challenge.⁶ If you can't stick to a particular diet long-term, you'll gain the weight back. One study found that, when on a calorie-controlled diet, including nuts and other Mediterranean-style foods increased adherence and feelings of satisfaction while losing weight.⁷ And, including pistachios in a calorie-reduced diet provides the feeling of delicious decadence, which also can help increase your ability to stick to it.

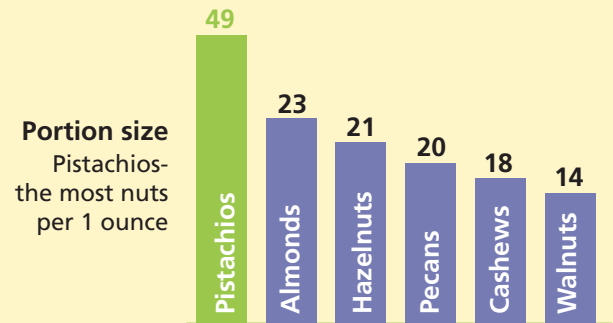


2. Pistachios May Help Put the Brake on Speed Eating

Eating S—L—O—W—L—Y has shown to have some advantages for helping with weight loss. Studies have shown that it takes about twenty minutes after eating for the stomach to communicate to your brain that it's full and time to stop eating.

Most of the time, we eat so rapidly that we actually eat well beyond fullness. Eating more slowly allows time for the satiety or fullness factor to finally alert our brain that we've had enough.

In-shell nuts naturally slow down the rate at which you eat because it takes time to shell them. A 1-ounce serving of pistachios packs in 49 nuts compared to 7 Brazil nuts, 14 walnut halves, 18 cashews or 20 pecan halves in the same serving size. In addition, you can enjoy twice as many pistachios in a serving compared to many other nuts.



Practice "Hari Hachi Bu."

In Japan, this translates to mean, "Eat until you're 80% full." It is one reason why Japanese are less likely to be overweight compared to Americans.



3. Pistachios Provide Protein for Muscles

There's even more reason to make more of your fat calories unsaturated: belly fat. Saturated fat and trans fats are not only good at clogging up arteries, research shows that they aren't readily used as fuel during exercise compared to mono-unsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. In fact, the calories in foods rich in saturated fat and trans fats are more readily stored in the body as harmful abdominal fat. Excess belly fat is known to be a risk factor for heart disease.

Pistachios are rich in mono- and polyunsaturated fat; low in saturated fat; and are naturally trans-fat free. This makes them a perfect snack option to fuel muscles. Pistachios are one of the best protein sources of all nuts, with 6 grams protein per ounce. Not only is protein the most filling nutrient, it can help ensure that you retain a higher percentage of muscle mass when you lose weight, which may help in keeping the pounds off. So enjoy a pre-exercise snack of pistachios to fuel your workouts.



4. Fiber Helps Cut Calories

Pistachios are a good source of dietary fiber, packing in 3 grams in each 1-ounce serving. Fiber is known to help contribute to successful weight loss and maintenance. Population-wide studies show that individuals who eat higher-fiber diets are thinner than those who eat less roughage.⁸ Since fiber travels through the GI tract undigested, it adds bulk to your diet without any calories, so fiber dilutes the calories of your diet but keeps the volume the same or greater to keep you satisfied. Since we are programmed to eat the same “volume” or amount of food daily, research shows that if volume remains same, while cutting total calories, losing weight may be easier.⁹ Since fiber travels through the GI tract unabsorbed, it also carries with it some protein and fat. Therefore, when you have fiber with meals containing protein and fat, you don’t absorb 100% of the calories because fiber shuttles some of it out of the body. Fiber also slows down the speed at which carbohydrate is digested, which blunts the blood sugar and insulin response that normally occurs after eating to enhance satiety and reduce cravings.⁸

The U.S. Dietary Guidelines Committee recommends a dietary fiber intake of about 14 grams per 1000 calories, but consumption studies have indicated that Americans typically consume only half the recommended amount. Research shows that increasing fiber by an additional 14 grams per day can lead to a 10% reduction in calorie intake and a weight loss of four pounds in 12 weeks.⁹



5. 100-Calorie Snack Option

You can literally snack yourself thin with pistachios. According to national consumption data, snack calories topped 600 calories a day—about one-quarter of our daily calories. Compared to two decades ago, we now get nearly 275 more calories a day from snacks alone.¹⁰ Substituting 100-calorie servings of pistachios for one or two of your typical snacks may help you reduce between-meal calories by 150 or more calories a day. In a year, that would translate into at least 15 pounds lost. For example, 30 pistachios in place of a typical candy bar (around 250 calories) or 2 ounces of Cheddar cheese (about 230 calories) would slash 130-150 calories from your diet. Replace your typical high-calorie, nutrient-poor snacks with 30 pistachios (about 100 calories) to snack yourself slim.

The average snack calorie count

★ 30 pistachios	100 calories	★
Candy bar	250 calories	
2 oz of Cheddar Cheese	230 calories	

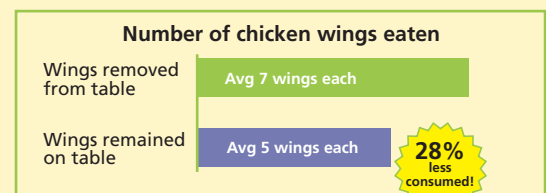
How to Avoid Mindless Munching

One of the best ways to lose weight and keep it off is to be “mindful” of what you eat and drink during the day. One of the best ways to do this is to keep a journal of everything you eat and drink for at least three consecutive days.

Here are other tips that Brian Wansink, a professor at Cornell University, suggests in his book, *“Mindless Eating: Why We Eat More than We Think”*.¹¹

- 1 Avoid eating and watching TV or movie.
- 2 When eating out, order smaller portions; at home, use smaller plates and glasses at home.
- 3 Keep tempting treats out of sight to help keep them out of mouth.
- 4 Don’t be lured into eating more because something is labeled as low-fat, healthy or low-calorie.
- 5 Exercise shouldn’t be a license to eat what you want.

Students participated in an all-you-can-eat buffalo wing buffet to demonstrate the effects of mindless eating. Participants consumed 28% fewer wings when left with a visual cue of empty bones than those whose tables were bussied.



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