

A Real Life Guide for Midlife Women

10 Simple Steps TO A Leaner, Healthier Midlife



Real•Life Midlife Wellness
Carol Casalino MS, CNS
www.reallifemidlife.com

WELCOME!

Thank you for downloading this guide!

It doesn't have to be complicated or overwhelming to start implementing healthier habits – even if you're in your 40's, 50's, 60's, or beyond. I wanted to share some of what I've learned, both from my personal journey as well as from my education and my many years as a Nutritionist working with midlife women.

In this e-guide, I share several important key tips to help you on your way to implementing healthier habits and a leaner you in midlife. It's important to understand that real change doesn't happen over night, even though we really want it to! Change is what happens when we decide we no longer want to settle for how we feel or look and we are truly ready to make a lifestyle shift (no crazy diets, pills, potions or “tricks”). The bottom line is, you have to DECIDE – not half heartedly, but with all your being, decide that you will start today and make it a priority.

Decide that your comfort zone is no longer serving you and you're ready to step out and find the old you... or maybe even the NEW you!

I'd love to hear from you!

Stop by my Facebook group – **Midlife Women's Wellness & Weight Loss Success Group** – with questions, comments or to share progress. Join here => <http://bit.ly/2CBZrVe>



Carol Casalino MS, CNS

is a board-certified Nutritionist and health coach who founded **Real•Life Midlife Wellness** when she realized that once you enter midlife so much of what we thought we knew about weight loss and staying healthy – what we did in our 20's and 30's – just doesn't apply anymore. Carol specializes in teaching midlife women how to eat right for their age so they can successfully manage their weight and health, regain the energy and vitality of their 20's and 30's, and take control over how well they age.

I invite you to visit my website www.reallifemidlife.com where you can:

- Learn more about Eating Right for Midlife for weight control and good health
- Subscribe to my blog where I'll keep you updated about simple ways to tweak your diet and lifestyle to keep you lean and healthy in midlife and beyond, share my favorite easy, delicious recipes, and keep you abreast of the latest nutrition and health news relevant to midlife women.

**ARE YOU READY TO DIVE IN?
GOOD! LET'S GET STARTED.**

The information provided is not a substitute for medical care or advice. Information provided is for educational purposes only and is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. Consult your doctor about making diet and lifestyle changes that are right for you.

You probably know by now that there are no quick fixes when it comes to losing weight for the long term while also supporting your health.

The most effective way to lose weight in your 40's, 50's, 60's, and beyond - *and keep it off* - is to focus on eating right for your age and adding in healthy habits. A healthy lifestyle is not about being on a 'diet', it's about learning how to nourish your body so you can thrive – not feel deprived.



It's easy to get overwhelmed, impatient and want results NOW, but by making small changes you can live with for the rest of your life, the better your chances are for success. This is also the best way to get off of the diet roller coaster for good.

WHY RESTRICTIVE DIETS DON'T WORK

Many of my new clients seek out my help for weight loss when their restrictive diets stop working for them. Their problem is a common one. A restrictive diet puts the body in starvation mode and prevents it from releasing excess body fat. In fact, a restrictive diet will cause the body to store more fat as a survival mechanism! At the same time, the body begins to break down lean muscle to get the calories it's not getting from food. The resulting muscle loss means a slower metabolic rate which can stall weight loss or even cause weight gain.

It can be confusing to know where to begin, so I'm sharing 10 simple but effective, strategies you can incorporate to help you on the road to living a healthier, leaner, and more balanced midlife.

- *Start with 1 or 2 habits at a time then build on those successes by adding 1 or 2 more. Slow and steady really is the way to go so that you incorporate these habits as part of your lifestyle.*
- *You can start with the simplest habit first and go from there if you like. Don't get overwhelmed – just start with ONE thing. Write it down somewhere as a reminder.*
- *Grab your smart phone, iPad, tablet, or pen and paper as we get started. By the way, a great, free smartphone app for tracking your habits is called "[Good Habits](#)". You can enter up to 3 habits and set it up so that you get a daily reminder. How easy is that?!*
- *Check off the first 1-2 habits you want to start with this week. Imagine if you were to incorporate even 1 new habit each month for a year – amazing things would happen!*

1. GET ENOUGH SLEEP

This may seem like a strange place to start, but it's so important that I'm putting it on the top of the list. Why? Let's face it, when we're tired we tend to make fewer healthy choices throughout the day and reach for the quick-fix energy boost we need, often in the form of sugar-filled options and processed snacks.

Midlife women, in particular, may experience sleep disruptions from perimenopausal hormone fluctuations and menopausal night sweats. But whatever the cause, lack of quality sleep disrupts circadian rhythms and can lead to inefficient body regulation of energy balance, metabolism and appetite. Abnormal leptin and ghrelin levels – hormones that tell your body it's full – can go awry when your body isn't fully rested. And the stress hormone, cortisol, becomes elevated, causing irresistible carb cravings.

To get more sleep, set a goal of what time you need to be in bed each night to get the 7-9 hours you need. Try it this week and see what difference you notice, both in how you feel and your appetite.

➤ *I'm committing to getting _____ hours of sleep each night this week.*



2. REDUCE STRESS

I realize this is not always an easy thing to do. Most of us are juggling way too much and going through the day at warp speed, trying to get more and more done. By having a high stress level, not only is it harmful to your health, it's harmful to your waistline as well.

When you are constantly under stress, hormone levels, like cortisol and insulin are elevated. The elevation of these two hormones can sabotage your weight loss efforts and actually cause weight gain.

'Feeling stressed can create a wide variety of physiological changes, such as impairing digestion, excretion of valuable nutrients, decreasing beneficial gut flora populations, decreasing your metabolism, and raising triglycerides, cholesterol, insulin, and cortisol levels.' – Mercola.com

So, while you may think you can “handle it” as far as your stress level goes, we aren't meant to be under constant stress. It takes its toll. If you're doing everything right as far as diet and exercise but you're under stress everyday, you're not going to see or feel the results you want.

Here are some ways you can reduce your stress level:

- *Meditation – [try this relaxation app](#)*
- *Conscious breathing – [try this 4-7-8 breath exercise from Dr. Andrew Weil](#)*
- *Nature bathing – [try a walk in the woods](#)*

Is there something you can start with this week or this month?



3. EAT CLEAN

Cleaning up your diet will help every cell in your body to function better and lessen your risk for developing the diseases of old age.

The chemicals that are added to much of the American food supply can double your risk of being overweight or obese and cause inflammation in your body that puts you on a path to heart disease, type 2 diabetes, thyroid disease, and some cancers.

Avoid foods that contain pesticides, herbicides, and fat-promoting chemicals (obesogens) such as artificial sweeteners, colorings, and flavorings.

If you can't pronounce it, don't eat it.

Look for these keywords:

- organic,
- grass-fed,
- pasture-raised,
- and non-GMO when cleaning up your midlife diet.

4. TRADE OUT YOUR BEVERAGE

A really easy way to improve your health and lose weight is to trade out your soda (regular or diet), flavored coffee drinks or other calorie or artificially sweetened beverage.

For most of us, it's just a habit we've formed. What is the trigger for you? Is it going by the cafeteria, fast food drive-thru or the stash in your fridge or pantry maybe?

Studies show that even diet soda increases our appetite. So, while the drink itself may be zero calories, you end up eating more food to go along with it.

Decide what you can drink instead. You can try unsweetened coffee and tea (hot or iced), water with fresh fruit or unflavored carbonated water with a splash of fruit juice if you just need some fizz in your drink.

- How much water should you drink daily? Nobody really knows what's optimal but conventional wisdom suggests drinking half your weight in ounces of water.
- Ex: If you weigh 140 pounds then drink 70 ounces of water daily.

By trading out your sugar or chemical-filled beverage for water you're giving your body what it needs – proper hydration.



5. EAT CARBS THAT FUEL YOUR BODY

Our bodies use carbohydrates as fuel, but just the right kind is needed especially in midlife when hormonal changes and a slowing metabolism make us more carb intolerant (think easy weight gain).

Refined carbohydrates like white bread, pasta, cereal and processed snacks are lacking in nutrients and leave us hungry again a short time later by disrupting our blood sugar balance causing our energy levels to plummet.

Complex carbohydrates from foods like fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds and legumes contain fiber and nutrients that fuel us, help us feel full longer, and keep our blood sugar levels, and energy, on an even keel.

If you can find it in nature (as opposed to a package with a long list of ingredients), it's a pretty safe bet it's a good choice for your midlife metabolism.



6. CHOOSE HEALTHY FATS

FACT: Our body needs fat in order to function optimally.

The body utilizes dietary fat for energy, healthy hair, skin and nails, vitamin absorption and normal, everyday bodily functions.

Good fats promote several health benefits such as protection against heart disease, cancer, Alzheimer's, and depression, as well as reduced blood pressure and lower cholesterol. All health issues that can manifest in midlife if we don't eat proactively.



- Choose fat sources such as nuts, seeds, cold water fish, avocados, grass fed butter and ghee, and extra virgin olive oil.
- Another good source of healthy fat is coconut oil, which can be used for cooking and baking and it's also great in smoothies.

The low fat diet craze caused most Americans to fear all sources of dietary fat, even the ones that we need to thrive. During this time, fat was replaced with sugar and other additives to give foods the flavor and consistency they needed. Unfortunately, this period of

time was also when the rates of obesity, diabetes and heart disease skyrocketed in this country.

Adding some healthy fats to your meals will not only make them tastier, but can help you stay satiated longer and even help you lose weight.

7. FOCUS ON PROTEIN

Protein is essential for helping us maintain, and even build, lean muscle mass in midlife, which is so important for preventing loss of function and mobility, poor balance, and a higher risk of falls, tripping, and fractured bones.

Consuming enough protein will also improve your energy and help you stay satiated longer after your meal. And it helps rev up our metabolisms, too!

Our bodies require protein for cell renewal, stabilizing our blood sugar, and providing us the energy we need. Many foods contain protein, but some of the best sources include: fish, dairy, meat and eggs, as well as plant sources like seeds, nuts and beans.

Be aware of your protein consumption and observe how you feel when you have more vs. when you have less to determine what works best for you.

An easy (and tasty) way to increase your daily protein intake is with a protein shake:

- Add some berries,
- about 10 ounces of coconut or almond milk (unsweetened, of course),
- and blend with a quality protein powder to have a great meal replacement or snack that will help preserve your lean muscle mass.



"Let food be thy medicine
and medicine be thy food."

– HIPPOCRATES

8. GET MOVING

Exercise actually gives us energy and can even alleviate our midlife aches and pains! Think about how you feel after sitting around for hours, versus how you feel when you're up moving around. You just feel better when you're active.

You don't have to spend countless hours at the gym to reap significant benefits from exercise.

- You can start with something simple like a 20-minute walk if you're just getting back to an exercise routine. Look at ways you can add more activity into your day – a short walk during lunch, another walk after work perhaps. Maybe two 10-minute walks each day would work better for you than one 20-minute walk.
- Having an activity tracker like a Fitbit or smart-phone app is a great way to see how active you are and get an idea of how many calories you burn during the day. It's fun and motivating to see how many steps you take in a day.
- Find a friend or coworker that has similar goals and figure out something you can do together to help keep each other accountable.
- Do you prefer to workout at home? Great! There are endless options of workouts to choose from for every fitness level. Options include exercise DVD's, online workouts, fitness apps and more. Let me know if you need suggestions.
- Join a gym. The gym is nice because your routine is not affected by the weather. If you can invest in a personal trainer to get you started, that can be helpful to boost your confidence and knowledge in how to use the machines as well as making sure you're using proper form.



If you have taken a long break from exercising, don't set yourself up for disappointment – have realistic expectations and be okay with feeling like a beginner again. It's okay – just start where you are right now and build on it.

Bonus tip: Add strength training to your exercise regimen. Weight-bearing exercise such as working out with free weights or weight machines, TRX, or body weight exercises, is the best way to maintain or increase your lean muscle mass, strengthen your bones, and lose body fat in midlife.

NOTE: Always check with your doctor before starting a new exercise program.

9. PREPARE MORE MEALS AT HOME



Cooking meals at home allows you to control the quality and portion sizes of your food. Do you notice how much food you're served when you go to a restaurant? Crazy! When we have more food in front of us, we'll eat more without realizing it.

- Preparing meals at home saves money too. Plan your week out in advance and see which nights you can cook at home. The pressure cooker or slowcooker becomes my best friend on busy days. I look at my calendar for the week ahead and whichever days are hectic, those are 'cooker' nights – easy peasy!
- Batch cook. Make more food than you will eat in one meal (ie., cook 2 pounds of chicken breast instead of one half of a chicken breast) so you'll have homemade 'fast food' for other meals during the week and won't have to cook from scratch every time. Refrigerate or freeze for later.

10. KEEP TRACK

Keeping track of what you eat can be pretty easy thanks to all the handy apps we have available at our fingertips.

My favorite food tracking apps are MyFitnessPal, Loselt, and CarbManager. You'll be surprised what you discover when you start tracking. Just remember, quality counts – it's not just about the number of calories.

- You especially want to track the amount of grams of carbohydrate, both total and NET, in foods (keeping them to a minimum) since we become much less carb tolerant when we hit midlife. Good for your health and your waistline.

You also want to track the nutrients (or lack of nutrients) in foods. Reading the nutrition label and list of ingredients is key.

- Look for foods that have the shortest list of ingredients and those that you recognize.
- If it's a long list of ingredients with words that are difficult to pronounce or you don't know what they are, put it back on the shelf and look for something else.



*"The key to making healthy decisions is to respect your future self.
Honor her. Treat her like you would treat a friend or a loved one."*

– A.J. Jacobs

START TODAY

Decide on 1 or 2 healthy habits to start with today. Start with the easiest one if you want.

When you start making choices based on the answer to the question “Is this going to feed my midlife body what it truly needs?” instead of “What’s the quickest thing I can find right now” and ask yourself “Will this get me closer to or further from my goals?” on a regular basis, decisions shift, behaviors are changed and you will feel much better.

The best part is once you’re on the road to that healthier lifestyle, knowing it will be for the rest of your life, you WILL lose the weight and it won’t feel like deprivation.

It will feel like the new YOU.

I find that so often, people want to live a healthier life, but they just aren’t sure how to fit all the pieces together to make a plan or they don’t know where to begin. It can be quite overwhelming!

In those instances, it’s great to have a knowledgeable advisor, like a Nutritionist specializing in midlife weight and wellness, to walk you through a step-by-step plan to implement healthier eating and lifestyle habits.

[Contact me](#) today to schedule your **FREE Eat Right for Your Age Discovery Call** to explore how I can assist you in achieving your health and weight loss goals.

In health and happiness,

Carol



Carol Casalino MS, CNS
www.reallifemidlife.com
carol@reallifemidlife.com



You can do this! I’m rooting for you!

The information provided is not a substitute for medical care or advice. Information provided is for educational purposes only and is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. Consult your doctor about making diet and lifestyle changes that are right for you.