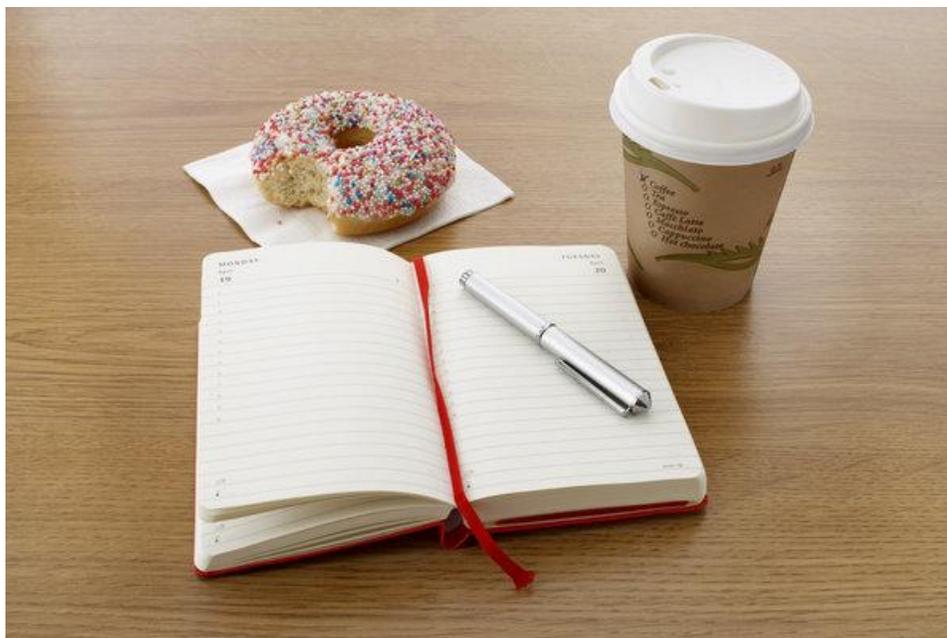


## Jot Down This Journal Advice

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Pen and paper is no longer required to keep a food journal — there are several online and mobile options with dietary information.

Here are some tips for keeping a food journal:

- (1) **Ditch the judgment: Awareness alone will help you clean up your eating habits.** Use that to your advantage. Commit to writing it all down, without beating yourself up over the results.
- (2) **Write it before you eat it:** Calculating the caloric damage of a fistful of M&Ms before you toss them back might be all you need to keep you walking past the office candy jar.
- (3) **OK, then log it immediately after you eat it:** If you wait until the end of the day, you might conveniently forget that 3 p.m. vending machine run.
- (4) Invest in plastic: **Doing your best to weigh and measure your food will help control portion sizes.** One shortcut: Buy inexpensive food storage containers in 1/4

cup, 1/2 cup and 1 cup sizes. Use them to portion out your favorite foods (and pack meals and snacks) so you're not always hunting for a clean set of measuring cups.

(5) **Commit to just 90 days:** In three months, you'll be a calorie-counting savant.

(6) **Embrace routine:** Calculate the calories on a handful of healthful breakfast, lunch and snack recipes that you enjoy. Then stick to them. It will make food journaling much easier and give you room to splurge.

(7) **Come up with a reward system.** Sounds silly, but what about gold stars on every day you faithfully keep your journal? And maybe a movie or a manicure for every 10 stars? And a massage or a round of golf for every 30?

(8) **Investigate before dining out:** Many restaurants put their menus online and include calorie counts that can easily transfer to your food journal. Use that information strategically: When your buddies are all standing around wondering where to go for grub, you can suggest the place that suits your needs.

(9) **Don't sweat the unknown:** If you end up being wined and dined at an exotic restaurant and find yourself puzzling over how best to calculate those unfamiliar ingredients and dishes, don't panic. And, whatever you do, don't ditch the journal just because it's not 100% perfect. Just do your best.

(10) **Remember the 80/20 rule:** If you can keep faithful track of your meals at least 80% of the time, you're already ahead of the weight-loss game.

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