

Online Diets: Logging On

Online dieting is increasing in popularity because we live in a fast-paced, convenience-oriented society—and logging onto the Internet has never been easier. Most diet-related websites these days offer more than a list of recommended foods. Some sites provide elaborate features that “pop up” with recipes, meal plans, online chat rooms, discussion boards and calorie and exercise tracking devices.

Here’s a look at some of the most popular, fee-based online diets available today, courtesy of Kara I. Gallagher Mohr, PhD, FACSM, co-owner of www.MohrResults.com, a nutrition and fitness company based in Louisville, Kentucky, and former assistant professor and weight loss researcher at the University of Louisville.

eDiets (www.eDiets.com)

An online-only program, eDiets is a constellation of different diets. It also offers its own unique weight loss programs. You start by completing a diet profile analysis to determine your personal dieting personality and which diet is the best fit for you. The types of foods included in the personalized menus offered by eDiets will depend on the type of diet selected.

Online components include personalized exercise programs, weekly menus with printable grocery-shopping lists, a library of fitness and nutrition articles,

discussion boards and forums, member challenges and online and phone access to health professionals.

Bottom Line. The eDiets program is a well-polished site with interesting and informative articles, instant access to professionals and a host of diets to choose from. If you think you’d like the convenience of weekly meal plans and the support of chatting with others, then eDiets may be a good fit for you.

CalorieKing.com (www.calorieking.com)

This online-only website is a behavior-based weight loss program that teaches skills related to food awareness. The plan is similar to what is used in clinical weight loss research and includes a balanced deficit diet generally consisting of greater than 55% carbohydrate, 15% protein and less than 30% fat.

Online components include meal plans, exercise and weight trackers, behavioral lessons, a library of articles and recipes related to weight loss, a database with information on more than 50,000 foods and an active online community with forums, blogs and live chats.

Bottom Line. The site’s inclusion of coping strategies and skills to decrease calorie intake could be beneficial.

Weight Watchers® (www.WeightWatchers.com)

The Weight Watchers program is based on a balanced deficit diet. You track points instead of focusing on calorie and fat intake. The focus is on moderation and decreasing dietary fat intake. Higher-fat and higher-calorie foods are given a greater number of points, thereby decreasing total calories throughout the day.



Other Online Tools for Weight Loss

Self-monitoring is the cornerstone of successful weight loss. In addition to the diet sites mentioned here, you can also click onto several websites that provide free access to search engines for this type of information.

Online tracking websites allow you to record daily calories and nutrients, in addition to noting time spent exercising. Two free tracking websites are FitDay.com and MyFitnessPal.com. Both offer options for tracking food, exercise and weight goals in a daily journal. MyFitnessPal.com also offers an online forum.

Some online tracking websites also allow you to create a unique page that others can view. For example, FitDay.com, is a program that lets your personal trainer track you, which can help with personal accountability.

Online components include a weight tracker, a “points” database of more than 27,000 foods, restaurant and cooking guides, menus and recipes, success stories and a free online community with discussion boards.

Bottom Line. This site is for you if you’re familiar with the points system or like using an established weight loss program. Unlike the traditional Weight Watchers plan, the online program does not include weekly meetings. However, you can upgrade and purchase a combination program of in-person and online tools, which may be better suited for you if you want face-to-face accountability. ■

COURTESY OF

Coach Ken Johnson
coachken@3-fitness.com
www.3-fitness.com