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## Start Strong in 2019 by Avoiding These 4 Diet Traps

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*You have healthy eating goals — we have ways to keep you on track. Here, Renown Dietitian Stephen Compston talks about how to avoid common diet traps.*

You've done it: You've made a list of your own personal healthy eating goals, and you're crushing it. Congrats!

But even the most goal-oriented people can become derailed by falling prey to common traps. Here, Renown Dietitian [Stephen Compston](#), RD, LD, CDE, shows you how to avoid them.

### **Diet Trap #1: You Skip Breakfast**

“Eating a good breakfast starts us off on the right foot,” Compston says. “Studies show those who eat a breakfast with a lean protein eat less the rest of day. The reason: They don’t have to chase their hunger.”

He defines a “lean protein” as:

- 1 or 2 eggs

- turkey bacon
- turkey sausage
- even peanut butter, he says, because it's a heart-healthy fat

"If you need something quick, grab a Greek or Icelandic yogurt," he says.

To accompany the protein, he recommends a small amount of carbohydrates, like a wholegrain of some sort.

### **Diet Trap #2: Snacking Issues**

"We've done people a disservice by universally saying everyone needs to snack," Compston says. "Snacking isn't actually for everyone."

How do you know if you need a snack? Your body will tell you — audibly.

"If someone isn't experiencing true, stomach-rumbling hunger, they may not need to snack," Compston notes. "What snacking accomplishes is sending off excessive hunger. If I don't snack, then I might get excessively hungry, then I might be tempted to overeat."

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For Compston, he finds himself hungry every day at 10 a.m., so he has a portion of 10-15 raw almonds ("I actually count them out, otherwise I'd overeat," he notes). He also has a snack at 3 p.m.

He adds that proteins are the most satisfying snacks — among his favorites are uncured turkey sticks, nuts, or peanut butter — and fruits are ideal if you're craving sweets.

### **Diet Trap #3: You're Not Eating Enough**

"It is absolutely crucial that we eat enough throughout the day, but the bottom line is that everyone is different in terms of what they need," Compston says.

But as you've likely heard before: If we aren't meeting the basic caloric needs of our body to have enough energy to survive, then our body thinks it's starving. It will then actually adjust its own metabolic rate, making it harder to accomplish our goals.

"Again, here, I'm going to emphasize the importance of breakfast," he adds. "That simple tweak — adding a breakfast with a lean protein — means your body will be burning calories more effectively — and then you'll successfully avoid starvation mode."

Working with a dietitian will allow you to understand your body's basic needs, but everyone can and should be tracking their daily intake if they're interested in eating healthier.

"I always tell my clients that tracking is not punishment — it just helps us learn something. And then we can adjust when we see patterns."

#### **Diet Trap #4: You Feel Like Giving Up**

"If someone feels like giving up, the first question I ask is if their goals are realistic," Compston says. "If you've never been a runner but now you're striving for a marathon a month, that's not realistic — of course you'll give up when it gets difficult."

To counteract the overpromise, he advises what he calls "goals too small to fail."

"Things like 'I'm going to walk for one minute today' or 'I'm going to do one pushup per day,' these are very small and realistic goals," he describes. "But then what happens is you have this positive momentum. On the days you do more than one pushup or walk for five minutes instead of one, you've not only achieved your goal, but you've also gone beyond."

This technique, he notes, adjusts your mindset.

"When you're constantly exceeding your own goals, it just does something to the brain — it helps you focus on these daily victories."

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