10 Tips For Building Healthier Meals

Eating healthy isn't hard, and making healthier meals only means making small adjustments to how you shop and prepare food. To get you started, check out these ten tips.

1 50% Veggies and Fruit
When you're planning a meal, make sure half of what you're eating is either a vegetable or a fruit.

2 Keep Protein Lean
Not all protein is created equally — make sure you focus on proteins like lean beef, pork, chicken and turkey. For a vegetarian option, opt for beans or tofu.

3 Go With Whole Grains
Whole grains provide more nutrients, like fiber, than refined grains. Look for the words "100% whole grain" or "100% whole wheat" on the food label.

4 Add Some Dairy
Pair your meal with a cup of fat-free or low-fat milk or yogurt to get the calcium and other essential nutrients as whole milk, but with less fat and fewer calories.

5 Say "No" To Sauces
Using heavy gravies or sauces adds fat and calories to otherwise healthy choices. For example, steamed broccoli is great, but avoid topping it with cheese sauce.

6 Slow Down
It takes about 20 minutes for your body's "full sensor" to kick in once you've started eating. When you eat slowly, you give your body time to tell you you're full before you overeat.

7 Use A Smaller Plate
The bigger the plate, the more food we tend to put on it. Using a smaller plate is a great way to control your portion size.
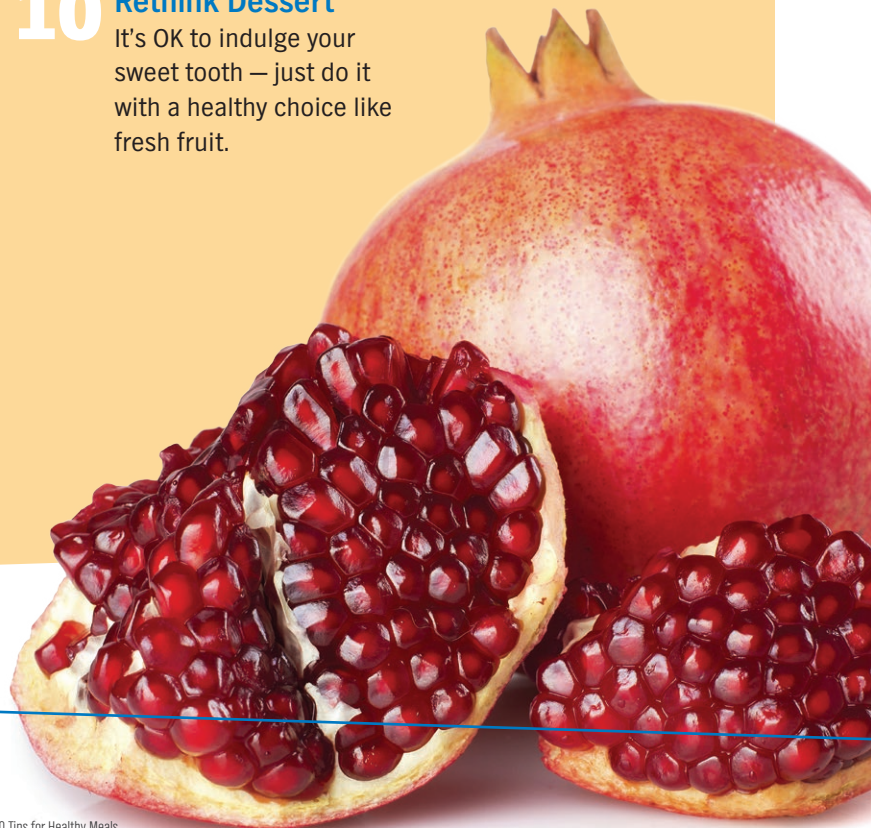
8 Cut Out The Take Out
Restaurant portions tend to be too big and high in calories. Preparing more of your food at home gives you better control over what you're eating. And when you do eat out, opt for healthier choices — grilled instead of fried, for example.

9 Mix In Some Variety
There are many healthy fruits, vegetables and grains to try so eating healthy never has to get boring. Why not trade tasty, healthy recipes with friends and coworkers?

10 Rethink Dessert
It's OK to indulge your sweet tooth — just do it with a healthy choice like fresh fruit.