

Beach Body Blitz

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If you would just love to stroll down the beach with a toned body which looks just great in this season's swimwear, then you have no time to lose and no excuses. With just weeks to go before having to un-robe around the pool or by the sea, you could probably do with a short, sharp plan to boost your body confidence.

Within two quick weeks you can shed up to eight pounds, and feel a whole lot better about the your impending beach D-Day.

The Diet Plan

Whether you are a normal weight or just want to shift a few pounds to feel that bit better about your body, most of us benefit from a pre-beach body blitz. Even with just a few weeks you can make a real difference to the way you look and feel. But be warned, you do have to be prepared to really 'go' for it.

To shed two pounds of fat each week, every day you need eat 500 calories fewer than normal, and burn 500 calories up with exercise. By also cutting down on processed foods and therefore salt, you can shed another two to three pounds of excess water that your body has been holding on to.

Here are my top tips to get you started and then some simple breakfast, lunch and dinner ideas to follow.

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1. Write down absolutely everything you eat and drink in a normal day. At the end of the day, take a red pen and put a big red line through all the extras you have eaten that you can easily avoid from now on. This includes obvious offenders like crisps and chocolate, biscuits, mayonnaise in sandwiches, cakes at break times, smoothies, cappuccinos and lattes, smoothies and fruit juices.
2. Next, take a green pen and write in fruit alternatives. For example an apple instead of crisps, a peach rather than a cake, a banana instead of chocolate.
3. Now consider how you can swap processed foods that you normally eat with fresh ones instead. This simple step can eliminate up to 75 per cent of the unnecessary, water-retaining salt that you normally eat and lead to a quite sense of de-bloating.
4. Have half a grapefruit before breakfast. It helps to stabilise your blood sugars and make you feel less hungry so that eat less without even realising. Also, try a light salad with a low fat dressing before dinner. Both tricks help you to naturally eat fewer calories at the main meal without feeling deprived.
5. Take a multivitamin and mineral supplement. You need this so that you get all your vital nutrients you need so that your energy levels do not drop and you will have the buzz you need to exercise.

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6. Be consistent and do not have 'weekends off'. Research shows that successful slimmers keep going and are consistent in their eating habits.
7. Drink up. If you crave a snack then reach for a herbal tea instead. Teas with liquorice or fennel can naturally blunt your appetite. Or have cold water to fill the gap.
8. When you have a real longing for chocolate, try a low calorie chocolate drink with just 40 calories per serving. You can make it up with boiling water and then allow to cool before putting in the fridge to chill it. A few slurps will help to conquer your chocolate craving.
9. Keep writing down what you eat and drink every day. This is a brilliant and simple way of being and remaining aware of what you are actually eating.
10. If you feel yourself faltering, just think of that 'beach moment', it should be enough to get you right back on track.

Meal Plans

Take a look through the next eight days of meal suggestions. Pick out those which take your fancy and decide when to have them. You can have the same breakfast and lunch every day if you find it is easy for you although mixing and matching will bring more variety of nutrients and tastes and flavours. This however, is up to you. Just don't think that you can't do this diet because you don't like one of the breakfasts, lunches or dinners. If you don't, it is simple, have something else instead!

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Breakfasts

1. **Porridge** - Mix together 40g of porridge oats with 140ml of skimmed milk and 40g of ready to eat dried fruit of your choice. Apricots or raisins are tasty choices. Microwave for one and half minutes on full power. Stir and allow to stand for a minute. Serve with a bit more milk and a tiny sprinkling of brown sugar. Alternatively make up the porridge in the traditional way on the hob with a pan. Making porridge the night before and just heating it up in the morning saves time if you are in a rush in the mornings.
2. **Boiled Eggs with Bread and Butter** - Boil two eggs to the time you most prefer. While boilings have half a grapefruit. Spread a slice of bread thinly with softened butter or other spread. Serve bread with your boiled eggs.
3. **Cereal Start** - Have a bowl oat flakes (about 40g) or two oat biscuits with skimmed milk and topped with a sliced banana.
4. **Scrambled Eggs** - Grill a large, flat mushroom and scramble two eggs with a little milk and seasoning. Serve scrambled eggs on the toast and the mushroom alongside.
5. **Muesli and Yoghurt** - Buy a sugar-free muesli or make your own using porridge oats and adding some mixed dried fruits. Grate an apple and mix into the muesli. Serve with a blob of yoghurt on top and with skimmed milk poured over.
6. **Pineapple Smoothie** - Open a small can of canned pineapple in natural juice and blend with a small plain yoghurt and 200ml of skimmed milk. Have your pineapple smoothie with a slice of malt loaf.

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Breakfasts

7. **Homemade Latte** - Warm up 250ml of skimmed milk. Mix a little of the milk with some instant coffee until a smooth paste in a large mug. Add the rest of the steaming milk to make a latte. Have along with a banana and other piece of your favourite fruit.
8. **Fruit Salad** - Put 125ml of water in a small pan with two dried peaches, chopped, 3 prunes chopped, 4 slices of dried apple chopped (or any combination of 90g of dried fruits that you enjoy), the grated rind of an orange and a tablespoon of honey. Bring to the boil and simmer for 5 minutes. Serve with a small pot of plain or fruit yoghurt.

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Lunches

1. **Baked Potato with Cheese and Cucumber** - Have a medium sized baked potato. Scoop out the inside and mash in a bowl with some lemon juice and ground black pepper - this makes it really moist. Mix in 100g of cottage cheese and chunk of cucumber quite finely diced. Pile back into the skin and tuck in.
2. **Tortilla Wrap with Tuna and Sweet corn** - Take a tortilla wrap and warm under the grill. Mix two tablespoons of canned tuna with a tablespoon of sweet corn (and some other chopped vegetables like a tomato or a spring onion if you have them to hand). Mix in a tablespoon of extra light mayonnaise or reduced fat salad cream to bind it and then spoon on to the wrap. Fold in the sides, roll up and eat.
3. **Pitta and Hummus** - Toast a pitta bread and cut into strips. While still warm use the strips to dip into 100g of hummus. Add some carrot sticks to give it all a bit of a crunch.
4. **Lemony Sardines on Toast** - Drain a small can of sardine and mash with lemon juice and some ground black pepper. Then add a diced tomato. Toast two slices of bread and top with the lemony sardine and tomato mix.

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Lunches

5. **Mushroom and Herb Omelette** - Whisk up 2 eggs and season with pepper. In a small pan put a teaspoon of olive oil and sauté a handful of fresh button mushrooms with the lid on for 5 minutes. Heat up a non-stick frying pan and brush lightly with oil. Pour in the egg mix and shake the pan well. Add the mushrooms. Once cooked through, serve with a really big mixed salad with a low fat dressing or Balsamic vinegar.
6. **Salmon Salad** - Open and drain 100g of canned salmon. Boil 4 new potatoes in their skins, cool and cut into quarters. Put the potato and salmon in a bowl and add a chopped tomato and some chopped cucumber and some chopped spring onions if you like them. Season with black pepper and serve.
7. **Pasta Salad** - Cook 70g of pasta shapes according to pack instructions. Once cooked, drain and rinse under cold water. Set aside. In a bowl, add two finely chopped ripe tomatoes, half a clove of garlic finely crushed, a half deseeded green chilli (or a pinch of chilli flakes), a tablespoon of freshly chopped basil and mix well before adding 100g of peeled, cooked prawns. Season with black pepper to taste, mix in the pasta then serve with a large green salad drizzled with vinegar (Balsamic vinegar is really tasty) or some low fat dressing of your choice.
8. **Mexican Bean Pitta** - Warm through in a pan 150g of canned red kidney beans canned in water. Drain and quickly blend or mash with a fork. Add a few drops of Tabasco sauce, some chopped coriander and spring onion. Season with black pepper and lemon juice. Warm a small whole meal pitta, split open and stuff with shredded lettuce. Pile on the bean mix and serve.

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Dinners

1. **Roast Dinner** - 100g of lean roast beef, lamb, pork, chicken or turkey
150g of potatoes roasted, Brussels sprouts, carrots, spring greens, courgettes, sweet corn. Try to have two of these vegetables which can be fresh or frozen. Gravy. Roast meat on a rack to drain off excess fat. Make gravy using a stock cube and some corn flour with the water drained from the vegetables. Serve and enjoy.

2. **Cheesy Potato Cakes** - 150g potatoes (or sweet potatoes)
40g reduced fat cheddar grated, chopped parsley fresh or dried, pepper and tiny bit of salt to season.

Peel and cook the potatoes in salted water till soft. Drain and mash in the grated reduced fat cheese until smooth. Add the parsley and season. Using your hands make two rounds and pat to flatten. Brush a non-stick frying pan with oil and cook the cakes gently on both sides till golden. When the potato cakes are ready serve with a large green salad or plenty of steamed broccoli or peas which can be fresh or frozen.

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Dinners

3. **Rice 'n' Peas** - 150g canned red kidney beans (or dried red kidney beans that have been soaked, cooked and drained) 100ml reduced fat coconut milk, fresh sprig of thyme or pinch of dried thyme, 1 spring onion finely chopped, a pinch of chilli flakes, 80g of long-grain rice, seasoning.

Put the kidney beans in a pan with the coconut milk, thyme, spring onions and chilli. Bring to the boil and boil for five minutes. Season with salt and black pepper. Add the rice, stir well and then cover and simmer gently for about 20 minutes until the rice is tender and the coconut milk has been absorbed. Serve hot and have with a vegetable of your choice on the side.

4. **Meatballs and Noodles with Tomato Sauce** - 125g lean minced beef (or you can use Soya or Quorn mince) ½ small onion finely chopped, ½ clove of garlic (crushed), Pinch chilli powder, 3 tablespoons tomato puree, fresh or dried coriander. Other ½ of the onion, other ½ of clove garlic (crushed) 200g canned tomatoes, chopped, two sun dried tomatoes in oil, drained (optional) 80g of noodles

Mix the meatball ingredients all together and shape into three balls. Put on a baking sheet and grill them on high for 7 minutes, turning them while cooking several times. Meanwhile, put the ingredients for the sauce into a small pan, bring to boil and then simmer for 8 minutes. Cook the noodles according to pack instructions and drain. Blend half of the sauce if you have used sun dried tomatoes. If not, leave as it is. Put the meatballs into the pan, cover with the sauce and then serve.

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Dinners

5. **Pork Kebabs in Pitta** - 100g lean pork, cubed (you can use chicken or turkey instead) $\frac{1}{2}$ green pepper cut into squares, $\frac{1}{4}$ onion, cherry tomatoes
1 tablespoon of plain yoghurt, a chunk of cucumber finely diced, pinch of cayenne pepper (optional), 1 small wholemeal pitta bread.

Separate each layer of the onion. Thread cubes of the pork, green pepper, cherry tomato and onions alternatively onto skewers and brush very lightly with oil. Place either over a barbecue or under a grill till the turkey is cooked through. Warm the pitta, and slit through. Unthread cooked pork and vegetables into pitta pocket. Mix the yoghurt, cucumber and cayenne and serve with the kebab.

6. **Haddock with Mashed Potato and Spinach** - 150g of potatoes or sweet potato, peeled and cut into chunks
150g spinach (can be frozen or fresh), ground nutmeg (optional) 1 tablespoon low fat plain fromage frais, salt and pepper, 100g piece of haddock, squeeze of lemon juice.

Boil the potatoes. Whilst cooking, brush the haddock with a little oil, sprinkle over some salt and pepper and a pinch of dried mixed herbs and grill until cooked to your liking. Just before both the potatoes and fish are ready, cook 150g of spinach, drain and make sure to squeeze out any excess water. Sprinkle over a little nutmeg and stir in the fromage frais. Drain the potatoes, and mash with some semi skimmed milk and season. Serve with the fish and spinach.

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Dinners

7. **Chicken Tandoori** - 125g chicken breast (skin removed), small pot low fat natural yoghurt, pinch of dried ginger, teaspoon of paprika pepper, 1 clove garlic, bay leaf, 1 tablespoon tomato puree, 1 mini pitta bread, 1 tomato, ½ small onion.

Prick the chicken breast with a fork. Place a small pot of natural low fat yogurt in a bowl and add a pinch of ginger, a teaspoon of paprika, a clove of crushed garlic, a bay leaf, 1 tablespoon of tomato puree, a pinch of salt and the grated zest of a lemon. Mix well. Add the chicken making sure it is covered with the yoghurt mix. Cover the bowl with cling film and leave in a cold place overnight or as long as is possible. Heat oven to 350F/180C/Gas Mark 4. Place chicken on a wire rack in a roasting tin and coat chicken with marinade. Bake for 45 minutes basting every 15 with the marinade. Meanwhile finely dice the tomato and onion and mix together in a bowl. Serve with the chicken which you put into the small pitta bread that has been warmed in the oven.

8. **Baked Salmon** - 125g salmon steak, lemon juice, freshly ground black pepper, salad leaves, tomato, 150g potatoes or 80g of noodles.

Put the potatoes or noodles on to cook. Meanwhile place the salmon on some tin foil and sprinkle over some lemon juice. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Close foil into a parcel. Bake at 200oc for 10 - 15 minutes. Serve with the potatoes or noodles and lots of salad.