



The Dress Diet

by AMY PATUREL

Plan to drop poundage before the big day? You're in good company. More than 75 percent of brides intend to lose weight before their I do's. Trouble is, if you diet long enough, the scale is bound to get stuck on the same digits for weeks. The good news: Simple strategies at targeted times can kick up your metabolic rate and nudge the scale back toward its downward trend.

9 MONTHS

Pump Iron, Pretty Girl

Strength training increases your metabolic rate and fat-burning potential. A study in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* found that women who lifted twice a week for 12 weeks significantly reduced body fat and increased lean muscle mass — even without restricting calories.

IN THE GYM Choose the right weights. “The resistance should fatigue your muscles within 90 seconds,” says Jessica Matthews, personal trainer and assistant professor of exercise science at Miramar College in California.

BONUS POINTS Pack protein. Not only does it require more energy (and calories) to digest, but it also helps rebuild the muscles you break down during workouts.

6 MONTHS

Sip Tea, Sweetie

Extracts in teas increase calorie- and fat-burning and inhibit the absorption of carbs when taken with a meal. Catechins, the disease-fighting compounds in teas, are the real magic. A Japanese study found that subjects dropped more weight and inches when they sipped green tea with more

catechins than those who drank tea with fewer catechins.

IN YOUR CUP For the most catechins, steep your tea longer — the darker your brew's hue, the more catechins in your cup.

BONUS POINTS Add a wedge of lemon. Vitamin C helps shuttle fat into your muscles so your body can use it for energy.

3 MONTHS

Buddy Up, Bride

It's more than just accountability — you'll also burn more calories with a friend. If you have to answer to your maid of honor, you're more likely to do the work. All your 'maids in a different city? Even reporting your progress to an online community like MyFitnessPal.com increases the likelihood you'll stick with your fitness plan.

ON THE ROAD Instead of your regular run at a steady pace, take to the streets with your hubby-to-be and race each other between signs or phone poles.

BONUS POINTS We know you're psyched for your day, but a study published in the *American Journal of Epidemiology* found that women who slept for five or fewer hours each night gained 2.5 pounds more than those who got seven hours of sleep.

2 WEEKS TILL GO-TIME?

HERE'S YOUR CRASH COURSE IN AVOIDING CRASH DIETING.

DO THIS

- ➔ Aim for seven to nine hours of sleep every night.
- ➔ Gulp down eight to nine glasses of water per day.

- ➔ Dial down activity — stick with yoga, Pilates and other low-impact exercise.
- ➔ Stash raw veggies and healthful snacks in your desk or bag.

NOT THIS

- ➔ Eat salty meals or snacks.
- ➔ Overexert yourself with strenuous workouts.
- ➔ Starve yourself in

a last-ditch effort to lose weight.

- ➔ Survive solely on triple-soy sugar-free lattes.
- ➔ Pop diet pills or supplements.