

## Five Ways to Stay Slim in the US

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**Lindsay:** Okay. So hey Vin and Georgia. How (are) you doing today?

**Georgia:** We're doing well. Thank you Lindsay.

**Vin:** Good afternoon, Lindsay.

**Lindsay:** All right. Great. So today I want to talk a little bit about **obesity** in the US. So here in the US a lot of people are overweight. It's a fact. I just read a statistic that said that 66 -- 36% of Americans are actually obese or were in 2009. That's huge isn't it?

**Georgia:** Yeah.

**Vin:** Yeah that's unbelievable and over the last 10, 15, 20, 30 years, it's (it has) increasingly become a higher percentage.

**Lindsay:** Yeah, it really has. So, so let's just first start by talking about how to actually say that someone's overweight. What are some ways, some terms that people use in English to say that someone is overweight. So 'overweight' is one. What else?

**Georgia:** 'Fat.'

### Key Vocabulary Words

1. Obese, obesity
2. To put on weight
3. To lose a few pounds
4. To slim down
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6. Ingredients
7. Label
8. Preservatives

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**Lindsay:** Yeah, you could say 'fat', but what's the connotation? Can you actually say "Oh you're fat." You can't really say that to someone can you?

**Georgia:** Oh, no I wouldn't talk to somebody that way, but I could talk about somebody that way.

**Lindsay:** Oh, would you really? Would you say that person's 'fat'?

**Georgia:** I might.

**Lindsay:** Isn't that kind of rude?

**Georgia:** I wouldn't say it....

**Lindsay:** I think it's a little bit rude.

**Georgia:** ...to anybody.

**Lindsay:** Okay. What else?

**Vin:** I noticed your clothing is getting bigger.

**Lindsay:** Okay.

**Vin:** Or, I've noticed the airlines are charging you for two seats now.

**Georgia:** Oh my goodness.

**Lindsay:** Okay. It's a little bit of a roundabout way to say it. Yeah. Or you could also say someone, you know, has "**put on a little weight.**" right? I would say that's a little bit more of a politically correct way to say it.

**Georgia:** And they might say -- if, if they complain about their knees, you might say, "Hmm, maybe you might try **losing a few pounds** and then perhaps your knees wouldn't hurt so much."

**Lindsay:** Right. You could say something like "that person needs to lose a few pounds." Another way to say they're overweight is just to say that they're "heavy." "That person is heavy."

**Vin:** Or they're "big-boned."

**Lindsay:** Or they're big-boned. Okay.

**Georgia:** I used to get that when I was a kid.

**Lindsay:** Were you a big kid? Were you an overweight kid?

**Georgia:** Oh yeah.

**Lindsay:** Okay.

**Georgia:** And big-boned.

**Lindsay:** But you've **slimmed down** quite a bit since then.

**Georgia:** I'd, I'd say so.

**Vin:** And I've beefed up since then.

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**Lindsay:** So we can say “someone has put on some weight,” um, or if we want to say the opposite, we could say “they’ve slimmed down.” That would be a nice way to say that someone’s lost a little bit of weight. Other rude ways to talk about someone who’s fat, you could say -- some kids are called “chunky” or “chubby.” Those are rude ways of calling someone overweight. Can you think of any others?

**Vin:** Well, I guess being inactive is one thing that

indirectly leads to that, so people that are heavy, don’t tend to want to do athletic things.

**Lindsay:** Yeah, for sure.

**Vin:** And that’s the one thing, when you come to America, don’t stop exercising.

**Lindsay:** Yeah.

**Vin:** Keep walking.

**Lindsay:** So let’s start to talk about that, so Vin, you’ve actually gone through a bit of an intense sort of diet over the past few weeks. You’ve gone through what’s called a cleanse to try to really change your diet completely, but we want to actually help people who are coming here to the US. What could they do and what do they need to watch out for in terms of the food? How to not gain weight?

**Vin:** Well, I guess the easiest way to be, whenever you – if you go somewhere to eat always ask them to take half of it and wrap it up for you before you even see it because you're gonna (going) to get two meals in one.

**Lindsay:** Yeah. It's incredible.

**Vin:** The portion sizes have gotten so much larger over the last few years, that you really don't need all that food, although people think that that's a normal amount of food to eat.

**Lindsay:** Right. It's amazing, you know, and it's, even though you say you're not gonna (going to) be able to finish that, a lot of people do end of finishing all the food on their plate. They eat enough for three people here in the US.

**Vin:** Right.

**Lindsay:** Um, it's just having it there in front of you, just for some reason makes you want to keep eating it unless you just say "No, I'm gonna (going to) ask the waitress ahead of time to actually take half of my plate and wrap it up in a '**doggie bag**,'" we call it right?

**Vin:** And it sounds silly too, but sometimes even getting a smaller plate makes it look like you (have) got more food than you do.

**Georgia:** I've noticed that some restaurants now do offer smaller plated meals on their menus.

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**Lindsay:** Yeah.

**Georgia:** And a smaller plated meal in the United States would probably be the same size as a normal dinner portion in a lot of other countries.

**Lindsay:** Absolutely. So that's a new trend, that restaurants are offering half portions, for example, or full portions.

**Georgia:** Or what I do often is always order two appetizers, a salad, and another appetizer, but when you have appetizers, if they're not salads, you do

have to be careful (that) they're not fried...

**Lindsay:** Right.

**Georgia:** ...foods with a lot of fat.

**Lindsay:** Yeah, so. Okay. So that's another trick, ordering small plates and so part of the problem is portion size. Another problem is just the content, the contents of our food, right? A lot of preservatives, um...

**Vin:** Yeah. And you never know when you go out somewhere like a restaurant to eat, you really have no clue what they're cooking the food in or what they're adding to it.

**Lindsay:** Yeah.

**Vin:** So the only way you can really help yourself is to not go out to eat so much. Cause (because) you know what you're making in your own kitchen.

**Lindsay:** Maybe once a week as opposed to four times a week.

**Vin:** Right.

**Lindsay:** If you can. And there are a few tricks, (ah), that people know here in the US, that people follow when they go into a grocery store. Which part of the grocery store would you shop in?

**Georgia:** I would shop the perimeter of the grocery store.

**Lindsay:** So the outside?

**Georgia:** The outside sides. The three outside sides.

**Lindsay:** What tends to be on the outside aisle?

**Georgia:** You have fresh fruits and vegetables, fresh meats and fish, and fresh dairy.

**Lindsay:** That's a great tip and what's usually in the middle? Like what are we trying to avoid?

**Georgia:** You're avoiding processed, packaged foods, canned, or bagged, or boxed.

**Vin:** Boxed, canned, or bagged packages. Stay away!

**Lindsay:** Stay away. Okay. Great.

**Georgia:** Yeah.

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**Lindsay:** And then if I do somehow find myself in the middle of the grocery store, um, and I'm looking at the package and I read all the **ingredients** and there are all these ingredients that I don't even know what they mean. They seem to have chemicals, I can't pronounce them. That's a good rule of thumb to actually...

**Georgia:** I'd say don't eat them, don't buy them if you don't know what the foods are or their individual ingredients are on the label.

**Vin:** That's a good point. If you can't pronounce it, don't buy it.

**Lindsay:** Don't buy it. Yeah. So you'll find...

**Georgia:** But if they're from another country, they might not be able to pronounce it and think it's them, not the type of food that it is.

**Vin:** Anything with an FD&C on the **label**, you gotta (got to) avoid.

**Lindsay:** What's FD&C?

**Vin:** Uh, Federal Drug Classification for numbers and drugs and additives and dyes. *(Some foods are certified by FD&C when they use additives and dyes like food coloring. [Read more about FD & C here](#))*

**Lindsay:** Okay.

**Vin:** Things that make your food look better...

**Lindsay:** Oh, okay. So food coloring...

**Georgia:** **Preservatives.**



**Lindsay:** Just anything that's not natural, we want to try to avoid basically. And what else have you done with your diet, Vin over the past few weeks? What else have you eliminated?

**Vin:** Well, I've eliminated breads. I've eliminated dairy products, gluten. It's been gluten-free.

**Lindsay:** What does gluten-free mean? That's a big buzz word now.

**Vin:** Gluten is like a sticky substance. It's in so much. Like it's in breads, it's in pasta. It's even in things like yogurt that uh, some people with metabolic issues or processing or digesting difficulties find that that really can wreak havoc on their health...

**Lindsay:** Yeah.

**Vin:** Give them constantly upset stomach and bowels, but also it's not really considered good for, a good healthy diet in general.

**Georgia:** Apparently foods used to have, um, two-thirds less gluten in them. A lot of processed foods or even natural foods. It's just that people who are developing seeds and uh foods these days are adding more gluten to it to stretch, to stretch the um diet, uh, so that they can get more money for the same amount of, of good food...

**Vin:** Right.

**Georgia:** ...but by adding gluten to make it seem more.

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**Vin:** I guess with – getting back to my cleanse, I think that uh, one of the things that was really interesting is it was kind of a mind transformation because in the beginning it sounded very stark. It's gonna (going to) be mostly vegetables, no meats, some kinds of fish and maybe some chicken, but for the most part foods that I would kind of, would always kind of gag on before, but within a week or so, I started to develop a real like for the taste of these foods and realize that

I didn't need sugars and starches and actually look forward to the things I would've thought were terrible before.

**Lindsay:** Yeah.

**Vin:** So it's a bit of a mind transformation that it's -- see it's not that hard to do, but you have to have a concentrated effort.

**Lindsay:** Yeah.

**Vin:** The fact that I had such cooperation at home was tremendously helpful because it would've been possibly difficult to do on my own, so the coaching part of it was nice.

**Lindsay:** Yeah, definitely and so I guess you also sort of avoid the drive-thru?

**Vin:** Yes.

**Lindsay:** I hope.

**Vin:** Yeah.

**Lindsay:** You don't go to the drive-thru at McDonalds. You don't really eat, as you said, you don't eat meat.

**Georgia:** And you don't need a -- drink as much coffee as you used to.

**Vin:** Yeah, I have tea now.

**Lindsay:** Great.

**Vin:** Uh, many of the times and uh, and I drink more water. That's been a big difference too. Water, you know, one thing if you're, you're worried about the logistics of the supermarket again, one thing is never go to the supermarket when you're hungry.

**Lindsay:** Yeah, that's a common...

**Vin:** Drink a couple of glasses of water before you go to the supermarket. Come out a lot happier.

**Lindsay:** It helps a lot. Right. Supermarket can be a bit of a trap if you don't do it right. Um, are there any shops that you like to shop at that help you to buy, like generally, better foods or the places where you can buy better foods. I mean I like Trader Joe's.

**Vin:** Trader Joe's is nice and they're around many locations. I guess they're in metropolitan Boston, New York areas...

**Lindsay:** Yeah, Boston, New York, mm-hm.

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**Vin:** Yeah. And sometimes, just, it's a little bit pricier, which could be difficult, but there's (there are) some specialty food places that concentrate more on organic food and concentrate more on local products produced by local farms...

**Lindsay:** Okay.

**Vin:** ...which (uh) -- again, don't spend the time having to be transported or preserved to keep them fresh for the shelves that way, so (*there are*) some

advantages there.

**Georgia:** The one we go to is called a co-op, but it's not the kind of co-op that you need to work in and uh, but you can join as a member and uh, they hire their own staff and we get dividends...

**Lindsay:** Mm, yeah.

**Georgia:** ...for being a member, but the best dividend is the quality of the food and...

**Lindsay:** Yeah.

**Georgia:** ...and supporting our local famers.

**Lindsay:** I guess what...

**Vin:** This is not, this is not totally on the topic, but one thing that, you know, I guess uh, fat people tend to hang around other fat people. So you have got a choice of different kinds of friends. Kind of pick the friends...

**Lindsay:** Make skinny friends.

**Vin:** Make skinny friends.  
You'll do great.

**Georgia:** Especially, I mean,  
one place you might  
be hanging around  
other heavier  
people is at bars  
sometimes because  
alcohol is a  
tremendous uh, hike  
in calories.

**Lindsay;** Yeah. Yeah, I guess  
also just being  
active, trying to walk  
as much as you can,  
adding the whole  
walking routine into your day as much as possible. That's why people  
stay so thin in New York. You go to New York, you don't find  
overweight people, you find them in Virginia and Texas.

**Georgia:** You do find overweight people in New York if they're in the poverty  
sections.

**Lindsay:** I guess so that's another issue. I mean. Awesome. Um, so any other  
tips, final tips?

**Vin:** Well, it's not that hard if you think about doing it. Just take baby  
steps. If you have a hard time thinking about this major  
transformation, just make a list of the things that you're currently  
doing and every week eliminate one of them at a time. Like for one  
week, don't eat meat. For another week be sure you do mostly  
vegetables. Another week stop drinking alcohol every day.

**Lindsay:** Yeah, that makes a difference.

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**Georgia:** Yeah. And I'd say overall, if you're new in the United States, make sure, try to make sure you take the smaller portioned plates if you go out to eat. Go out to eat less than you might have in your own home country. Look for markets that sell fresh vegetables and fruits and eggs and (uh) whatever the produce is from that's fresh from the area or close by. (Um), and when you grocery shop, (uh), do the periphery and try to avoid the processed, packaged foods.

**Lindsay:** Okay. Thanks so much for...

**Vin:** And don't forget that smiling also consumes calories.

**Lindsay:** He thinks he's funny. Okay. Thanks for chatting with us today everyone.

**Vin:** Bye-bye Lindsay.

**Lindsay:** Bye.