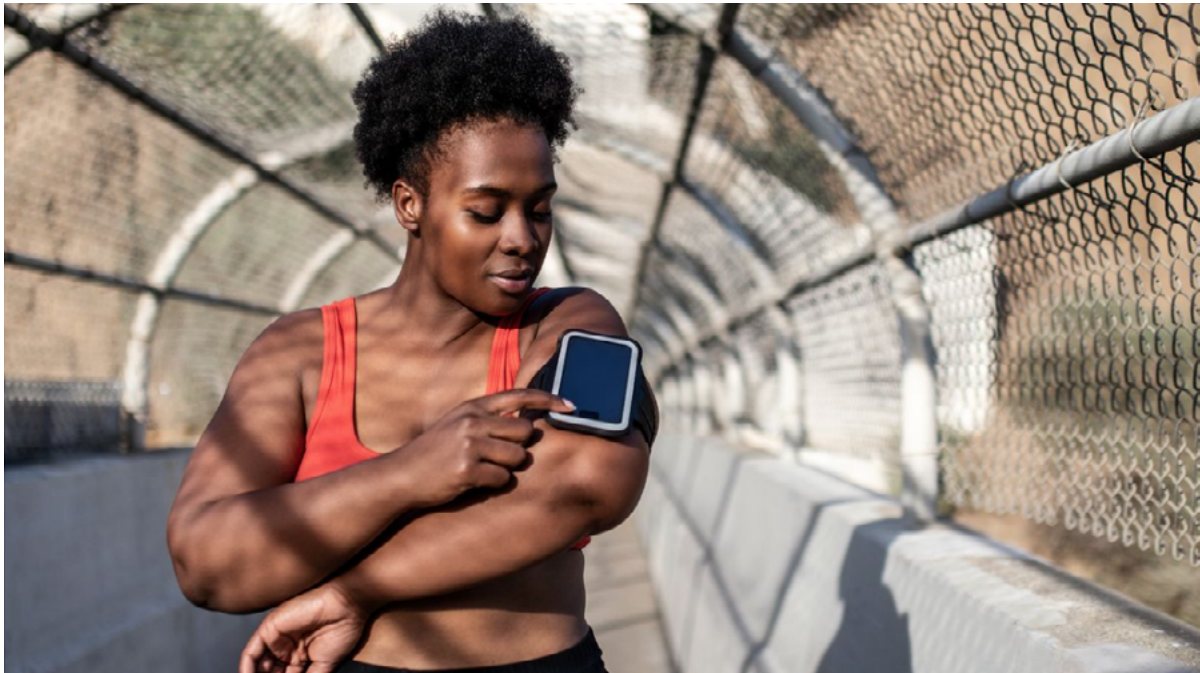


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Women's Health

15 ways to make PCOS weight loss so much easier, according to doctors and dietitians

Colleen De Bellefonds, Mark Surrey, MD, and Nikhita Mahtani | April 5, 2024



Weight loss is never a walk in the park (although walking can help) and it can be especially challenging for those living with polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS). But there are manageable, expert-approved tweaks you can implement to your daily routine that make shedding pounds less daunting.

PCOS is one of the most common causes of female infertility and affects up to 10 percent of women of reproductive age in the UK., according to the NHS, often causing irregular periods, excess hair growth, and stubborn acne. Being overweight is also associated with PCOS.

Because androgens (hormones that women with PCOS have more of) are linked to insulin resistance, they can cause you to store more fat instead of burning it. That's why some people with PCOS struggle losing weight.

'Insulin is similar to a key, and this key is what allows sugar from your blood into your cells,' says Kim Shapira, RD, a nutritional coach at [Trimly](#) and the author of *This is What You're Really Hungry For*. 'When the cells stop recognising the key, our pancreas releases more insulin and we get a buildup of sugar in our blood, which affects the functioning of our ovaries and ovulation,' like issues with egg development and release, she explains.

Unfortunately, weight gain caused by PCOS can negatively impact your health because it increases the risk of diabetes, liver disease, heart disease, and stroke, says Shapira. But maintaining a healthy weight or even reducing your weight by five to 10 percent can help decrease the likelihood of

developing these conditions and avoid other complications, adds Christa Brown, RDN, who works with women who have PCOS.

Here are 15 ways to make weight loss with PCOS less stressful and more manageable, according to experts.

Meet the experts: Mark Surrey, MD, is a board-certified reproductive and endoscopic surgeon and fertility specialist in Beverly Hills, California, and the co-founder of Southern California Reproductive Center. Daniel Dumesic, MD, is a professor of reproductive endocrinology and infertility at UCLA, and specializes in PCOS. Caroline Apovian, MD, is an adjunct professor of medicine and pediatrics in endocrinology, diabetes, nutrition and weight management at the Boston University Chobanian and Avedisian School of Medicine. [Kim Shapira](#), RD, is a LA-based nutritional coach at Trimly and the author of *This is What You're Really Hungry For*. Christa Brown, RDN, is a registered dietitian who works with women who have PCOS. Lori B. Sweeney, MD, is an endocrinologist and associate professor of medicine at Virginia Commonwealth University Health System. Maria Horstmann, is an Atlanta-based National Academy of Sports Medicine-certified trainer who specializes in working with women living with PCOS. Alisa Vitti, the founder of integrative hormonal center Flo Living.

14. Get your steps in.

Logging your steps has major health benefits such as improved heart fitness, blood pressure, and cholesterol, but getting 10,000 steps a day is also a great tool for managing PCOS symptoms and helping with weight loss. 'Exercise uses sugar as fuel, and it's like a built-in blood sugar regulator,' Shapira explains.

Whether you use a wearable or an app on your phone to keep track, check how many steps you're averaging per day, and find the time to hit at least 10,000 (or about five miles). 'You don't have to be perfect, you just have to be intentional,' says Shapira. 'Make it a goal and try for a little more each day.' She suggests going for a moderate stroll every time you eat: five minutes before and five minutes after a meal.

When to see a doctor

If you're diagnosed with PCOS, it's better to see a reproductive endocrinologist sooner rather than later for a comprehensive evaluation, says Mark Surrey, MD, a board-certified reproductive and endoscopic surgeon, fertility specialist, and co-founder of Southern California Reproductive Center. Based on the PCOS symptoms you're experiencing, a doctor can help guide you on the best weight loss solution for your needs, he adds.

Additionally, it's crucial to work with a doctor if you're struggling to lose weight with PCOS because it may affect your fertility, especially if you're trying to conceive, says Dr. Surrey. 'The issues associated with weight include ovulatory dysfunction and hormonal imbalance, so it's not just the weight, but rather the things associated with it that can impact your fertility,' he explains.

Lastly, always talk with a doctor before implementing any major dietary changes or supplements to your routine, adds Dr. Sweeney.

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