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[Keep Your Salads Healthy](#)

Avoid turning the light summer salads into calorific bombs with a few simple tricks

Summer is officially the time of the year when salads usually make a spectacular comeback. The very word "salad" sounds like it was designed especially for those endless, hot summer evenings when we're in the mood for something really light, a healthy treat that steers well clear of any calorific controversy. Well, think again: with a little "help" from oily dressings, mayonnaise, bread croûtons and fried chicken strips, a salad can turn from a light snack into a heavy-duty power dinner that will definitely not help us lose any weight - on the contrary. As a result, we've put together a few suggestions about how to best protect yourself from any salad-inflicted weight gain and keep your salad light and refreshing.

1. Rather than treat salads as a side-dish and thus run the risk of eating double the amount of fat or calories, why not turn the salad into the main dish on the table. This is easy enough to do, plus it has the added bonus of balancing the carbohydrates in the salad, thus keeping hunger pangs at bay for hours. Add any leftover chicken or fish to the salad leaves, vegetables such as kidney or black beans, and stir in some reduced-fat cheese (part-skim mozzarella is a good idea).
2. Replace any mayonnaise-heavy dressing with using canola or olive oil. Canola oil in particular is rich in mono-unsaturated fats and healthy omega-3 fatty acids, while olive oil contains mono-unsaturated fat and healthy phyto-chemicals.
3. When preparing a home-made dressing, try using low-fat ingredients such as fat-free sour cream or plain yogurt; freshly squeezed tomato and carrot juices are also very good ideas, as are using honey and cutting out any other sugary ingredients. Wine and nonalcoholic beer are also much more weight-friendly, if used in moderation.
4. Add fresh vegetables to any pasta or rice salads to boost your fiber and nutrient intake bringing a large amount of calories into the mix. Anything from cherry tomato halves to broccoli, sweet peas, cauliflower, green onions or peppers will work just fine and add an extra bend of color and style to your healthy meal.