JOY'S LIFE DIET
Four Steps to Thin FOREVER

JOY BAUER
MS, RD, CDN
NUTRITION EXPERT FOR THE TODAY SHOW AND LEADER OF JOY FIT CLUB

LOSE UP TO 7 POUNDS THIS WEEK!
Every diet starts with passion for action. It takes time and an ocean of emotional energy to face the reality of excess weight and admit the need for change. Because dieters believe that every encounter with food holds the potential for either accomplishment or diet disaster, they are always alert and on guard. People who have never had to lose weight don’t understand how exhausting the process can be. Yes, downright exhausting.

Your search for the right diet brought you here, which means you have already done the initial work. Congratulations—you have that passion for action! I believe that if you are going to expend all that energy, you should get something more than broken promises, disappointment, or a temporary drain of water weight. You deserve to get something spectacular for your efforts. Trust me when I tell you that it is possible to transform more than just your waistline—you can lose weight and improve nearly every aspect of your life. This is by far the absolute best gift you’ll ever give yourself. That’s why I created Joy’s LIFE Diet.

**LIFE stands for Look Incredible, Feel Extraordinary.**
Isn’t that what we all want, what drives our optimism each time we make a
New Year’s resolution or buy a new swimsuit? Of course it is! Imagine waking up
each morning feeling rested and alert, loving the way your body looks, fitting per-
factly in all your clothes, and enjoying a steady flow of energy and enthusiasm. If
you are willing to invest even a fraction of the energy you’ve given to all the other
diets you’ve probably already tried, you can Look Incredible and Feel Extraordinary
every single day. LIFE—it is my personal code, and it can be yours, too.

LIFE Expectations

I know the power of Joy’s LIFE Diet firsthand (after all, I eat food, too!) and from
an overwhelming amount of positive feedback from countless personal clients.
Over the years, the men and women who followed Joy’s LIFE Diet principles have
collectively dropped more than 250,000 pounds—the heft equivalent of the popu-
lation of a small town! I also learned the effect weight loss can have from Joy Fit
Club members, those determined dieters who—on their own, without my help—
took off between 100 and 300 pounds . . . and kept it off. They went from channel
surfing to paddling a kayak, running marathons and triathlons, and hiking across
Europe. They feel so healthy and energized that they get remarried on a Caribbean
beach, play ball with their kids, go back to college, discover hidden talents, and
even forge new careers. They have inspired friends and family to lose weight. Don’t
believe me? You can meet them yourself—scattered throughout this book are twenty
profiles of inspiring people (most are Joy Fit Club members) who challenged them-
seves to change their diets, never expecting that so much of the rest of their lives
would end up altered as well.

If all that sounds like a lot to promise, it is. But it’s hard to argue with thousands
of similar success stories, large and small. The best part is that you can be one of
them.

Joy’s LIFE Diet takes you through your transformation in four easy, spelled-out,
mistake-proof steps. In each step, I give you general guidance, specific menus for
each day of the week, portion control, and balanced nutrients in the right amounts
and combinations to help you look incredible and feel extraordinary. Here’s what
you can expect, beginning as early as the first week and increasing for as long as you stick with it:

✦ Weight loss (of course)
✦ Better sleep
✦ More energy
✦ Strength and stamina
✦ Less bloating
✦ Greater self-confidence
✦ Fewer mood swings
✦ Better memory
✦ Clearer thinking
✦ The ability to move with greater ease
✦ Improved relationships with others
✦ The experience of waking up with enjoyment and excitement every day

Sounds good, doesn’t it? All these goodies don’t happen by magic, though. You also have to bring something to the table (both literally and metaphorically).

1. **Change your mind.** It is important that you realize that starting a diet is not a mark of failure, but is in reality a sign that you have already succeeded. It is so easy to fall into the trap of thinking that you are somehow defective for being overweight and that going on a diet says to the world—and to your own inner critic—that you couldn’t get this one aspect of your life under control on your own. Although many people begin a diet in desperation when they have “hit rock bottom” in some weight-related way, beginning the LIFE Diet is not an act of defeat. It is an act of courage and hopefulness and success! It means you haven’t given up on yourself. What could be more positive than that?

2. **Change your eating style.** I’m sure it’s obvious that unhealthy habits are not worth keeping, but ditching them can be tricky. Habits are ingrained in the brain. They are familiar and comfortable, and sometimes they serve to make
other people happy. Every family has a set of rituals, recipes, and cooking styles passed down from generation to generation. While these are a part of who you are, you may have to reevaluate and adapt them to twenty-first-century health standards so they work for you and don't continue to translate into extra pounds. Throughout this book, you’ll find specific tips on how to make better food choices and how to substitute healthier versions of some of your diet’s worst offenders. I also give waistline-friendly recipe makeovers of many family favorites, such as Chicken Parmesan, Turkey Sausage with Sautéed Peppers and Onions, even Creamy Chocolate Pudding.

3. Change your loyalties. If you identify with food, separate yourself. You are not an afternoon chocolate bar. You are not a supersized meal. You are not family dinner. Anytime you find yourself defending poor food choices because they are something you “always” do, stop. You are not a collection of bad habits. What you are is a person who wants to lose a few pounds and become healthier. That may sound like funny advice, but you will probably run into situations in which food seems to define you. For example, maybe you are the office candy machine because you’ve got a jar of snacks on your desk. (If you take away the candy, I guarantee your coworkers will notice and ask you what’s wrong.) You don’t have to remain loyal to who you have always been. There is a new you ready to emerge. Always remember:

You are more than food.
You are stronger than a craving.
You are more complicated than a habit.
You are more thoughtful than mindless eating.

You are just as successful on day 1 of a diet as you are on day 301—because success is in the doing. With each passing day, you’ll look more incredible, and feel even more extraordinary.

Food Choice Basics

I have made it my life’s work to make weight loss as easy as possible. With Joy’s LIFE Diet, you don’t have to think about exactly which foods to eat because my
meal plans do it for you. I tell you exactly what to eat (and how much to eat) at every meal for the first six weeks. It’s almost as easy as ordering from a menu.

I’m often asked what kind of diet this is, what is the nutritional shorthand—is it low-fat, low-carb, no-meat? Joy’s LIFE Diet doesn’t conform to that kind of simplification because it contains a rich diversity of foods from all categories. Steps Two, Three, and Four even allow you to have “fun” foods . . . yes, that includes chocolate! Really, it’s just good food in the right amounts, with room for snacks and indulgences. So when it comes right down to it, I guess we can call it a no-gimmick, low-fuss diet.

In sweeping general terms, here’s what you’ll be eating:

Moderate amounts of carbohydrates, which provide energy, fiber, and a ton of vitamins and minerals. The carbs here are mostly from the “high-quality” categories:

- Foods rich in insoluble fiber, such as high fiber cereal, whole wheat bread and various whole grains, brown rice, all veggies and fruits.
- Foods rich in soluble fiber, such as oats, beans, sweet potatoes, lentils, and certain vegetables and fruit.

Joy’s LIFE Diet isn’t “low-fat,” but it is low in toxic fat. Good fats are an important part of everyone’s diet to maintain cell structure and nerve function. However, saturated and trans fats don’t work—instead of keeping cells healthy and flexible, these toxic fats promote inflammation and can stiffen cell walls, which interferes with the way they work. Joy’s LIFE Diet dramatically reduces the amounts of saturated fats and trans fats in your diet from the most common sources, including whole-fat dairy products (whole milk, cheese, and ice cream), butter, cream, marbled red meat, and anything containing partially hydrogenated oils.

On the other hand, I encourage you to eat moderate amounts of foods rich in the two “good fats”: monounsaturated fats, found in olive oils, canola oil, avocado, and nuts; and omega–3 fats, found in fish, canola oil, flaxseeds, and walnuts.

Proteins are the basic building material for all body cells, and we need a steady supply to help us maintain muscles, organs, and bones; keep a strong immune system; and heal damage. Because animal proteins can also contain high amounts
of saturated fats, Joy’s LIFE Diet contains lean proteins only, such as skinless poultry, fish and seafood, lean red meat, eggs (whites only during Step One), low-fat and non-fat dairy, beans, lentils, and soy.

Four Steps to Thin Forever

The foods you eat are only part of my LIFE Diet strategy. The other part involves making the transition from the old you to the new you. No matter how much weight you want to lose, you can accomplish anything in just four steps.

Step One: Release—is a single intensive week of stripping away negative habits.

Step Two: Relearn—is two weeks during which you “reprogram” your appetite and discover the joys of healthy eating.

Step Three: Reshape—lasts until you reach your goal weight. Along the way, you learn how to create physical, psychological, and nutritional wellness.

Step Four: Reveal—is about reveling in your diet success. By the time you reach this step, you will have experienced the full LIFE promise of helping you to Look Incredible and Feel Extraordinary. And because step four is about finding your maintenance groove, once you get here you don’t ever have to go back to the old you. Give the big clothes to Goodwill—this weight loss is here to stay.

Secrets for Success

I know you are excited to get started. I’m excited for you! In fact, I want you to have the best possible experience. Here are a few strategies to ease your way:

Acknowledge and avoid your “trigger” foods. Everyone has a few specific foods that are difficult or impossible to resist. These foods trigger uncontrolled eating. I know people who can eat a perfectly healthy diet until they are around their trigger foods, and then they lose all control. Who knows
why this happens. It’s like a bout of temporary diet insanity. For me, cookies are a trigger food. I know this, so I try to keep them out of the house (or, when I buy cookies for my kids, I only buy the types I like least). Acknowledge your own trigger foods—I’m sure you know what they are. Then . . . avoid them. They are a bad influence on your diet and your health. Don’t buy them, don’t take a single bite.

Purge or separate out unhealthy foods. As you begin my LIFE Diet, you’ll discover which foods are good for you, and which will keep you from your weight-loss goal. If you live alone, or if everyone in your household will be following the diet with you, clean out your refrigerator and pantry. Start with a clean, healthy palette. Stock your kitchen with the good stuff so that everywhere you turn, you are surrounded with encouragement.

Keep “Unlimited Foods” available and ready to eat. On pages 41–42 is a list of the “Unlimited Foods” you can eat whenever you like, as much as you like. But if you don’t buy them and make sure they are ready to eat, you may reach for something less healthy when you get hungry. Many of these foods can be purchased in ready-to-eat packages, or can be washed and prepared in advance. Explore some foods that are unfamiliar to you, learn which foods satisfy your snacky taste buds, and keep those foods on hand.

Pre-plan meals. It is easier to make familiar meals than unfamiliar ones. When you come home from a stressful day at work, you will be more likely to stick to my LIFE Diet menu if you plan and shop for all meals at least a day in advance. Make sure all ingredients are on hand and as ready to go as possible. You can pre-chop vegetables and store them in the fridge for a day or two. And—even easier—you can buy frozen chopped vegetables that can be defrosted (and drained) before use. Yes, frozen veggies are just as healthy as fresh, as long as there is no added salt, sugar, cheese, or other additives.

Eat breakfast within 90 minutes of waking, and try not to eat after 9:00 p.m. Food does a whole lot more than just make our stomachs happy. Every time you eat, it sets in motion a cascade of physiological effects, from release of enzymes and hormones to delivery of nutrients wherever they are
needed. Your first meal of the day helps to fire up your metabolism and regulate your appetite for the remainder of the day, so it should be eaten relatively close to waking. On the other hand, our bodies naturally wind down at night. As digestion slows, your last meal of the day—even if it is a snack—is more likely to sit in your stomach and affect your sleep. Late-night eating is a common reaction to the day’s stress, which almost guarantees over-eating and bingeing. You’ll never lose weight that way. I know there are times when late eating is unavoidable, but make that the exception rather than the rule.

I realize that some people have atypical schedules and are therefore unable to eat dinner before 9 p.m. (for example, people who work graveyard shifts or late at night). That’s okay. Simply adjust my LIFE guidelines to your personal schedule, no matter what time of the day or night. In other words, eat your three meals and one planned afternoon snack. With those guidelines, you should be eating something every four to five hours. And use the Unlimited List whenever you need it.

Make the TV room a NO EATING ZONE. Too many people indulge in mindless snacking in front of the television, and that’s a particularly dangerous habit. It becomes automatic, like buying popcorn at the movies. It doesn’t matter what you eat—mindlessly eating even healthy foods can rack up the calories. Try to remain conscious of everything you eat. If you train yourself to eat at the kitchen table, you’ll be less susceptible to constant munching. Of course, this assumes that you don’t have a television in the kitchen—if you do, keep it turned off while eating.

Motivation Activation

I could give you a million reasons for losing weight; chances are you have heard most of them already. But in the end, one reason stands alone and above them all—the one that brought you to this book. Everyone has a different motivation for beginning a diet. Regardless of whether you want to look slimmer, fit into a different size of clothing, prevent disease, avoid surgery, or be an example to your child,
your personal desire and sense of commitment are the only things that will carry you through to achieving permanent weight loss.

I won’t lie to you: There will be times when the weight will practically fall off, and times when you will want to pack your bags and move into a Krispy Kreme shop. That happens to everyone. In the tough times, it is important to find a way to remind yourself of your ultimate goal, and that single critical reason that spurred you to start dieting in the first place. Find a way to make it real for yourself, something that you can turn to whenever you need to reactivate your motivation. Some examples that seem to work are:

✦ Keep a journal to keep track of your emotional and physical progress.
✦ Post a picture of something that reminds you of your weight loss goal—a photo of your child or grandchild, a postcard of the beach where you hope to wear a new swimsuit, a magazine picture of the wedding dress you plan to wear, or anything else that makes your goal a little more concrete.
✦ Create a chart or graph that will allow you to visualize your day-to-day weight loss.
✦ Create a playlist of songs you find inspirational (and play them often).
✦ Find a diet buddy who can relate to your difficulties and be there when you need to have your motivation reenergized. You can find others like you who are following Joy’s LIFE Diet at www.JoyBauer.com, where you will also find meal plans, additional recipes, weight loss tools, an interactive weight tracker, an activity calculator, nutrition information, and even an online journal to help keep yourself motivated.

In the coming pages you’ll read lots more motivation suggestions in the profiles of real life weight loss superstars. They are here to inspire you! But I also want you to take advantage of your own natural enthusiasm and get started on Joy’s LIFE Diet. Right now.