

Mindful eating



How often do you eat? Try to remember how many times you ate yesterday. When, what, and how much did you eat? If you can't remember, you may have been eating mindlessly.

Most of us have many opportunities to eat mindlessly throughout the day. But eating mindfully can improve eating habits, food choices, and create healthier lifestyles.

Mindful eating is paying attention to when, what, and how much you eat. It means giving your full awareness to what and how much you are eating, but also how it smells, tastes, and makes you feel. It also brings awareness to how hungry you are and when you feel full.



Why is mindful eating important?

There are distractions everywhere. Our busy lives leave little or no time to stop what we are doing, sit down, and enjoy the food we eat. This causes us to lose track of how much we need to eat, how much we actually eat, the types of food we choose, and how it makes us feel.

Mindful eating is not dieting or giving anything up. It is about eating for nourishment and enjoyment.

Mindful eating tips

- Use smaller plates, bowls, and cups. On average, 25-28% more food is consumed when using larger plates or bowls.
- Eliminate distractions. Unplug and just eat. Over 40% more food is consumed while watching television.
- Pay attention to all of your senses while enjoying your food. Notice the taste, smell, and texture of what you are eating.
- Stop eating when you are satisfied, not full. Try eating half of your plate. Wait about 20 minutes. Are you still hungry?
- When eating at a social gathering or buffet, fill your plate only one time before you sit down. Filling your plate once allows you to have a better sense of everything you ate.
- Take at least 20 minutes to eat. It takes your body and brain awhile to realize you've had enough to eat.

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Ways to be more mindful

Common problems	Mindful eating ideas	Your ideas
I don't have time to sit down and eat.	Plan 20 minutes for just one 'mindful meal' a day.	
I eat quickly.	Set a timer and make your food last. Put your utensil down between every bite. Taste and let yourself enjoy.	
I eat until I'm too full.	Keep track of your hunger before you eat and fullness after you eat. Start with smaller portions. If you want more, think about whether you're really hungry.	
I hate wasting food, so if it's there, I will eat it.	No need to be a human garbage can. Portion and dish out food before sitting down. Whatever is left when you are full is a bonus meal for later. You may find that you actually need to prepare or buy less food.	
I have to eat lunch at my desk or in-between meetings.	Even if it's just 10 minutes, turn away from your computer or distractions and focus on enjoying your lunch.	

Next step

What will you do to eat more mindfully?

Where will you eat mindfully?

When will you eat mindfully?