

Health tip: Mindful eating



Mindfulness is the practice of paying attention, deliberately and non-judgmentally. With practice, mindfulness may cultivate the possibility of freeing yourself of reactive, habitual patterns of thinking, feeling and acting. This practice can be applied to any area of your life; applying these principles to eating may allow for an improved relationship with food.

With so many distractions in daily life, it's easy to eat without much thought. One method to combat this is mindful eating. Mindfulness involves focusing on the present—what you're feeling or sensing in each moment—even while eating. Mindful eating also teaches you to follow hunger cues. It takes up to 20 minutes for your brain to register the chemicals that let you know when you're full. Slowing down helps your brain catch up, reducing the chance of overeating.¹

Mindful eating encourages questions²

- Why do I eat?
- What types of food do I eat?
- Where do I eat?
- How does what I eat make me feel?

Mindful eating tips¹

- Assess your hunger
- Make time for meals
- Avoid distractions when eating
- Choose modest portion sizes¹

Creating a personal hunger scale¹

Before you eat, ask yourself “how hungry am I right now? Am I eating out of hunger, or am I bored or stressed?” Think of a scale from 1 to 10 where 1 is starving and 10 is stuffed. Aim to eat when you're a “3”—somewhat hungry, but not yet starving.

Mindfulness techniques

- Taking smaller bites
- Putting down your utensils in between bites
- Setting a timer for 20 minutes to slow down the eating process
- Treating the meal as a self-care ritual



Studies suggest that bringing mindfulness to your eating habits may reduce binge eating and emotional eating.³



Mindful eating is an art and skill which may become easier and more natural the more it is practiced. Having patience and compassion is key.



¹ Mayo Clinic Connect, Tips for Mindful Meals. <https://connect.mayoclinic.org/blog/take-charge-healthy-aging/newsfeed-post/tips-for-mindful-meals/>. April 2022. Accessed September 2023.

² HelpGuide.org, Mindful Eating. <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/diets/mindful-eating.htm>. February 2023. Accessed September 2023.

³ News in Health, Mindfulness for Your Health. <https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2021/06/mindfulness-your-health>. June 2021. Accessed September 2023.

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