

Mindfulness for Healthy Eating

Mindfulness is the practice of purposely focusing our attention on the present moment. It can be a great tool to help us fully experience our lives. Did you know mindfulness can also help with eating healthy? Eating in a mindful way can help us identify when we are full and ensure we are eating for the right reasons.

What is mindful eating?

Mindful eating is the concept of being fully present and focused while eating. This means paying attention to your eating habits and cravings. Eating mindfully can help you slow down your eating process and eat for nourishment instead of emotions. A large part of mindful eating is slowing down the time it takes you to eat.

Tips on mindfulness for healthy eating

- **Set down your utensils between bites.** This can lengthen the time it takes you to eat and help put a stop to overeating by giving yourself the time to feel full and satisfied.
- **Use your senses when eating.** This will allow you to take time to enjoy and savor food, and it can help you feel more satisfied and nourished.
- **Start with smaller portions.** You can always go back for seconds, but a pause between servings may be enough to help you realize you're already full.
- **Eat without distractions.** When you're eating, try to avoid checking your cellphone, taking calls or watching television. These all serve as distractions from meals and could lead to overeating. If you are eating out with friends and socializing, take breaks between bites to talk.
- **Use a hunger scale.** A useful way to gauge hunger and fullness is by using a "hunger/fullness scale" to rate the level of hunger or fullness you feel.

Use the Texercise hunger/fullness scale below to help you with mindful eating. Try to avoid being at level 1 and 5. If you notice you're often at 1 or 5, consider keeping a food log to see if any habits can explain why.

Table 1: Hunger/Fullness Scale

Rating	Hunger/Fullness Scale Description
5	Uncomfortably full or "sick" – "Thanksgiving full"
4	Full, but not yet uncomfortable – hunger is gone
3	Neutral – neither hungry nor full
2	Slightly hungry, mild signals that your body needs food – you can wait to eat
1	Starving, weak, lightheaded, dizzy or extreme symptoms of hunger

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