

7 Mindful Eating Tips

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When you are mindful you are fully present, in-the-moment without judgment. When it comes to eating, mindfulness helps amplify the volume of your body's cues so you can hear loud and clear when you are hungry and full. Many social and environmental factors can stand in the way of being able to accurately decode your body's feedback. Mindfulness helps you break free from routine eating habits by examining the thoughts, feelings and internal pressures that affect how and why you eat (or don't eat).

1. Shift out of Autopilot Eating

What did you have for breakfast? Be honest. Many people eat the same thing day in and day out. Notice whether you are stuck in any kind of rut or routine.

2. Take Mindful Bites

Did you ever eat an entire plate of food and not taste one single bite? Bring all of your senses to the dinner table. Breathe in the aroma of a fresh loaf of bread. Notice the texture of yogurt on your tongue. Truly taste your meal. Experience each bite from start to finish.

3. Attentive Eating

Sure, you're busy and have a lot "on your plate." It's hard to make eating a priority rather than an option or side task. If you get the urge for a snack while doing your homework or studying, stop and take a break so that you can give eating 100% of your attention. Try to avoid multitasking while you eat. When you eat, just eat.

4. Mindfully Check In

How hungry am I on a scale of one to ten? Gauging your hunger level is a little like taking your temperature. Each time you eat, ask yourself, "Am I physically hungry?" Aim to eat until you are satisfied, leaving yourself neither stuffed nor starving.

5. Thinking Mindfully

Observe how critical thoughts like "I don't want to gain the Freshman Fifteen." or "I'm so stupid, how could I do that!" can creep into your consciousness. Just because you think these thoughts doesn't mean you have to act on them or let them sway your emotions. Negative thoughts can trigger overeating or stop you from adequately feeding your hunger.

Remember: A thought is just a thought, not a fact.

6. Mindful Speech

Chit chatting about dieting and fat is so commonplace that we often aren't truly aware of the impact it might have on our self-esteem. When you are with friends and family, be mindful of your gut reaction to "fat talk" (e.g. "I'm so fat!" or the "I'm so fat; No you're not" debate). Keep in mind how the words might affect someone struggling with food issues.

7. Mindful Eating Support

Friends provide an enormous amount of support, but often it's helpful to obtain assistance or a second opinion from a trained professional. If you would like to learn more about mindful eating, or if you have concerns about your eating habits, call your college counseling center, student health center or consult the NEDA website www.NationalEatingDisorders.org for information and treatment referrals.

