

# Take 15

## HOW TO EAT MINDFULLY

### What is Mindful Eating?

Mindful eating is rooted in the practice of mindfulness, which is about staying in the moment, remaining conscious of everything you're doing. Mindful eating sounds simple—it involves being aware of how hungry you are and how much you're eating—but anyone who's ever curled up on the couch with a big bar of chocolate, promising themselves they will only eat two squares and then plow through the entire bar without paying attention knows it's easier said than done.

Here are four simple tips to keep in mind to distinguish between mindless and (more) mindful eating and bring our bodies and minds back together.

#### 1. Slow Down - Let your body catch up to your brain

Slowing down is one of the best ways we can get our mind and body to communicate what we really need for nutrition. The body sends its satiation (fullness) signal about 20 minutes after the brain, which is why we often unconsciously overeat. But, if we slow down, you can give your body a chance to catch up to your brain and hear the signals to eat the right amount and also enjoy and savour your food.

#### 2. Listen to our bodies first

Often, we listen first to our minds, but like many mindfulness practices, there may be more wisdom by tuning into our bodies first. Rather than just eating when we get emotional signals, be they stress, sadness, frustration, loneliness or even just boredom, we should Take 15 and listen to our bodies – is your stomach grumbling, do you feel light headed etc

#### 3. Assess our own eating habits

Another way that we eat mindlessly is by wandering around looking through cupboards, eating at random times and places, rather than just thinking proactively about our meals and snacks. This prevents us from developing healthy environmental cues about what and how much to eat. It can boost both your mind and body's health, and greatly improve your mood and sleep schedule to eat at consistent times. Ideally, this means sitting down at a table, putting food on a plate or bowl. It also helps to eat with others, not only are you sharing but also getting some healthy connection.

#### **4. Don't mix screen and Mealtime**

Eating in front of a screen, whether it's your phone, laptop, TV, or tablet, is a surefire way to distract yourself. That's good if you're trying to unwind from a long day at work but bad if you're trying to lose weight or develop healthy eating habits.

Also at work to try to eat your lunch somewhere other than your desk. Whether it is the café at work, the break room or a quiet bench outside, get some mental distance from your work by physically removing yourself from your workspace

#### **Everyone can eat mindfully.**

Mindful eating focuses on small behaviour changes during meals, such as limiting distractions, slowing eating pace, noticing feelings of fullness and taking time to savour the flavours of a healthy balanced diet. Eating mindfully encourages you to be more thoughtful about what you need, and the foods you choose are more likely to be balanced to include both healthier foods and the occasional indulgences you love.

For more information on mental health see links below:

#### **Mind UK:**

Email: [info@mind.org.uk](mailto:info@mind.org.uk)

Contact number: 0300 123 3393

Text: 86463

#### **Mental health Ireland**

Email: [Info@mentalhealthireland.ie](mailto:Info@mentalhealthireland.ie)

Contact number: 01 284 1166

#### **Website links**

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/>

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/>

For stress busting Apps recommended by the NHS

<https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/category/mental-health/>

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