

# MINDFUL EATING

## *tools + tips*



### WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

Mindfulness is the awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgementally.

*Jon Kabat-Zinn*

### WHAT IS MINDFUL EATING?

Mindful eating is the practice of SHIFTING OUT OF AUTOPILOT to be FULLY PRESENT with the experience of eating.

### WHY EAT MINDFULLY?

- Increases your ability to feel satiated
- Positively changes your relationship to food
- Optimizes digestion and improves gut health
- Prevents overeating by tuning into the body/brain's "I'm full" signals
- Engages the skill of **SAVORING** which increases pleasure and fulfillment
- Helps you feel more connected, present, and balanced in daily life

## MINDFUL EATING HACKS

1

### ASK YOURSELF: WHAT TYPE OF HUNGER IS THIS?

Investigate, with kindness, what kind of hunger you're experiencing (*see reverse side*). Remember, only stomach and cellular hunger can be satisfied with food, so pause to ask yourself "What do I *really* need/want here? Is there a different activity that could nourish me?" Sometimes, simply pausing for 3-5 minutes to bring curiosity to the craving can actually help it dissipate.

2

### GRATITUDE PAUSE

Before each meal or snack, pause to take in what's on your plate. Notice the colors, textures, shapes, and smells. Consider the process or journey that brought this food to you. Then, take a moment of gratitude to appreciate the pleasure, nourishment, and energy this food will provide you. Sometimes just a simple, silent *thank you* is enough.

3

### SINGLE TASK

Cut the distractions! When you're eating, **JUST EAT**. Put down the cell phone, turn off the news, set down the magazine...even for a few minutes. Conversation can also be distracting, so considering eating some of your meals in silence (or inviting a few moments of silence whenever possible).

4

### SLOOOOOOW DOWN AND CHEW, CHEW, CHEW

Slowing down when you eat is critical for digestion, metabolization, eating healthy portions, and boosting pleasure. Some research suggests that it's helpful to chew each bite of food 15-20 times (yep, seriously). Just embody your favorite sloth character and give it a whirl. You got this!

5

### SET DOWN YOUR UTENSIL

It's super common to start on another bite of food before you've finished the first one. Consider setting down your utensil between bites (or perhaps every few bites). When you notice the urge to grab the utensil and keep eating, pause for a moment, take a deep breath, and then proceed.

6

### SAVOR

Savoring makes us happy and improves our quality of life – across the board. Take a moment to **FULLY** appreciate your food. Notice what is pleasant about the experience and let yourself linger on the flavors of each bite. When you're done, you might savor the feelings of fullness and nourishment in your belly.

# 7 TYPES OF HUNGER



## EYE HUNGER

*Seeing a bowl of snickers*



## NOSE HUNGER

*Smelling popcorn at the movie theater*



## MOUTH HUNGER

*Potato chip crunching; craving a particular sensation in your mouth*



## STOMACH HUNGER

*Either hunger pangs OR anxiety, stress, some other emotion*



## CELLULAR HUNGER

*Your body craves what it needs to optimally function*



## MIND HUNGER

*Thoughts-based: I "should" eat this, this is "bad" for me; often fueled by worry*



## HEART HUNGER

*Stemming from a heartfelt need – loneliness, emptiness, sadness; needing to fill some void*

Often, we don't eat because of genuine hunger. We eat because cravings arise from other stimuli that are unrelated to physical hunger. When this happens, we can't actually satiate the craving with food, and we easily get stuck in a cycle of dissatisfaction or more craving.

By becoming familiar with the 7 types of hunger, **we can identify the true source of our cravings and make wiser decisions that nourish ourselves.** You can try the technique "**name it to tame it.**" For example, if you're watching TV and a pizza commercial comes on and you suddenly crave pizza, you can acknowledge, "Aha...eye hunger." This simple act of naming the hunger can reduce the craving. Similarly, if you feel anxious and then want cookies, you might meditate or go for a walk instead, creating space before you act on the impulse. This often helps the craving subside on its own and allows you to choose a far more fulfilling alternative.



*"Mindful eating is a way to become reacquainted with the guidance of your internal nutritionist."*

*Jan Chozen Bays*

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### BOOKS

**Nourishing Wisdom: A Mind-Body Approach to Nutrition and Well-Being**

*By Marc David*

**Mindful Eating: A Guide to Rediscovering a Healthy and Joyful Relationship with Food**

*by Jan Chozen Bays*

**Savor: Mindful Eating, Mindful Life**

*by Thich Nhat Hanh and Lilian Cheung*

### WEBSITE

The Center for Mindful Eating | [www.tcme.org](http://www.tcme.org)