



TIPS TO MANAGE FOOD INTAKE

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WHAT TO EXPECT

There are many reasons why someone could choose to manage their food intake, it could be done to improve their health, manage their cholesterol or diabetes, to be more mindful of how much they eat and/or control their bodyweight. There are as many reasons as there are ways to manoeuvre.

When we make changes in the volume of food, portion sizes or sources consumed (such as calorie dense foods), **it is typical to feel more hunger and/or cravings**. Just as with any other changes it can take some time before our system, brain and tastebuds find their new equilibrium.

In the next pages we will go through different ways to manage food intake, but it eventually always come down to those few tips:



- Portion smaller servings directly in your plate,
- Chew slowly and mindfully,
- Have nutritious whole foods with high protein and fibres content,
- Rearrange your surroundings to decrease temptations,
- Find activities to clear your head when necessary,
- Understand that hunger signals are not necessarily emergency signals.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

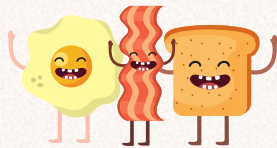
If you suffer or have suffered with eating disorders, wherever you fall on the spectrum (that is very very large), please, reach out for support and be very aware of yourself and how you react. Know that I'm here for you.

BUILD & IMPROVE HABITS



Start eating later in the day

If you're not very hungry in the morning, it's a good opportunity to wait a little longer before having your first meal. Be aware that you shouldn't wait to feel uncomfortable to eat. Bonus: it gives your digestive system some time to restart.



Don't skip breakfast

Or maybe do.

There are conflictual results on the subject but basically, starving yourself until lunch time can cause you to overeat in response to hunger. On top of that, the accumulated stress (and extra volume of food) can cause digestive discomfort.

Eating at 9 and later can still be considered a breakfast.



Plan ahead

Planning ahead allows you to relax and follow the road you paved for yourself. It reduces the risks of following your cravings when hunger hits and end up acting in a rush.

[Read more on the doc "Cooking for oneself".](#)



Brush your teeth after your meal

Brushing your teeth can reinforce the feeling of being done with food. Just be aware that some toothpaste taste and their ingredients can increase cravings.



Build a supportive environment

The external cues have strong influence on our feelings of hunger and satiety. Be aware of where you store, cook and consume your food as well as the art that's hanging on your walls. For example: instead of having snacks at the front of the cabinet, place them at the back: the more available and accessible a food is, the more likely it is to be consumed.

You can use this advice in reverse to increase the consumption of certain foods that suit your goals better, like precut veggies or boiled eggs, by placing them at the front.



Adapt your routine

If you got used to pop at the bakery on your way back from work, it will be easier to change route (or sidewalk) than to frustrate yourself as you pass in front of it everyday.

If you're sensitive to advertisement (as most of us are), change the station or channel and get rid of food packages when you get home.



Get familiar with hunger

Hunger is a natural process that helped us survive. Thing is, our brain is now constantly stimulated to send us hunger signals even though we're not in the need for food.

Learning what true hunger feels like (as opposed to cravings, boredom or thirst) can be very empowering. Hunger is not an emergency signal but rather somethings that flows throughout the day and that is sometimes ok to ignore (especially when it's caused by the smell of a bakery).

WHEN SHOPPING



Beware the sales game

Packages are made the way they are for a reason: it tickles our brain and leads to us buying the product. Our brain loves bright colours and catchy words.

Learning to read and understand what's on the box, like the nutritional value, the ingredients list and other claims, will give you the power to make choices that make more sense for you than for the producer.

Have a look at the guide “[Better understand food labels & packagings](#)” to know more.



Buy larger volumes and refill smaller boxes

Buying larger quantities of food that are easy to store or freeze is often good for the wallet and a time savior. Simply use your own containers to easily access foods and control their use.



Buy smaller packages

This is not the budget and ecological friendliest option but sometimes that's all you can do. Smaller volume of available food = smaller amount of food available. So if you want to have those damn chips but know that you can't handle a full bag of it, get a small one. Being able to finish the bag will give you the same satisfaction as with a big one, if not more.



Buy high volume - low calories foods

If your goal is to lower the amount of calories in, eating low calories food that fill you up is a must, those foods usually have high water and fibre content. Such foods include vegetables, fruits and lean proteins.

WHEN COOKING & SERVING



Include proteins and fibres to your first meal.

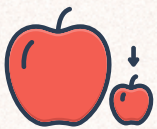
Protein and fibres are the most satiating micronutrients and the ones that take the longest time to be broken down.

Bonus: if you're a "sweet breakfast" kind of person, adding proteins will have a positive impact on your glycemic levels (=no more sugar crash).



Use a smaller plates

The brain interprets empty spaces as something that has to be filled, which can increase the sensation of having "too little". When you're using smaller plates the opposite happens and satisfaction is more easily attained.



Start with a smaller serving

Just as with the small plate, eating a full smaller servings while knowing that you can have a second plate gives a feeling of abundance and satisfaction. Two important tools to combat negative feelings like restriction, that are often linked to reducing food intake or dieting.



First serve, then store.

A simple and non-frustrating action is to portion what you are about to eat and store the rest, whether in the fridge, freezer or simply in the cabinet. It works on the "out of sight, out of mind" idea, if you forget about it, great, if you don't and really want to have an other serving, go for it.



Become comfortable with not finishing your plate.

Many of us have been taught to finish our plate "or else". The truth is you're an adult and you have to power to not eat what you don't want to eat. If you're home, simply put the left overs in a box for later, if you're at the restaurant, make use of the popular "doggy bags".

WHEN EATING



Make sure to eat enough during the day

We naturally have less energy to spent on managing hunger and cravings in the evening, make it easier for future you by keeping a steady food intake during the day so you don't crash later.



Eat more of less

This is a simple way to trick your brain and increase satisfaction. Eating 2 small cookies is perceived more positively than eating a big one as it increases the feeling of abundance and choice.



Sit down to eat

Sitting reinforces the message that “now is the time and place to eat”. If you eat anywhere during any activity, you might get used to eat anywhere during any activity.

On top of that, our system needs to be relaxed to properly set up for digestion, for example, snacking while walking is a good way to end up with stomach cramps.



Eat the “lightest” foods first

Having the least energy dense foods (like vegetables or proteins) first will help you start filling up while managing the amount of total food and/or calories in. Bonus: eating the veggies first seem to have an impact on total glycemic levels and reduce risks for glycemic crash (like after lunch).



Eat slowly

Eating is a whole process that starts before you place the first piece of food in your mouth. It is about more than just getting food in. Be curious and mindful of the appearance, aroma, texture and flavour before and as you eat.

Bonus: this will give time for digestive system to tell your brain that you're full.



Chew thoroughly

Chewing is linked with the same physiological processes as eating slowly. The main point of chewing is turning your food in a bolus, a mix of food and saliva that is easily digestible and make the nutrients easy to access. The more chewed the better. It is generally advised to chew 15-20 times each bite, more for harder foods (such as meat) and less for softer ones (like salad).



Avoid distractions

Or at least be aware of them and control their effect.

Screens, music, books are “anti-mindfulness”, you can't focus both on what's in your mouth and what's in front of your eyes and/or in your ears. If you want to watch a movie while having a pizza, be aware of how fast you eat and how much you chew, if you're listening to music know that we have a tendency to eat accordingly to the tempo, so faster beats = faster intake.

Got a question?
Want to know more?
Let me know!

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