

# 12 Mindful Eating Strategies<sup>1</sup>

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- 1 Make eating an exclusive event.**

When you eat—only eat. Give eating the attention it needs to fully enjoy your food and be mindful of every bite. Eating without distraction can help you better recognize when you are full.
- 2 Check your stress level.**

Eating is a common response to stress. During times of stress, you may find yourself turning to food even when you are not hungry. Try to get your mind off of food and deal with stress in other ways, perhaps a few deep breaths or a short walk.
- 3 Appreciate food.**

Acknowledge the gift of food and the effort needed to grow and prepare it. Enjoy your food with gratitude.
- 4 Eat slowly.**

Eating slowly may help you better recognize your hunger and satiety cues. Try to put your fork down between bites, chew your food well, and make each meal last at least 20 minutes.
- 5 Be mindful about the taste, texture, and smell of food.**

Savor your food. Notice the flavor, shape, and texture of each bite.
- 6 Be mindful of portions to enjoy quality, not quantity.**

When more food is served, we are tempted to eat more. Be mindful of the portion sizes being served on your plate.
- 7 Be mindful of how hungry you are.**

External cues such as seeing or smelling food, may be signaling you to eat, but are you really hungry?
- 8 Eat before you get too hungry.**

When you get too hungry, you may be tempted to make impulsive choices instead of mindful selections.
- 9 Be mindful of your protein.**

Choose plant-based proteins often such as beans and legumes.
- 10 Be mindful of your calorie budget.**

Everyone has a number of calories that can be eaten each day to maintain a healthy weight. One way to be mindful of the calories you are consuming is to track what you eat and drink. Tracking for even a few days can increase your mindfulness of what and how much you are consuming.
- 11 Determine if the food is calorie-worthy.**

When it comes to special holiday foods or “sometimes” foods, ask yourself, is this calorie-worthy? If you are going to splurge on a high-calorie food, make sure it is something you really enjoy—then have just a few bites.
- 12 Take one bite.**

Follow the one-bite rule when it comes to special foods or desserts. You will not feel deprived from missing out on a favorite food and will not feel guilty for eating too much. The maximum pleasure of eating a food usually comes in the first bite.

Created by Eat Smart, Move More, Weigh Less, an online weight management program delivered in real-time by a live Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN).

1. Dunn C, Thomas C, Aggarwal S, Nordby K, Johnson M, Myer S, Haubenreiser M. 12 Mindful Eating Strategies. 2018. [esmmweighless.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/12-Mindful-Eating-Strategies.pdf](https://esmmweighless.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/12-Mindful-Eating-Strategies.pdf).

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