

Mindful Eating for Weight Management
By: Fabienne C. Grossman, RD, E-RYT

It's a shared human experience, and one of the pleasures of being in a body: eating! But how many of us eat mindfully—or even know what that means? Mindful Eating might be described simply as being more attentive to planning, preparing and eating our meals, and making sure that we schedule actual time throughout the day for nourishment. This increased awareness (not surprisingly) has a profound impact on weight management, and can restore instinctive choices about food type/portion that lead to a healthy body.

Life moves quickly, and we often match that pace—rushing through days and putting eating well/peacefully low on the list. How many of us skip breakfast or eat on the run because the day takes an unexpected turn? Many times we eat without thinking, out of stress, sadness or boredom. When we eat for emotional reasons, we run a high risk of overeating and making poor food choices.

When food is eaten mindfully it's actually better metabolized; nutrients are better absorbed and food is better digested. Here are a few Mindful Eating tips:

Schedule It In

We need to make the time to plan, prepare and eat our food in a leisurely manner. This might seem insignificant, but it's essential to help our bodies optimize metabolism. The same way we schedule a day's activities, we can schedule meal planning and eating. Maybe we get up a teeny bit earlier to make breakfast without rushing out the door and eating in the car. We can plan a lunch/dinner time and put it in our calendars, even if it's not a full hour. Ideally, our midday meal should be the largest, so the body has optimal time to make use of those calories. (Bonus: making time to eat in the morning—as well as time to digest and eliminate—promotes regular bowel movements, which are crucial for well-being.)

Turn off the TV

Shockingly, the naughty habit of eating in front of the TV or in chaos could be making us fat! Eating with family, friends, in nature or a quiet atmosphere is preferable, and studies have shown when we do, we're highly likely to eat less. Be present with your food, and relish the smell, taste and texture.

Slow Down

It takes about 20 minutes for the stomach to tell the brain it's full. If we eat too quickly, we consume more than needed and feel uncomfortably full to boot. So, sloooooooow down. Put down the fork between bites. Chew food thoroughly, and enjoy every bite.

Assess

Assessing hunger/fullness both before and after meals assures we're eating to nourish our bodies, as well as bringing awareness to times when we eat for comfort or emotional diversion. If we wait until we're starving, chances are excellent we'll grab the wrong foods.

Being more mindful with each part of the meal process is an integral part of the well-being that nourishes both body and mind. Sometimes challenging to do, but the results? Delicious!

Fabienne C. Grossman is a Registered Dietitian and ERYT. She is available for private and group yoga, meditation and nutrition instruction online and in person. For more information contact her at: fabyogi18@gmail.com.