

## Eating Mindfully

Food plays a large role in everyday life. The effort to shop, cook, and finally eat the meal probably takes up a good amount of time out of your day. While the idea of eating may seem to be a simple concept, eating mindfully is completely different, being aware of your relationship with food at all levels.

- ❶ Rather than devouring the meal set in front of you immediately, being aware of your thoughts and feelings as you are eating

Developing a habit to eat mindfully can become a large benefit when making and also maintaining healthy changes in your diet.

- ❶ Notice increased attention to each different domain of food—where it's from, how it's grown, what's in it?
- ❶ How *much* you eat, how frequent you eat
- ❶ When you eat, and how you feel after eating
- ❶ Cravings and attachments
- ❶ Habits towards how you eat certain food or foods that you do or do not eat



It may be difficult to abruptly change your entire eating habit, so perhaps, baby steps can be taken. Begin by paying close attention to the food you are eating—how it looks, what it is, and how it affects you, notice how the food tastes as you are eating it.

- ❶ When a meal is set in front of you, carefully look at what's on the plate
- ❶ Notice how you *feel* an hour or two after

You may find yourself noticing new habits you have with food, foods that make you feel good while others that may fatigue you. You may even develop a newfound enjoyment to eating as you are now aware of the food domain in a new way.

Kabat-Zinn, Jon. "Chapter **MOMENTS TO LIVE**" *Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness*. New York, NY: Pub. by Dell Pub., a Division of Bantam Doubleday Dell Pub. Group, 1991. N. pag. Print.

## How it's done

The thought of eating mindfully may seem tedious as it involves so many thoughts and attention, however, with practice, it will become habitual. Consider trying the following example of mindful eating with eating a raisin.

1. Bring your attention to **seeing the raisin**, observing it carefully.
2. **Feel its texture** between your fingers and **notice its color and surfaces**.
3. **Be aware of any thoughts** that you may have **about raisins or food in general**
4. **Note any thoughts and feelings of liking or disliking raisins**, should they come up.
5. **Bring the raisin up to your nose and smell it** for a while.
6. With awareness, **bring it to your lips while noticing your arm and hand position** as you move it to your lips.
7. Take it into your mouth and **chew it slowly**, tasting the actual taste of the raisin.
8. When you feel ready to **swallow**, do so **consciously** so that when you swallow, you can **feel your body becoming 'one raisin heavier'**.



<https://1bp.blogspot.com/-7dl4CshIFsA/Vtg5Nua16wI/AAAAAAAABgQ/y5L0PJxfJIo/s1600/raisin.jpg>

While the example above explains mindful eating with only a raisin, it can easily be done with other foods such as a slice of cracker, a wedge of orange, a piece of chocolate, etc.

Remember—mindful eating requires awareness at all levels of the eating process. You are attending to your eating and being in touch with your food as your mind is not distracted. When you are fully focused on your food, you can really see it and taste it, therefore, enjoying it more.

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