

Eating Mindfully

Food is imbedded in our everyday lives since ingestion of nutrients is essential for life, but in today's age few are involved with its actual production and sometimes even preparation. Only a few generations ago, people relied on food that was produced and grown locally and seasonally. It wasn't until industrial growth, that more and more food options have become processed and ultra-processed. In real terms, this has given food an aspect of convenience and accessibility; no longer do we need to spend energy and hours a day making meals and we can spend those hours on other things that we enjoy.

However, so many new foods are added to the market each year, making healthy eating more confusing and complicated. Many foods we eat didn't even exist 10 or 20 years ago. In this aspect, food has become distorted and varied from the way nature produces it.

Bring mindfulness and awareness to what is put in the body



<http://www.justharvest.org/eating-healthy-on-a-budget/>

The truth is that today, in the United States and other *developed* countries, there is so much access to healthy foods we have the *potential* to be healthier than ever in human history.

Mindful vs. Mindless Eating

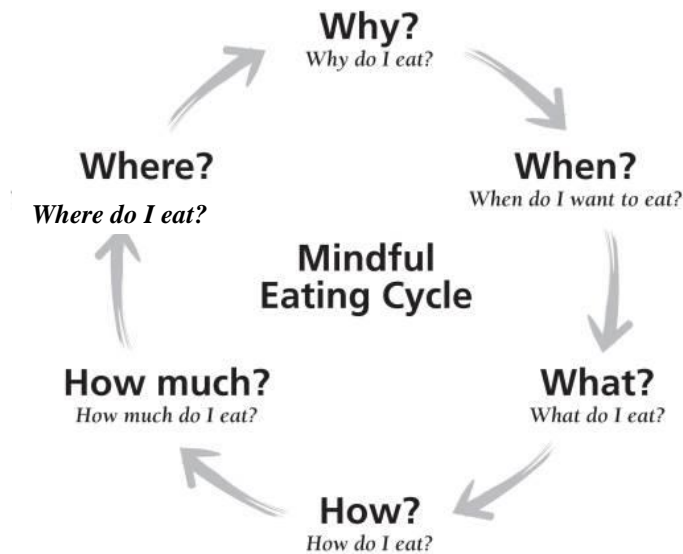
Mindful eating has been shown to be effective and is growing in popularity. Techniques to reduce mindless eating involve adjustments one can make to avoid triggers that may compel us to eat unhealthful foods, eat too much, or both. Strategies include:

- 🕒 Eating on smaller plates-Drinking from smaller cups
- 🕒 Repackaging or purchasing single-serving sizes
- 🕒 Avoid free food or social eating if you're not hungry
- 🕒 Placing unhealthful foods out of sight
- 🕒 Ordering smaller portions at restaurants
- 🕒 Avoiding eating while doing an activity

In Practice

Kabat-Zinn, Jon, Ph.D. 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. Print.

Practical steps to mindful eating requires being aware at all levels of the eating process. With practice and observation over time, mindful eating can become a habit.



<http://www.todaysdietitian.com/newarchives/030413p42.shtml>

- 1) **Why?** When you go for food take a moment to step back. Notice the sensations in your body. Are you *actually* hungry, or is there another cue pressing you to eat such as comfort or discomfort? Does the food give you energy or make you tired?
- 2) **When?** Often times eating is habitual~ mentally and physically. The body can send cues at certain points of the day, after smelling food or during different emotions.
- 3) **What?** Take notice of what your food looks like. What exactly is the texture, the color and the smell? Look at the shapes of the food. Is it a convenience food?
- 4) **How?** Notice what type of utensils you use. Are you enjoying each bite or eating very quickly? How does it taste?
- 5) **How Much?** First notice the amount you decide to eat. Do you eat with an unlimited desire, or do you set a plate with portions? Do you go back for seconds? Do you continue to eat past not being hungry?
- 6) **Where?** This one is often over looked, but location can dictate cues for eating. What is the location? Are you indoors or outdoors? Are you in the midst of a busy day or relaxing? Are you on the go or sitting down? Where is your mental / emotional state?
- 7) Back to 1.

A healthy relationship with food requires persistence, commitment and discipline.