

*A Beginner's
Guide to
Intuitive Eating*

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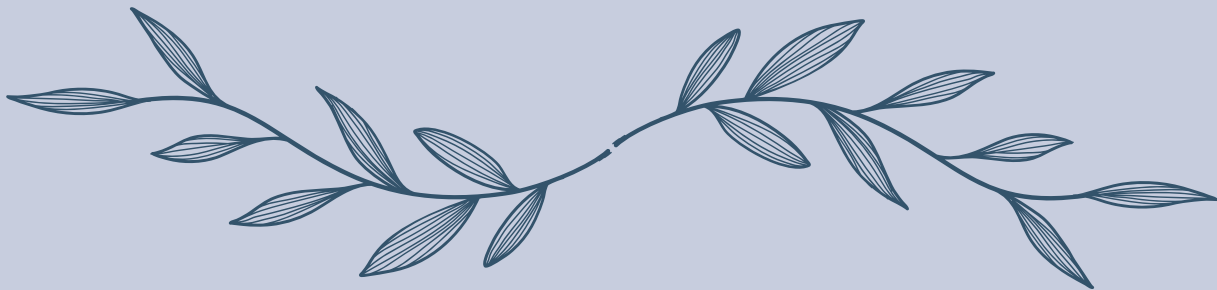
Nourish
BODY AND MIND



What is Intuitive Eating?

Intuitive Eating is a thoroughly studied, self-compassionate, dynamic and individualized eating framework. It was created in 1995 by two Registered Dietitians, Evelyn Tribole and Elyse Resch. Intuitive Eating is an evidence based, weight-inclusive paradigm that is proven to reduce disordered eating patterns, improve self-esteem and honor both physical and mental health. Intuitive Eating also supports that intentional weight loss is damaging - and creates weight stigma (which is rooted in racism!), weight cycling (which can result in a number of health issues) and eating disorders (which are deadly and do not discriminate!).

Practicing Intuitive Eating requires exploring and examining your relationship with food and your body.



Who should practice Intuitive Eating?

Intuitive Eating is for everyone! Any age, gender, race, ethnicity and religion can practice intuitive eating. That being said - Intuitive Eating may not be able to be utilized and practiced fully in someone with an active eating disorder, as hunger and fullness cues and medical stability may be affected. Please work closely with your Registered Dietitian (RD) and/or licensed mental health provider to determine if you are ready to eat intuitively.



10 Principles of Intuitive Eating



1. Reject the Diet Mentality

Diet culture is everywhere. Allow yourself to feel angry at the lies that led you to feel like you somehow failed because past diets failed. Studies show that diets don't work... and you are not to blame for this. Rather, the 72 billion dollar diet and "wellness" industry is. Diet culture capitalizes on your self-esteem and challenges your self worth. You are worthy and you are enough - without a diet.

2. Honor Your Hunger

You're a human, right?? Humans need food. Period. Feed yourself when your body tells you it needs fuel. Ignoring this body cue can trigger a primal instinct to overeat later. *Note - this principle can ONLY be utilized fully when we are experiencing hunger cues regularly... if you have an active eating disorder and/or are not experiencing hunger cues - you will likely need to rely on mechanical eating (eating every 2-4 hours minimum). Please discuss & work with your RD on this!*

3. Make Peace with Food

Food is not morally good or bad - give yourself unconditional permission to eat. When you do not allow yourself access to the foods you want, you continue to crave them - which can often lead to bingeing on these foods. *ALL foods provide nutritional value.* Explore how it feels to give yourself regular access to the foods you like, rather than placing more rules on how, why and what you eat.

4. Challenge the Food Police

The food police is the voice that tells you that you are "good" or "bad" based on what and how much you ate. Get curious about who the food police are in your life - and notice what rules they create around food and your body. Ps...Internal & external food police can exist!

5. Respect Your Fullness

Listen for the body cues that signal you are no longer hungry. Pause in the middle of a meal to ask yourself, "how am I feeling right now?" This skill can be honed by leaning into mindfulness - and utilizing a hunger/fullness scale can help!



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6. Discover the 'Satisfaction Factor'

Examine your food-related experiences. Do they feel nourishing? Pleasurable? Satisfying? Do you feel as though you can eat what you want in a safe, inviting environment, free from judgement? Imagine a really positive food experience - maybe it was a time where you felt "at peace" with the meal, environment, company, etc. Is there anything we can learn from that enjoyable food experience?

7. Cope with Your Emotions

Emotions, like hunger and fullness, are ways that your body is communicating with you. Recognize and respect feelings of anxiety, boredom, anger or loneliness. It may be helpful to work with a licensed mental health professional to help you build adequate coping skills to navigate this!

8. Respect Your Body

Your body size may be different than it was 6 months, 5 years or 10 years ago. Human bodies are intended to change, grow, expand and extend, despite what diet culture tells you. Lean into self compassion and acknowledge that your genetics play a BIG role in your health status. With this, challenge the thought that a certain body size is better... all bodies of all abilities (yes, all!) deserve dignity, respect and equitable care.

9. Joyful Movement

Exercise does not have to be intentional, nor does it have to be a certain intensity, length, or type. Unfortunately, exercise is frequently weaponized by diet culture - but you can reclaim it if desired. What would it feel like to explore your relationship with exercise - and get curious about movement that feels celebratory, joyful and fun in your current body, regardless of size?

10. Honor Your Health - Gentle Nutrition

Despite common misconceptions that intuitive eating is just eating whatever you want, whenever you want... or just eating when you're hungry and stopping when you're full, it is much more nuanced and scientific. Feeding your body isn't supposed involve rules, rigidity or restriction. Rather - find balance in feeding your taste buds and and listening to how your body feels physically.





How do I get started?

1) Recognize that you aren't broken... and this isn't your fault!

Trying to fix yourself with diets, exercise, cleanses and detoxes isn't necessary. Engaging in these behaviors prevents you from connecting with your body. You are not the problem... rather the diet and wellness (and our culture!) are to blame.



2) Get curious - where did your beliefs come from?

Everything you "know" about your appearance, body size, diet (and more) is something you were taught. Negative beliefs can be unlearned and reframed - with the help of self compassion and your care team!

3) Tune in & strengthen your mindfulness skills

Take a pause to check in on thoughts, body sensations and emotions, then decide how you want to respond to the experience. Your hunger, fullness and emotions are all ways that your body communicates with you... are you listening and responding to them appropriately?

4) Reconnect with and care for your inner child

Healing your relationship with your body and food may involve digging in the vault for some memories of how you interacted with these as a child. Could you care for your body as if you were a child? What would this feel like for you?



5) Give yourself permission!

Your body is brilliant. It can tell you what you need at any given moment.. and you have permission to listen! Consider asking yourself: "What sounds good? What kind of taste am I in the mood for?" I trust you to feed yourself - do you? This can take practice and experimentation, so be patient with yourself.



Ready for more? Let's work together!



Nourish - Body and Mind, LLC is owned and operated by Alison Kucharski Varhol, MS, RDN, LDN. Alison is a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) and Certified Intuitive Eating Counselor. She has a passion for helping others rediscover their body's natural intuition and balance. As an anti-diet dietitian, Alison practices with an Intuitive Eating®, Health at Every Size (HAES)®, weight-inclusive and gentle nutrition focus. She love talking about body image and diet culture, brainstorming grocery lists and meal ideas and helping clients to rediscover how to make self-care a priority.

Reach out to inquire about sessions with Nourish - Body and Mind, LLC:

✉ alison@nourish-bodyandmind.com

www.nourish-bodyandmind.com 

☎ (908)-892-1747

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