

DEVELOPING HEALTHY EATING HABITS

By being aware of the emotions attached to your eating behaviours, and following these steps, you can get on the path to healthy food habits.

1

Identify the emotions that trigger your non-hungry eating. For example, are you angry, sad, lonely, or scared? Then make a list of alternative things to do when you experience non-hungry eating emotions and stick it on the fridge and the pantry. These alternatives may be reading a book, going for a walk or having a workout. The primary reason why people overeat is to soothe their overwhelming emotions.

2

Map the events that lead to binge-eating episodes. With knowledge comes the power to change. So you know that you're likely to binge eat at night when everyone else has gone to bed. But do you know why? Work out what you were thinking, doing and feeling right before your last binge episode. Chances are one or more of these things will be a trigger for an out-of-control eating episode. When you work out what the trigger is, you can make some changes.

3

Write down why losing weight is important to you and commit to reading your list before every single meal or snack. It sounds like a chore, but it works! First, write down your list of five or ten reasons why you want to lose weight. Enter it into your phone, laminate a copy of it and keep it with you in your wallet, or paste it onto your fridge or inside the pantry door. The important thing is to read it, read it, read it – before every meal or snack.

4

Move! A positive approach to exercise is an important part of developing healthy habits – it goes hand-in-hand with healthy eating. When it comes to reasons and excuses for not exercising, lack of motivation to pound the pavement or hit the gym is right up there with feeling too tired. The fact is, exercise actually creates energy *and* motivation, and improves mood.

5

Plan ahead. Some people dread weekends or meals out because they know they are likely to overeat and then struggle to get back to healthy eating afterwards. But a healthy eating regime shouldn't stop you from going out and enjoying yourself. When you plan ahead you stop pretending that you're not going to treat yourself. Instead, you accept that this is your reality, and you plan for it. You know you're going to indulge, so give yourself permission to do so, but in moderation.

6

Keep a food and exercise journal. It may seem boring and time-consuming, but it will keep you honest and on track.

7

Don't despair if you break your diet – forgive yourself for being human and restart the next day. This is probably one of the most important tools when it comes to losing weight. A binge, or going off the rails a little, isn't really a big problem. It's what happens after you've eaten an entire family pack of salt and vinegar chips and washed them down with six beers, that matters. You can either use this binge as an excuse to eat everything in sight for the next eight weeks, or you can excuse your temporary lapse and get straight back on your healthy eating plan.



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