

Understanding our Eating, Emotions and Body Signals

Three Steps to Tuning In



Eat regularly so you don't dip into feeling 'too hungry'. You'll feel more in control and less panicky around food. For most people this means eating every 3-5 hours. Having an idea of when you'll eat, and carrying snacks, can help prevent you getting too hungry.



Tune in before you tuck in: how hungry are you right now? What do you feel like eating? How full do you want to feel afterwards? When will you next eat?



Try and match what will nourish or satisfy you with what in fact you choose to eat. In other words, can you let go of any 'shoulds' or other rules to let yourself eat to meet your needs?



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Making Sense of Eating

As you practice taking your body signals and emotions into consideration you may notice particular thought patterns and related behaviours such as:

- Eating with abandon, or a *'see if I care'* attitude
- Eating from defiance *'no-one is going to tell me what to do'*
- Not 'bothering' to respond to what you really feel like – *'I'm too tired'* , *'whatever'*
- Feeling overwhelmed or despondent by the enormity of the changes you think you 'should' make
- Eating from fear of deprivation – *'I'm going to finish the cake, it's my birthday, I don't know when I'll next let myself eat treats again'*. Reassure your scared self: it's ok, things are different, we can choose to leave it or eat it.
- Confusion over whether you are eating automatically (out of habit, or a seemingly irrelevant stimulus) or in a connected way, in tune with your present needs. You're ok whichever it is. Also, it can be hard for anyone to be entirely clear on the distinction! Notice if you were aware of the taste, temperature, texture of the food... of your hunger levels... your emotions... tuning in to your body and being curious can help you understand your eating.
- Confusion about whether you turned the cake down because of a 'diet mentality' response or because you really didn't fancy some right now. Perhaps you were afraid once you started you wouldn't be able to stop.
(In this case, would you feel better for a meal, then a slice of cake? Sounds like you could be really hungry.) Hmm, be curious: what emotions are you feeling? Use practical information too, when did you last eat? Have you been more active than usual?

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- Comfort eating is about coping. Can you see patterns in how your eating changes with circumstances or events? Covid comes to mind. Is trauma an issue?
- Mixed feelings ... wanting to be at ease around food but being afraid of how risky it feels to stop dieting wanting to try the Well Now way – after this one last diet try and notice all these contradictions without judging

Remember, whatever you do or don't do has no impact on your worth.
You are ok even if you decided never to pay any attention to your eating again . You just are ok. Go gently.

