

An Introduction to Mindful Eating



What is mindful eating?

Eating mindfully involves bringing full awareness to the experience of eating, without judgement, while taking into consideration both internal and external events. At the heart of mindful eating is the practice of combining our inner wisdom about our bodies, the knowledge we obtain about food, and awareness of our unique needs and experiences to guide our food choices. One of the main objectives of eating mindfully is to help us become aware of our thoughts, feelings and physical sensations surrounding eating and to help us use that inner wisdom to become more in tune with our natural hunger, fullness and satiety cues. The overall goal is to be able to acknowledge the nourishing opportunities through food selection and preparation methods while using our mindful awareness to influence our eating habits. Some of the benefits of adopting mindful eating practices include more satisfaction with meals, positive health outcomes, forming a healthy relationship with food and making peace with our unique eating experiences.



Mindful Versus Mindless Eating

Mindful

Being aware of thoughts, emotions and physical sensations while eating and using that awareness and attention to guide you in choosing food that is satisfying and nourishing

Using all senses to be fully present and connected to food while eating

Acknowledging physical hunger cues

Acknowledging physical fullness cues

Select and prepare foods while considering where they came from and their impact on our health as well as the world around us



Mindless

Making most food selections based on external guidance (diets and food rules)

Eating with distractions, such as television, cell phones or work

Waiting until starving to eat or eating when you are not hungry

Ignoring fullness cues and eating until uncomfortably stuffed

No consideration of where the food originated, how it was prepared, it's cultural significance, or the influence it has on our health and the environment

A Mindful Eating Exercise

If you want a taste of mindful eating, please try this fun exercise! You can print this PDF and write your reflections in the spaces provided.

Exercise: The next time you make a meal for yourself, try engaging all your senses while eating. Engaging your senses while eating helps you become fully aware of your eating experiences. To start, approach the meal with curiosity, as if you have never seen the food in front of you. Enjoy the meal, distraction-free, and follow the prompt below to help you create a mindful experience. For this exercise, it is best to use a meal made up of finger foods.

Once the food is in front of you, start by noticing what your sense of sight is telling you. What colors, textures and shapes do you see?

Next, engage your sense of smell. Inhale deeply. What aromas do you detect?

Pick up the food on your plate with your hands. Roll the food around in your fingers and write what you notice about the texture, shape and temperature of the food.

Take a bite of the food in front of you and roll the food around your mouth with your tongue before chewing. Notice how your senses of taste, touch and smell are working together and write down what they are telling you about the food.

Lastly, as you bite into the food, notice what you hear. What sounds are heard?

Do you want to learn more? Are you interested in building healthy eating habits using mindful practices? Please visit the website for Nicole Merryman Nutrition at <https://www.nicolemnutrition.com/> and **schedule your free 30-minute discovery call now!**

My name is Nicole Merryman and I am a registered dietitian with an online private practice based in California, where I provide virtual, one-on-one nutrition consulting. My goal is to help people ditch the dieting mentality for nourishment rooted in mindful eating and a healthy relationship with food. In my practice, I take a personalized approach in order to help others develop a healthy lifestyle with their unique needs and preferences in mind.

At Nicole Merryman Nutrition, my mission is to help adults who feel frustrated with restrictive dieting methods by teaching them simple, mindful and sustainable practices that can help them achieve their health and wellness goals while celebrating food.

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