



# MINDFUL EATING

## A Beginner's Guide

## A beginner's guide to mindful eating (and how it can help)

Eating food is a vital, natural and gratifying activity for keeping hunger pangs at bay. It nourishes your body with nutrients and can provide social and spiritual wellbeing. Yet in our calorie-rich, diet-obsessed world, eating food is often full of angst and guilt.

We tend to put food into our mouths out of habit - almost unconsciously. Mindful eating encourages you to pay attention to and respond to your body's signals - *not* your emotional triggers. You start to notice why you feel like eating in the first place. You tune into your thoughts and feelings and become more aware of the sensations.

Instead of reacting mindlessly to triggers, a mindful approach enables you to break habits that no longer serve you – creating space between your triggers and your actions – giving you time to choose how to respond.

### The next time you reach for a snack:

#### **Stop**

Take a deep breath and shift your attention towards your body. Ask yourself: Am I hungry/full/neither? Take a moment to connect with how you really feel.

#### **Choose**

From a place of kindness and self-care. There is no right or wrong answer. If you decide to eat, consider your options. Notice what foods your senses are drawn to: Cold or hot? Sweet or savoury? Crunchy or smooth?

#### **Enjoy**

Bring your full awareness to your food. Notice the rainbow of colours, the combination of aromas, the medley of flavours and textures. If you find your mind wandering, gently bring your attention back to the experience of eating - staying with the taste and noticing each bite will help you know when you've had enough.

#### **Reflect & Adjust**

How do you feel after eating? Bloating, sleepy, hungry again after 30 minutes or energetic, alert and pleasantly full even 2 hours later? Experiment with different foods to find a combination that works for you.

Mindful eating is an effective tool for fostering a positive relationship with food and unlocking the secret to longer term weight management and a healthier lifestyle.

To work *with* your body and make wise lifestyle choices visit: [www.nutritioninthemind.com](http://www.nutritioninthemind.com)

Elena Rayner-Melnikova is Public Health Nutritionist in the U.K. with a passion for psychology and neuroscience. Nutrition in the Mind is where she blends evidence from these fields with her mission to help yo-yo dieters find lasting change. By bringing awareness to *why* we eat and how the brain works, Elena's work in the world inspires time-starved mums to keep off the pounds and find more energy – without dieting, guilt or depriving themselves.

\*The information provided is not a substitute for medical care. If you have, or suspect you have, a health problem, you should always consult with a licensed healthcare professional.