



MINDFULLY MANAGING YOUR HUNGER

When we work from home, we are never very far away from the refrigerator. This can be challenging because we may be tempted to go looking for food whenever we need a break or a distraction. On the flipside we may get so engrossed in our work that we forget to eat. If you've experienced either of these scenarios, checking in with your hunger throughout the day can help you stay on track.

Keys to Managing your Hunger:

1. Pay attention to your physical hunger cues

If you find yourself making frequent trips to the kitchen and staring longingly into the pantry or fridge, pause and check-in with your body to see if you are physically hungry. When physically hungry, many people notice an emptiness or growling in their stomach, weakness, low energy, headache, or a willingness to eat just about anything to feel better (You can try the apple test – Are you hungry enough to eat an apple or are you just experiencing a craving?)

2. Identify your reasons for eating

If you are not physically hungry, try to identify what is causing your desire to eat. Are you stressed, lonely, frustrated, angry, bored, or tired? Are you looking for a reward or a pick-me-up? There are a whole host of emotions and needs that may cause the desire to eat. Once you identify the reason behind the desire, figure out how you can best meet that need. Do you need to take a walk, call a friend, spend time meditating, get more sleep, etc. While food may help us feel better temporarily, it is never a long-term solution to our emotional struggles.

If eating is a result of habit or sensory triggers, try setting up your workspace as far away from the kitchen as possible. Keep foods that you are trying to limit out of sight, ideally don't even bring them into your home. Begin to identify habit patterns that you may want to change such as mindlessly munching at the computer or during your favorite show.

3. Eat mindfully without judgement

If you are not physically hungry but decide to eat anyways, try taking a small portion of food, sit down at the table and eat it slowly and mindfully. Don't judge yourself for eating despite not being hungry. We all do this from time to time! See if you can stay connected to your body and how the food tastes and makes you feel. Does the flavor and enjoyment of the food decline the more you eat? Perhaps you will not need to eat your next meal until later than usual. For more information about mindful eating check out this article:

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/diets/mindful-eating.htm>

4. Avoid skipping meals

If you tend to work so intently that you forget to eat, you may want to set reminders to check in with your hunger periodically to see if you need to eat. Skipping meals can leave you depleted of energy and less productive during the workday. When you finally get around to eating, you may be too hungry to put together a healthy meal and may overeat or even binge as a result.