



# Mindful Eating Challenge



## CHALLENGE DESCRIPTION:

In today's digital world, we often eat with one hand around our fork and the other around our phone. This Mindful Eating Challenge encourages you to put away your electronics and **really engage with your food** – bite by bite. Can you think of a time where you've sat down to watch a show or scrolled on your phone while finishing your food and then realized you didn't taste or enjoy what you ate? This is mindless eating.

**Mindful eating** is:

- Eating with intention and attention
- Being fully present when eating, whether it is a snack or a meal
- How you appreciate nourishment and unique eating experiences.

Embrace this opportunity to reconnect with the simple joy of eating mindfully and see how it transforms your relationship with food, improves your digestion and enhances your overall well-being. For the next 7-days, enjoy electronic-free mealtimes by engaging in **mindful eating habits** listed below:

## HOW TO PRACTICE MINDFUL EATING

### Begin with a shopping list

To begin this challenge, set some time aside to brainstorm a meal plan for the next 5 days. Think of recipes you love to make or sound exciting to try. Especially focus on whole ingredients and limit processed foods and ready-made meals. If you're going to eat without distractions, it may as well be food you really enjoy eating!

When you're at the grocery store, avoid impulse buying and stick to your pre-planned list. Try to fill your cart in the produce section and skip the centre aisles which are full of processed options. Ask yourself **these questions** when you are evaluating your choices:

- What do I want? (What is it that I really want to eat?)
- What do I need? (Do I need to consider health conditions?)
- What do I have? (What kind of variety can I have to choose from?)

# MINDFUL EATING

## Eat regularly throughout the day

Try to set aside regular meal and snack times so you never come to the table overly hungry. It's good to bring your appetite but if you're starving it's easy to eat quickly and not actually enjoy the food in front of you. Consider **how hungry you are** before eating:

1. I am starving and feel weak.
2. I am very hungry and maybe feel cranky.
3. I feel hunger pangs.
4. I feel slightly hungry and know that I am about to be hungry.
5. I am comfortable. I could or could not eat and still feel ok.

Try to begin your meal before you have hunger pangs as it will be easier to be conscious of what you are eating and how much.

## Sit at the table

It's easy to get into a pattern of eating in front of the TV. For this device-free challenge, try sitting at the table to avoid the distraction of household electronics.

## Bring all your senses to the meal

Food is meant to be enjoyed, not just the taste, but the smell, look and texture are all an important part of the experience. As you chew your food, try identifying all the ingredients, even the seasonings! Take your time and use **your 5 senses**:

- **Sight:** How does it look on the plate
- **Sound:** What does it sound like as you chew it?
- **Scent:** How does it smell?
- **Touch:** What is its texture? How does it feel in your mouth? In your hand?
- **Taste:** What is its flavour? Does it taste like anything else?

## Take small bites

Try to put your utensils down in-between each bite, this will slow down the eating process and help you better enjoy your food. This also gives your stomach time to register when it's full and signal to your brain that you've had enough to eat. Eating large bites, quickly can lead to overeating and may result in bloating, gas, and abdominal discomfort.

# MINDFUL EATING

External cues, like an empty plate, may not match what our body needs. Taking small bites and pausing a few times as you eat will help give yourself a chance to reflect on **how full you feel**:

- 1. I feel mostly satisfied but could eat a little more.
- 2. I am completely satisfied.
- 3. I am full and uncomfortable.
- 4. I am too full and very uncomfortable.
- 5. I feel sick I am so full. I feel nauseous and might even vomit.

Trying ending your meal before you are full and uncomfortable and give your brain time to register that you have had enough.

## Chew thoroughly

Chewing is the first step of the digestive process and should not be overlooked. It's important to thoroughly chew each bite to support a healthy gut.

## THE CHALLENGE

Mark off each day once you have followed at least one mindful eating habit for a meal. It may not be possible to always follow a set schedule or take the time needed for a proper meal, but the more often these habits are practiced, the more they will become part of your routine.

### Your 1-Week Challenge

DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6	DAY 7

## CHALLENGE COMPLETE!

No matter if you were able to practice mindful eating at each meal or just follow one step each day, congrats on taking this step towards eating with intention and transforming your relationship with food!



# Congratulations on completing the **Mindful Eating** Challenge

The journey of wellness is ongoing, and each step, no matter how small, is a victory to be celebrated. Keep pushing forward, embracing each day as an opportunity to live your best life.

