

5 Steps Toward Living a Diet Free Life
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End the Dieting Cycle and Finally Feel Good About Yourself

1. Eat Three Meals a Day or Eat when you are hungry and stop when you are full.

Eating 3 meals a day is recommended if you tend to overeat or don't allow yourself to experience being hungry. This technique helps you to put boundaries around eating and help you to feel less out of control with food. If you are able to allow yourself to experience hunger, try only eating when you feel hungry. Monitor when you feel full so you can begin to stop eating before you experience fullness. Hint: If you think of hunger on a scale of 1-10 (1=extremely hungry and 10=stuffed), you should eat when you are at a 3 and stop eating at a 7-8. It is okay to feel your tummy growl; see if you will allow yourself to experience this. Notice that you enjoy your food more when you are hungry. As well, avoid being too full; the uncomfortable feeling in our tummy when you have eaten too much (notice the discomfort increases as you go up the scale). At first, you may need to play with this a bit. Write down where you are on the scale when you eat and where you are when you stop eating. For an added bonus, write down what you feel before you eat and what you feel after you eat. After some time of keeping track of this, see if you notice any patterns.

2. Eat what you want. Eat what you love. No more 'diet' food.

Although this goes against what we are told, this step is very important. Throw out all the rules you have heard or tried to live by. Food is not the enemy. The rules and "shoulds" are what hurt us. By eating what you want, you will begin to learn what your body wants, rather than what your emotions want. You will begin to feel freedom from food because you will start to *know* that you *can* have what you want (and you give it to yourself). Thus, the desire for your favorite foods (your binge foods) will naturally decrease.

3. Avoid Distractions; Taste your food.

If you don't slow down to taste your food, you will not feel the satisfaction offered by the food, and you might run the risk of eating more than you need. When you eat (and you are eating what you love) enjoy it, taste it, eat it slowly, feel it in your mouth, smile at how delicious it is. Notice the satisfaction you feel, in this moment, and probably for hours afterward.

4. Put on your plate only what you will eat and don't eat while you're preparing food.

Particularly if you tend to overeat, notice how much you eat before you even start your meal. If you are unconscious about eating, you will consume more than your body wants or needs. This is also a great way to confront how much you really are eating versus how much food your body really needs. In addition, put your fork down with a little food left on your plate.

5. Stop weighing yourself; Throw your scale away.

Ever notice how a number on a scale can either make your day or completely ruin it. You are NOT your weight. You are so much more than that! By weighing yourself and determining how good you are by how much you weigh, you undermine yourself. When you stop using a scale to tell you how you should feel about yourself, you give yourself a chance to be who you really are.

Your relationship with food is a reflection of your relationship with yourself. If you find the above steps difficult to follow, or the thought of taking them scares you, consider seeking counseling. You may be using food to manage your emotions, not your weight. Counseling can help you discover what you are really craving so you can feel happy both inside and out.