Lose Weight Without Feeling Hungry

We’ll help you get back in touch with your body’s signals and also offer hunger-busting strategies so you can lose weight and still feel satisfied!
Sure, you may need to eat less to lose weight, but cutting too drastically will only trigger the hunger response. Walking around hungry most of the day is definitely not acceptable, and, not surprisingly, it could make you ditch your weight-loss effort altogether.

That’s why it’s so important to stay within your calorie sweet spot (as described in Session 1), a level that promotes weight-loss without triggering major hunger pangs. Minor hunger pangs, however, are normal in the first few weeks of cutting calories—that means you’re in the weight-loss zone. The good news: Around week three or four they subside. But if you find that you’re feeling cranky or irritable or ravenous during the day, it could be that you’re not eating enough calories (see “Padding Your Plan” on page 13 of the Real Foods Nutrition Guide and check in with your coach). Or it may be that you’re not eating the right types of foods, particularly those that quell your appetite.

That said, it’s important to differentiate true hunger from other urges that drive you to eat, and truth be told, that’s not always easy. As strange as this may sound, you may not be tuned into your body enough to even know what real, physiological hunger feels like. That happens when you’ve been dieting, overeating or bingeing. But if you can learn how to tap into your hunger—and fullness—signals, you’ll have conquered about 90 percent of the battle of the bulge.

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The Hunger Rx

Here are ways to stay satisfied (and happy) while on the Real Appeal plan.

1. Don’t go too long without eating.
   Perhaps you ignore the beginning signs of hunger because you are busy hustling from one errand to another, or maybe you don’t experience the signals clearly because you are distracted with back-to-back meetings or rushed carpool rides with the kids. Or, you may think you’ll lose more weight if you skip meals. (So not true! When you do start eating, you’re ravenous, and that often leads to a loss of control and overeating.)

   To keep appetite in check, set an eating schedule, using the box in your Commitment Contract at the end of this session. Try to stick to your eating schedule every day. Your online food tracker will automatically input the time of day each meal or snack is consumed. See how closely you are following your eating schedule no matter what method of tracking you are using. Following your schedule should help to keep hunger at bay. If it’s not, work with your coach to make necessary adjustments.

2. Tune into your body’s natural hunger and fullness signals.
   You were born knowing what hunger felt like. As a baby, you cried when you were hungry and drank just until you were full. But now, you may not always clearly recognize hunger symptoms, such as a growling stomach or light-headedness (the latter means you’ve really waited too long to eat).

   Why? It could be that you eat too often and never let yourself get even a little bit hungry. Perhaps because you’re an emotional eater (more on this in session 5) or your workdays are filled with edible temptations, like the office candy jar or one client meal after the next. Another possible culprit: too little sleep (more on this in session 11), which can mess with appetite and fullness hormones so you overeat. The end result: You rarely experience actual hunger signals.

   To get back in touch with your body’s cues, follow the eating schedule you’ll create for yourself in the Commitment Contract and use the Real Appeal Hunger Scale (page 71) to tune into whether or not you are really due for some food.
3 Eat more appetite-quelling foods.

What satisfies appetite better?

| 250 calories of Steel Cut Oatmeal | 250 calories of “O-shaped” cereal |

The winner: Steel Cut Oatmeal.

While there’s nothing wrong with those little O’s you’ve been eating since you were a kid, calorie for calorie, a bowl won’t keep hunger in check as long as the oats. That’s because steel cut oatmeal is what nutrition experts call a “high-satiety” (pronounced: sa-TIE-a-tee) food, meaning it tends to keep you feeling “satiated” (pronounced: SAY-she-a-ted)—satisfied and hunger-free—for longer than if you’d eaten the same amount of calories of most other foods.

Satiating is different from filling. You might feel full after eating a bunch of cookies, but an hour later, you’re hungry again. The cookies just aren’t able to sustain that full feeling for very long.

The “Real Meals” in your Real Foods Nutrition Guide are designed to be satiating. Enjoy them, or, if you’re making your own meals, follow the Foods with Staying Power (page 74) guidelines, the Balanced Meal Formula from the previous session, and use your Perfect Portion Plate to create filling but calorie-appropriate meals.

The Real Appeal Hunger Scale

Eating when you’re hungry and stopping before you get too full can make all the difference in the world to your waistline. But how often do you actually do this? To get back into this healthy habit, you’ll be using a very powerful tool: The Real Appeal Hunger Scale.

It’s a snap: Before you begin eating, rate your hunger level using the scale below. Fill in the “hunger number” in your online tracker. When you’re finished eating, record your hunger level again.

1. Crazy with hunger.
   It’s been way too long since you last ate—your stomach has been empty for a long time. As a result, you might feel light-headed, irritable and maybe even weak. All you can think about is getting something in your stomach!

2. Hungry.
   You can still function pretty well—no weakness, and probably no irritability yet, but your stomach feels empty and is probably starting to growl. It’s time to eat.

3. Neither hungry or full.
   Your stomach feels neither empty nor full. You don’t need to eat for a while.

4. Satisfied.
   You’re at that nice stage in which you feel a little full—your stomach has food in it and you’re pleasantly full.

5. Too full
   You should have stopped a few (or many) mouthfuls ago because now you’re feeling too full. It’s uncomfortable—in fact, it might feel good to undo the first button of your pants.

When to start eating: Aim to eat when you’re at a level “2.” At this stage, your body is signaling that it needs fuel. You don’t want to wait much longer because you’re more likely to overdo it when you reach a “1.”

When to stop eating: Try to pause throughout the meal to gauge your hunger level so you can stop eating before you get too full. Once you hit a “4,” put down your fork. At this level, you’re comfortably full, but not stuffed.

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Meals that Manage Hunger

What makes a food or meal satisfying, and not just as you’re eating, but for hours afterwards? Drumroll please... it’s not just about the calories—it also has to do with having the right combination of macronutrients (carbohydrates, fat and protein are the three main macronutrients, the components of a food that provide calories). In session 3, you learned how to strike the right macronutrient balance on your plate. Here’s why that combo is so satiating.

Protein
It’s the most appetite-controlling of all the macronutrients. When you digest chicken, fish or other types of protein, your body breaks down the nutrient into building blocks called amino acids, which trigger the release of appetite-suppressing hormones and other substances in your gut (intestines) and brain.

In fact, protein is such a powerful appetite-suppressor that you’ll want to include it in every meal (and, if possible, in most snacks).

How much to eat? About 3 to 6 ounces of lean meat, skinless poultry, tofu, fish or other seafood per meal or 2 ounces of cheese, or 2 eggs or 3 egg whites. Those are the most concentrated sources of protein. At breakfast, a cup of nonfat or one percent milk or soymilk or plain nonfat or low-fat yogurt also works. All the meals in the Real Foods Nutrition Guide contain the proper amount of protein to leave you feeling full and satisfied while helping to feed that fat-burning lean muscle you’re building through exercise. So, try to start incorporating some of those meals into your daily plan, if you haven’t already done so.

Keep in mind, there’s no need to go overboard on protein. In fact, excessive amounts of it are converted to fat by the body. And if you have a kidney disorder, too much protein can cause further damage. Plus, high-protein diets are often low in filling fiber because they typically exclude whole grains.

Carbohydrates
Some high-carb foods have the power to keep you feeling fuller for longer, while others are downright un-satiating. The main difference: fiber. Fiber—or “roughage”—is found in whole, unrefined high-carb foods such as whole grains, legumes, fruits and vegetables. These foods suppress appetite because they:

• Stretch your stomach (in a good way!). Have you ever eaten a big salad or a lot of watermelon and felt really full? That’s because the fiber in fruit and vegetables causes your stomach to stretch and send a signal to the brain to stop eating. This is a smart way to satisfy because fruit and vegetables are relatively low in calories.

• Slow the rate at which your stomach empties. Soluble fiber—the main type in vegetables, legumes, oats, and barley—thickens into a gel-like substance in your gut, which slows down stomach emptying, making you feel fuller for longer.

• Slow down the conversion of starches, a type of carbohydrate in certain foods, to blood sugar. A brief digestion lesson: After you eat bread, potatoes or another starchy food, enzymes in your stomach and gut get to work breaking down starches into sugar (aka glucose). That’s a quick task when it’s white flour or white rice—the body digests it easily, blood sugar rises speedily, and in some cases, it later plummets, leaving you feeling hungry shortly after eating. The thick fiber layer in foods like whole grains, legumes and sweet potatoes, on the other hand, sets up a tough barrier that takes your enzymes some time to penetrate. Thus, you’ll get a slower rise in blood sugar, and stay satisfied longer. This is why steel cut oats (thick, more intact form of the grain) tend to be more satisfying than “O-shaped” cereal (made from finely ground oats).

Fat
Even just the taste of fat in your mouth can trigger the release of appetite-suppressing hormones, as does the presence of fat in your intestines, after you eat and absorb it. But beware: If you eat a very high-fat diet, your body can lose its sensitivity to the nutrient. You’ll get a healthy helping of fat if you stick to the amount recommended in Balanced Meal Formula (in session 3): About 1 to 2 teaspoons of oil, a few tablespoons of nuts or a few slices of avocado at each meal.
Foods with Staying Power

Think big
The bigger and more intact the grain (brown rice versus whole wheat flour), the more satiating it is. These carbs take longer to digest, slowing and shortening the rise in blood sugar.

Get your fruit fix
All fruits offer a two-for-one benefit: They’re high in fiber and low in calories, so enjoy!

Go for it!
Because vegetables help fill you up and cost you few calories, you can—and should—pile them on. Just don’t fry them or drench them in fatty sauces.

Be picky with protein
Protein is the most filling macronutrient. To keep calories in check, stick with leaner types, including skinless chicken or turkey, fish, shrimp and other shellfish.

Don’t forget the fat
Adding a little fat to the meal increases satisfaction. The healthiest types: avocado, olive oil, nuts, and seeds. Almonds, peanuts, walnut, and other nuts have been shown to be particularly satiating.

Love your legumes
Black, white, kidney and other beans—as well as lentils—are high in fiber and protein, making them super-satiating carbs.

Make it whole
Barley, oats, whole wheat, rye, brown rice, corn and other whole grains are more satiating than refined white flour and sugary foods. The fiber in whole grains expands in your gut, which makes you feel fuller.

For more guidance on just how much fat, protein and carbs to put on your plate, flip back to the “What’s a Serving?” chart on page 48.
I’ll listen to my body's hunger and fullness signal

Commitment Contract

I’ll eat when I’m reasonably hungry and stop when I’m slightly full.

Learning to eat by my body’s hunger and fullness signals is key to my weight-loss success. To help tune into these cues, I will:

☐ Set a meal schedule and follow it as closely as I can, asking my coach for assistance if needed.

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☐ Use the Hunger Scale in my RealAppeal.com food tracker.

☐ Aim to start each meal or snack at a 2 on the Real Appeal Hunger Scale and end at a 4.

☐ Eat more filling meals, which include protein, fat and high-fiber carbohydrates, using my Perfect Portion Plate, the Balanced Meal Formula in session 3, and Real Appeal meals and recipes as helpful tools and guides.

☐ Meanwhile, I’ll continue my other healthy habits to the best of my ability.

☐ It’s time for my monthly check in! I will take my Week 4 photo, track my weight, BMI, and assess my progress using the Real Snapshot overview on RealAppeal.com.

My signature: ______________________________