



Conquer Cravings and Tackle Emotional Eating

In this session, we'll help you identify why you crave certain foods and help you gain back control over your eating. You'll not only see results on the scale, but you'll feel a whole lot better about yourself in the process.



Escape from the Clutches of Cravings

After using the Hunger Scale for the past week, you've probably noticed that you don't always eat when you're hungry. In fact, you might still feel full when suddenly you're hit with a craving for chocolate, chips or another less-than-stellar snack. Or, maybe it's not so specific; you find yourself wandering back to the kitchen, opening up the fridge and rooting around aimlessly for something to eat.

Don't Worry— You're Not Alone.

Everyone occasionally eats when they're not hungry (ever wonder why there always seems to be “room” for dessert?). It becomes a problem only when you can't seem to control your cravings and splurges—and instead, they're controlling you. If this is the case for you, you could easily wind up blowing right by your daily calorie “**sweet spot.**”

You've been thinking about—OK, obsessing over—pizza for a day or two, so you finally “cave.” You pass a Godiva store, your mouth starts watering, and all of a sudden you *must* have chocolate.

When you're not actually hungry but have a powerful drive to eat a particular food—that's a craving. What prompts these seemingly irresistible urges? It could be emotional eating—when you're bored, stressed or lonely, a chocolate bar, cookie or bag of chips can give you a temporary lift. (You'll find more information on emotional eating on page 87.)

It may also have something to do with hormones—pre-menstrual cravings are well documented—or your particular brain chemistry, which makes it harder to resist certain foods. A lot of times, environmental cues trigger cravings; just think of how your mouth waters when you spot those leftover pastries in the conference room or get a whiff of the Cinnabon store as you enter the mall. It doesn't help that modern food manufacturing churns out chips, candy and other foods to be as tempting as possible.



The good news is you can take back control.

That way, you won't just slim down and stay on track, but you'll also get a healthy dose of self-esteem and reclaim the chunk of your life you were spending obsessing about food



Are You a Junk Food Junkie?



Back in the Stone Ages, our caveman ancestors actually had to worry about getting *enough* calories. They sought out foods like meat, fruits, berries and nuts that would sustain them. That's where our five tastes developed: sweet, sour, salty bitter (this taste helped us avoid poisonous plants) and "umami" which is the taste for meat and other savory foods.

Fast forward to today: Our tastes have remained the same, but we're now surrounded by foods that contain not just one—but often three or more—of these tastes, including cookies, candy, chips, French fries and pizza. Not surprisingly, these foods are often really high in calories as well.

To a caveman, a few ripe berries were considered a sweet treat. Now, we can grab a strawberry milk shake with 20 times the sugar, loads of fat, and artificial strawberry flavors to boot. These hyped-up flavors act on the pleasure centers in our brains the way a plain strawberry never could—some experts believe they spike levels of pleasure-inducing brain chemicals, much like drugs and alcohol do. One theory is that eating a lot of junk food actually changes the brain, so that it takes more and more high-sugar, -salt and -fat foods to produce the same pleasure sensation you used to get from a moderate amount. It's also possible that some people are born with a "flatter" brain chemical response to food, so they must eat more to get that same "high."

Whether you call it an intense craving or addiction, the result is the same—overeating, overweight, and feeling out of control. It's our survival mechanism gone wild! Fortunately, you can break the cycle, and we'll show you how.

This week, try out each of the following four techniques to battle cravings and see which combination works best for you. Each time you seize control and don't give in, you become a little more empowered and it becomes a little easier the next time. **After a while, the high you get from feeling in control becomes more rewarding than the chips, chocolate or other craved food.**

Four techniques to resist cravings

1 Delay and Distract

When the urge comes on, set a timer for 5 minutes and during that time, do two things. First, try to figure out what's going on emotionally and record it in the Notes section of your RealAppeal.com dashboard. Next, distract yourself with a non-food replacement (see Non-Food Fixes for Cravings on the next page). Just a few minutes might be enough to change your cravings course.

2 Ride the Wave

If distraction isn't working—the cravings persist, or even become more frequent—do just the opposite and "experience" the craving without giving into it. When a craving strikes, try these three steps.

Remind yourself why you want to stop giving into cravings; why you want to lose weight. Go to your Goals & Motivation page (either online or at the back of this guide) to review your personal motivators.

Accept the craving without judgment. Remind yourself that while you didn't choose to have this craving, you can choose how to react to it. Cravings rise and fall, like waves in the sea. Ride that wave, but don't get engulfed in it.

Mentally step back from the urge.

When you see it from a distance, you'll recognize that a) it's temporary, and b) yes, you will survive if you don't eat the craved food.

3 Get Off the Clock

If you always have chocolate around 3 p.m., it's no wonder a craving strikes at just about that time every day. If you're taking in more than 1,350 daily calories it's OK to have a daily treat (which, of course, you account for in your daily calories). Just don't have it at the same time or in the same place.

4 Call in a Substitute

If you crave potato chips, French fries, milk shakes, chocolate chip cookies and other foods with lots of sugar, fat, or salt (or all of the above), try to switch to foods that are lower in these hard-to-resist components, such as fruit, or the smoothies and treats in your Real Foods Nutrition Guide (like Hot Chocolate, page 120).

While these foods may not be as good as the real thing at first, if you stick with it, (just give it a week!), your taste buds will adapt. Soon, foods you used to crave will seem too salty, too sweet and too greasy.

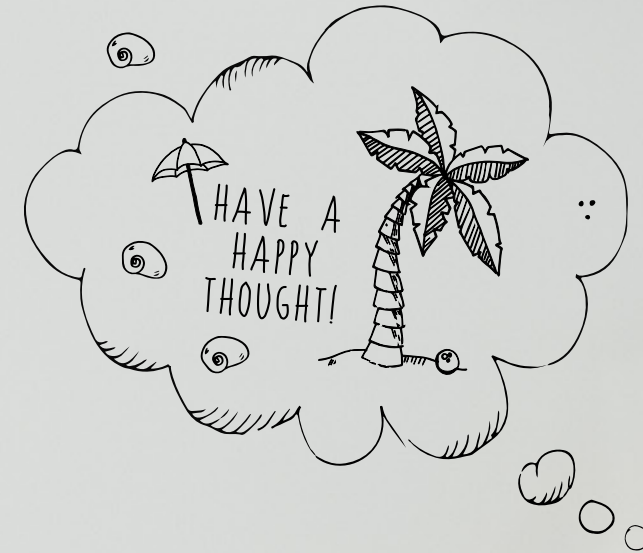


Non-Food Fixes for Cravings

Food soothes and comforts us, but so do other things that won't pack on the pounds. It may take practice before these non-food replacements work as well as food, so keep doing them.

1. Replace the mental image of the food you're craving with a non-food one (that perfect beach, mountain-top view or garden vista).
2. Go for a walk—even if it's just around the block.
3. Call or email your coach or a friend.
4. Read a book, magazine or blog about healthy living.
5. Do something that keeps your hands and your head busy, like a Sudoku or crossword puzzle.
6. Plan your next vacation.
7. Organize your digital photos into an online photo album to share with family and friends.
8. Listen to your favorite music—maybe even do a little dance (no one's watching!).
9. Take a play break with your child or pet.
10. Meditations; download free 5-minute meditations for your smartphone.
11. Brush your teeth or suck on a peppermint—the smell and taste of mint is an effective appetite suppressant.
12. Take a bath or shower; add candles to enhance your relaxation.
13. Review your personal goals... to lose weight, look better, get healthier.

Add your own:



Emotional Eating

Cravings may be the result of your brain chemistry or the way foods are formulated which makes them particularly crave-worthy. But there's an even better chance that you're eating to feed a feeling instead of a growling stomach. When you're feeling stressed, do you hit up the vending machine or raid the office candy stash? When you're depressed, lonely or bored, what do you do? Turn to food to soothe and comfort yourself? You may even reach for food when you're experiencing positive emotions, such as excitement and joy, as a way to celebrate.

Emotional eating—using food to cope with boredom, loneliness, anger, grief, stress and other emotions—can make it extremely difficult to lose weight.

Even if you're eating “perfect healthy” meals and snacks and consistently exercising, your weight loss may come to a standstill if you end up taking in hundreds of extra calories because of emotional eating.

In fact, when you look at weight-loss studies, it's the emotional eaters who wind up gaining the weight back, while those who don't do much emotional eating tend to maintain their weight loss.



“Let's be real”

A little emotional eating is totally normal, and usually won't cause you to pack on pounds. But when it crosses a line—for instance, you just can't resist using food to deal with life—then you know it's time to get a handle on it.



Quiz

Are You an Emotional Eater?

Take this quick 10-question quiz* to find out:

1 Do you feel like the scale has power over you and your mood?

- Never Sometimes
- Generally Always

2 Do you crave specific foods, like chocolate or pizza?

- Never Sometimes
- Generally Always

3 Is it hard for you to stop eating certain sweet foods, especially chocolate?

- Never Sometimes
- Generally Always

4 Do you have trouble controlling how much you eat of certain foods?

- Never Sometimes
- Generally Always

5 Do you eat when you're stressed, angry or bored?

- Never Sometimes
- Generally Always

6 Do you eat more of your favorite foods and with less control when you're alone?

- Never Sometimes
- Generally Always

7 Do you feel guilty when you eat certain foods, like sweets or snacks?

- Never Sometimes
- Generally Always

8 Do you feel less in control of your eating when you're tired (for example in the evenings, after a long day)?

- Never Sometimes
- Generally Always

9 When you overeat, do you give up on your diet and start eating out of control (fattening foods, in particular)?

- Never Sometimes
- Generally Always

10 How often do you feel that food controls you, instead of the other way around?

- Never Sometimes
- Generally Always

* Quiz developed by M. Garaulet et al, University of Murcia, Spain.

Scoring

Give yourself:

- 0 points for each "never"
- 1 point for each "sometimes"
- 2 points for each "generally"
- 3 points for each "always"

Score



Between 0-5

You're not an emotional eater. Your emotions have little to nothing to do with your eating behavior. You eat only when you feel hungry, regardless of external factors or your emotions.



Between 6-10

You're an occasional emotional eater. You don't typically use food to solve your problems, however, there are certain foods that may have some power over you.



Between 11-20

You're an emotional eater. To some extent, your emotions influence your diet—your feelings and your moods often determine how much and what you eat.



Between 21-30

You have a significant emotional eating problem. Your feelings and emotions constantly revolve around food. If you're not careful, food will control your life.

If you scored 11 or higher, the tips in this session will help break your emotional eating patterns. Even if you scored 10 or lower, you may still want to check out some of these techniques; they may come in handy in certain situations. Note: you can also take this quiz on RealAppeal.com.

Getting Zen

The Art of Mindful Eating

In short, it involves paying attention to what goes in your mouth as well as what's going on in your mind and body. It forces you to stop and think about the WHAT and WHY you're eating, which can help pinpoint emotional eating patterns. When you fully experience your meal, it tends to be more satisfying and you're more likely to stick to appropriate portions.

Becoming a more mindful eater will help you become a slimmer and more satisfied eater.

A great tool to help put the brakes on emotional eating is “mindful eating.” You may have already heard a lot about it, **but what does “mindful eating” really mean?**



real tips

Try these strategies to mind your meals.

- 1 Look away from your computer or TV, get off the phone, disengage from other distractions. Do this *before* you take your first bite or sip.
- 2 Ask yourself: “**Do I need this food now? Am I eating out of hunger?**” And if not, “**Why am I eating? Am I feeling stressed, bored, lonely, excited or could some other emotion be driving this?**” This week, record those feelings in the “Notes” section of your RealAppeal.com dashboard, and, meanwhile, also log your hunger ratings in your tracker. Together, they'll reveal how many times you eat when you're not hungry, and will help pinpoint emotional triggers.
- 3 Portion out an appropriate amount of a food or beverage and put the container away. (Wondering what's an appropriate portion? Your

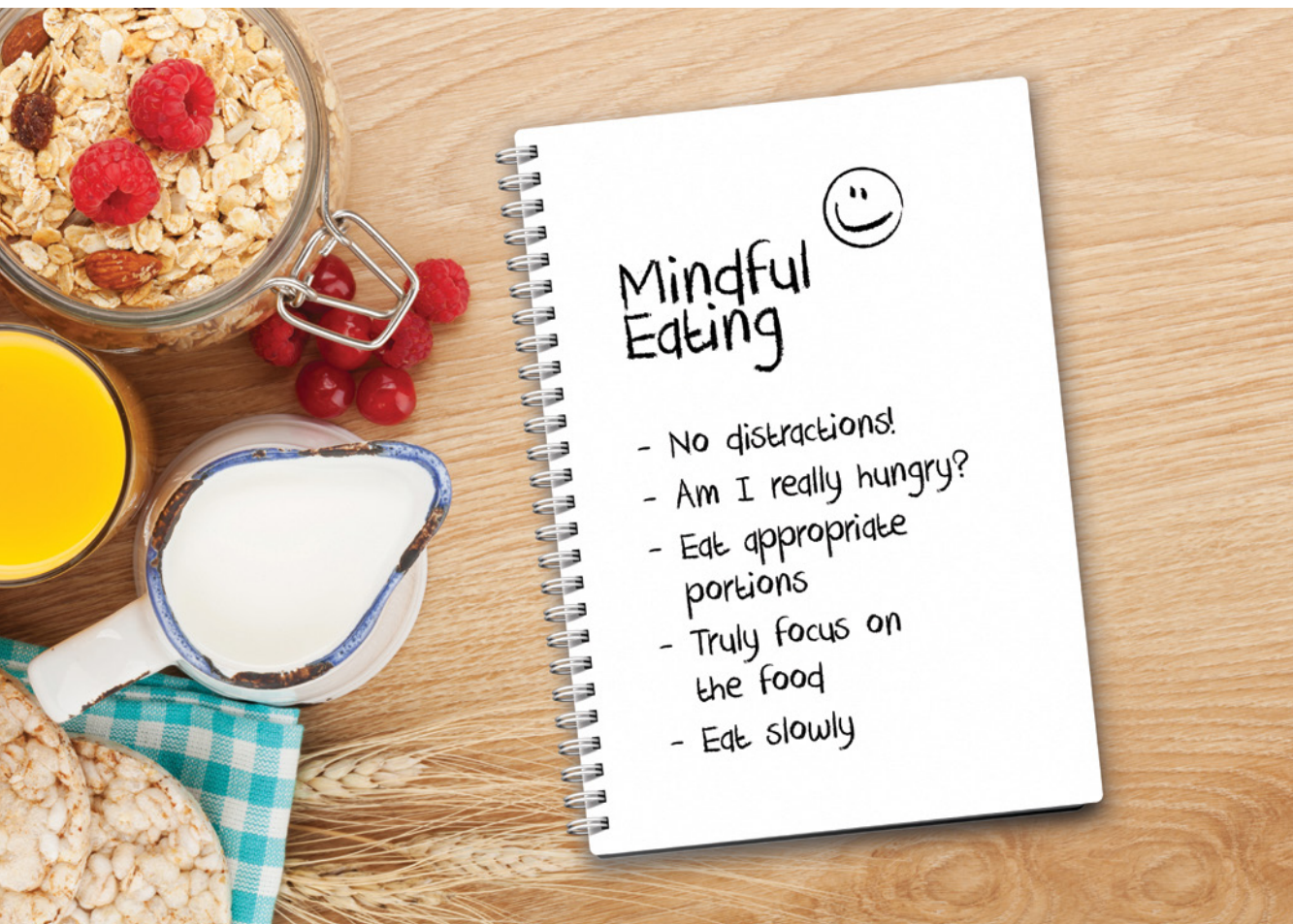


Perfect Portion Plate is a good guide; you can also refer to the “What's a Serving?” chart on page 48.) If you don't deliberately set aside a pre-portioned amount, it's just too easy to space out and keep grabbing handfuls or continue sipping.

4 Truly focus on the flavors, texture, consistency and aroma of your food and beverages.

5 Pace yourself. Eat slowly—try chewing your food 20 times before swallowing.

6 Note any reactions without judgment. Are you getting pleasure from the food? Or do you feel guilty or anxious? If it's the latter, is it because you're loading up on calories? Note: If you feel anxious and guilty even while eating appropriate portions, discuss these feelings with your coach.





*I will overcome
my cravings*



Commitment Contract

Overcoming emotional eating and cravings

Emotional eating and cravings may be contributing to my weight problem. To take control of these habits and get back control of my eating, I will:

- Use the **Notes section of my RealAppeal.com dashboard** to make connections between my emotions and my food intake.
- When a craving or the urge to eat for emotional reasons arises, I'll **set a timer for 5 minutes** and distract myself with one of the activities on page 84.
- To control cravings for treats at specific times, I'll **get out of the habit** of having a treat at a particular time or replace it with one of the Non-Food Fixes for Cravings on page 84.
- I'll start **replacing very high-sugar, -salt, and -fat treats** with foods that are lower in these ingredients. I'll look in my Real Food Guide for healthy shakes and snack recipes.
- I'll focus on becoming a **more mindful eater**, paying attention to what I eat, taking the time to savor my meals and observing my feelings about food without judgment.
- Meanwhile, I'll **continue my other healthy habits** (weighing in, tracking, eating meals from the Nutrition Guide, staying within my calorie range) to the best of my ability.

My signature: _____