

6 Ways to Stop Mindlessly Eating Yourself Out of Your Pants

Many of us have lived long enough to see trends in nutrition come and go ... and come back again. Snacking is one of them.

Back in the day, we were told not to snack in between meals. Then we were told that “grazing,” several small meals throughout the day, was better.

Now the pendulum is swinging back the other way, to not snacking so much.

The reason is simple: Snacking tends to cause weight gain. Snacking is often mindless eating, which means we really aren't paying much attention to what we are eating, and more importantly, how much we're eating, because we are often preoccupied with something else, such as television or work.

So while a good goal is to avoid snacking all together, it's perhaps unrealistic. A more practical guide might be how to snack wisely.

Dave Zinczenko, author of the new book *Eat It To Beat It*, shares his tips:

1. Don't in the morning. If you find yourself hungry in the morning that means your breakfast isn't doing its job. Eat something that will stick with you, such as healthy fat and protein.

2. When you snack, choose something colorful. No, not rainbow Skittles or peanut M&Ms. Usually, colorful foods tend to be vegetables or bright fruit ... such as red bell peppers, carrots, blueberries, and so on. Also, colorful foods add variety to your diet and you tend to be more aware of every

bite you take, thus cutting-down on mindless eating.

3. Make sure your snacks contain protein. Protein tends to cause us to feel fuller longer because it requires more energy to burn than carbs or fat. Check the grams of protein on your snacks and at the same time look for sugar content. Sometimes items with protein also contain too much sugar, in which case, you should choose something else.

4. Here's an interesting trick: eat your snacks with your less dominant hand. In other words, if you are right-handed, eat with your left hand. This gets back to our attempts to avoid mindless eating. When you are fully engaging your brain in eating, you will eat less. Eating with the opposite hand certainly engages your mind. If you don't believe me, try it!

5. When you snack, choose smaller plates and bowls. Instead of pouring the whole bag of chips in a giant serving bowl, just put a little bit in a small cereal bowl. That way your portion will be smaller, and you'll be amazed how full you feel after having only eating a fraction of what you normally eat. You won't even miss it!

6. Don't fall for the advertising hype on the labels of foods. Food manufacturers know that if they make something appear healthy you'll choose it, and research shows you'll eat more of it than something you think is unhealthy. Therefore, many foods that are actually unhealthy only SEEM healthy because of words like, "antioxidant" "low fat" "no trans fats" "low sugar" and so on.

Oftentimes these are gimmicks that are either not true, or if they are true, are low in whatever bad ingredient they're advertising, but very high in something else. For instance, many food items advertise the fact that they're low fat, but don't tell you about the fact that they make up for the fat with extra sugar.

In short, remember that in today's world we must be

discriminating about what we eat, how much and when.

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