



Intuitive Eating

Creating a healthy relationship with Food, Mind and the Body

What is Intuitive Eating?

Intuitive Eating is about becoming more attuned to your body's *natural hunger and fullness signals*. It is learning how to distinguish between physical feelings (hunger pangs, nausea, headache, or difficulty concentrating) and emotional feelings (disappointed, anger, sadness and anxious).

PHYSICAL hunger	EMOTIONAL hunger
Below the neck	Above the neck
Occurs several hours after a meal	Unrelated to time
Goes away when full	Persists despite fullness
Eating leads to a feeling of satisfaction	Eating leads to guilt and shame

In other words, Intuitive Eating is about gaining a deeper understanding of your body and responding to its internal



cues. However, this inner wisdom (that we are born with) is often clouded by years of dieting and food myths. Intuitive eating believes that this non diet approach is a more effective way to attain a healthy weight, rather than keeping track of calories in foods.

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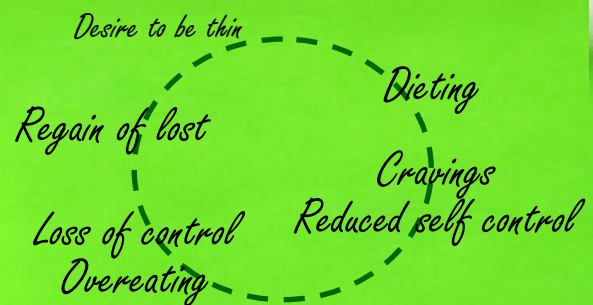
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The dieter's dilemma

The inherent concept of dieting is problematic. The dieter's dilemma is triggered by a desire to be *thin*. This leads to getting on a diet, which is only feasible for a limited period of time. After a while, the dieter will increase cravings and urges for food which ultimately leads to the dieter giving in to the cravings, overeats and eventually regains any weight lost. At this point, the dieter may be at a higher weight than where they started! This then comes full circle with the dieter again, wanting to be thin. This was first explained by psychologists John Foreyt and G.Ken Goodrick.



How do I learn to be an Intuitive Eater?



"Don't step on it... It makes you cry"

The initial step to begin your journey is to experience a paradigm shift. A paradigm as defined by Stephen Covey, author of the best selling book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, is "a model or frame of reference by which we perceive and understand the world". In relation to weight management, a paradigm shift rejects the ideals of dieting while embraces the concepts of mindful eating; only then can we be more attuned with our internal cues and develop a healthy relationship with food and our bodies. Need a little more persuasion? Chronic dieting has been shown to decrease metabolism, slow the rate of weight loss, increase binges and cravings and even increase the risk of premature death and heart disease!

Strategies to an Intuitive Eater

1 Taste each bite of food. Sound too simple? Do you already experience the variety of textures, tastes, colors, smells your food offers?

2 RESPECT your body. Honor your hunger. Recognize your fullness.

3 Put your fork down every now and then through out the meal. This may help you feel your fullness. At the same time, check in with yourself to see if the food still tastes good. Usually, the first couple of mouthfuls taste better than the bottom of the bag. If the food doesn't taste as good anymore, consider stopping and waiting until you are hungry again as you'll be more satisfied.

4 Schedule a time to eat, and pay attention to eating. Remember that taste buds are on your tongue and not your stomach. While eating, sit down at a table and make yourself comfortable. Standing in front of a fridge decreases attention and satisfaction.



5 Learn to cope without using food. Some ideas that deal with feelings are writing a journal, calling a friend or breathing deeply. You could also find a different distracter such as going to the movies, dancing to music, taking a nap or strolling in the park.

6 Quit the body-check game. When you enter the room, do you compare your body to the rest of the crowd and ask questions such as, "Am I the fattest one here?" or "How does my body compare to the others?" This is a dangerous and unhealthy game especially when played with people you don't know.

How an Intuitive Eater Thinks

Progress,
not perfection is
what counts

Intuitive Eater Mentality	Issue	Diet Mentality
Am I hungry? Do I want it?	Eating and Food Choices	Do I deserve it?
Will it be satisfying?		I feel guilty when I eat heavy foods
Does it taste good?		I usually describe a day of eating as either "bad" or "good"
I deserve to enjoy eating without guilt		I view food as the enemy
I focus on how exercise makes me feel; especially how it is energizing and stress relieving	Exercise Benefits	I focus on the calories burned
		I feel guilty if I miss a designated exercise day
While I'm concerned about my weight, it is not my primary goal or indicator of progress	View of Progress	How many pounds did I lose?
I recognize inner body cues		What do other people think of my weight? How do I look?
I have increased trust with myself and food		I have good willpower

10 Principles of Intuitive Eating, the Cheat-Sheet

Reject the Diet Mentality

Throw out diets that offer false hope of losing weight quickly, easily and permanently

Honor your Health

Make food choices that honor your health and taste buds while making you feel well. It's what you eat consistently over time that matters

Exercise—Feel the Difference

Get active and feel the difference. Shift your focus to how it feels to move your body, rather than the calorie burning effect of exercise.

Respect your Body

A person with a shoe size of eight would not expect to realistically squeeze into a size six. Why don't we have the same expectation with body size?

Honor your Feelings without using foods

Find ways to comfort, nurture, distract, and resolve your issues without using food. Food won't fix any of these feelings.

Discover the Satisfaction Factor

When you eat what you really want, you will find that it takes much less food to decide you've had "enough"

Honor your Hunger

Provide nutrition for your body before any feelings of excessive hunger - intentions of moderation are irrelevant at this point!

Make Peace with Food

Provide unconditional permission to eat; "can't" or "shouldn't" foods lead to bingeing

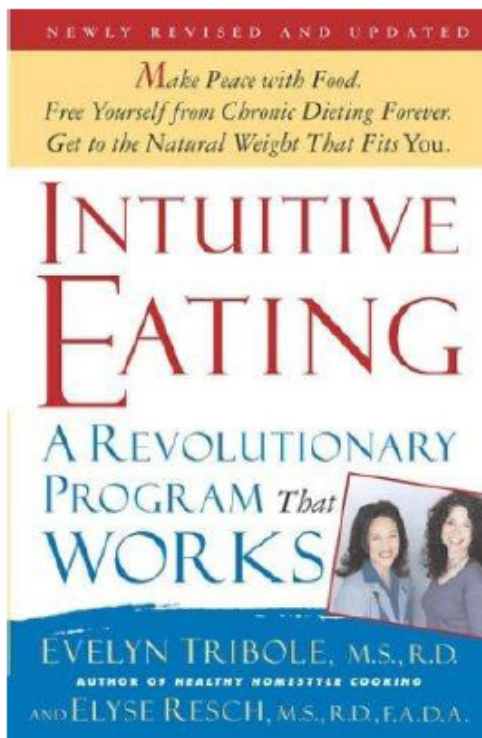
Challenge the Food Police

Scream NO when your head says you're "good" for eating under 1000 calories, or you're "bad" for eating a piece of chocolate cake

Respect your Fullness

Listen to your body signals to tell you that you are no longer hungry

10 Principles of Intuitive Eating



1. Reject the Diet Mentality. Throw out the diet books and magazine articles that offer you false hope of losing weight quickly, easily, and permanently. Get angry at the lies that have led you to feel as if you were a failure every time a new diet stopped working and you gained back all of the weight. If you allow even one small hope to linger that a new and better diet might be lurking around the corner, it will prevent you from being free to rediscover Intuitive Eating.

2. Honor Your Hunger. Keep your body biologically fed with adequate energy and carbohydrates. Otherwise you can trigger a primal drive to overeat. Once you reach the moment of excessive hunger, all intentions of moderate, conscious eating are fleeting and irrelevant. Learning to honor this first biological signal sets the stage for re-building trust with yourself and food.

3. Make Peace with Food. Call a truce, stop the food fight! Give yourself unconditional permission to eat. If you tell yourself that you can't or shouldn't have a particular food, it can lead to intense feelings of deprivation that build into uncontrollable cravings and, often, bingeing. When you finally "give-in" to your forbidden food, eating will be experienced with such intensity, it usually results in Last Supper overeating, and overwhelming guilt.

4. Challenge the Food Police. Scream a loud "NO" to thoughts in your head that declare you're "good" for eating under 1000 calories or "bad" because you ate a piece of chocolate cake. The Food Police monitor the unreasonable rules that dieting has created. The police station is housed deep in your psyche, and its loud speaker shouts negative barbs, hopeless phrases, and guilt-provoking indictments. Chasing the Food Police away is a critical step in returning to Intuitive Eating.

5. Respect Your Fullness. Listen for the body signals that tell you that you are no longer hungry. Observe the signs that show that you're comfortably full. Pause in the middle of a meal or food and ask yourself how the food tastes, and what is your current fullness level?

6. Discover the Satisfaction Factor. The Japanese have the wisdom to promote pleasure as one of their goals of healthy living. In our hurry to be thin and healthy, we often overlook one of the most basic gifts of existence--the pleasure and satisfaction that can be found in the eating experience. When you eat what you really want, in an environment that is inviting and conducive, the pleasure you derive will be a powerful force in helping you feel satisfied and content. By providing this experience for yourself, you will find that it takes much less food to decide you've had "enough".

7. Honor Your Feelings Without Using Food. Find ways to comfort, nurture, distract, and resolve your issues without using food. Anxiety, loneliness, boredom, anger are emotions we all experience throughout life. Each has its own trigger, and each has its own appeasement. Food won't fix any of these feelings. It may comfort for the short term, distract from the pain, or even numb you into a food hangover. But food won't solve the problem. If anything, eating for an emotional hunger will only make you feel worse in the long run. You'll ultimately have to deal with the source of the emotion, as well as the discomfort of overeating.

8. Respect Your Body. Accept your genetic blueprint. Just as a person with a shoe size of eight would not expect to realistically squeeze into a size six, it is equally as futile (and uncomfortable) to have the same expectation with body size. But mostly, respect your body, so you can feel better about whom you are. It's hard to reject the diet mentality if you are unrealistic and overly critical about your body shape.

9. Exercise- Feel the Difference. Forget militant exercise. Just get active and feel the difference. Shift your focus to how it feels to move your body, rather than the calorie burning effect of exercise. If you focus on how you feel from working out, such as energized, it can make the difference between rolling out of bed for a brisk morning walk and hitting the snooze alarm. If when you wake up, your only goal is to lose weight, it's usually not a motivating factor in that moment of time.

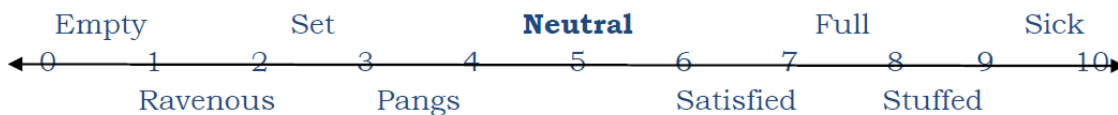
10. Honor Your Health; Gentle Nutrition. Make food choices that honor your health and taste buds while making you feel well. Remember that you don't have to eat a perfect diet to be healthy. You will not suddenly get a nutrient deficiency or gain weight from one snack, one meal, or one day of eating. It's what you eat consistently over time that matters; progress not perfection is what counts.

Hunger & Fullness Discovery Scale

Use this scale to help you be more aware of your internal cues when you are eating. The neutral point is 5; this is when you are neither hungry nor full.

Before eating, check in with yourself to see where you are on the hunger scale. Ideally, it should be at 3 or 4. After eating, check in again with yourself; work toward ending your meal at a 6 or 7.

Time	Food	Hunger/Fullness Rating												
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		



Keep in mind that when you start a meal with a lower number (indicating that you are over hungry), you will likely end the meal with a much higher number (feeling overstuffed and overfilled).

So go ahead and try to eat when you are at a 3 or 4, you will be more likely to stop at a 6 or 7 (where you feel satisfied, but not uncomfortably full).

What does science say about Intuitive Eating?

Okay, so you may not be absolutely convinced that Intuitive Eating will work for you. Need some expert opinion?

Here is a sample of three scientific research articles:

Weight Science: Evaluating the Evidence for a Paradigm Shift

Bacon, L and Aphramor, L. "Weight Science: Evaluating the Evidence for a Paradigm Shift." *Nutrition Journal* 10.9 (2011)

The current guidelines for "overweight" and "obese" individuals are to lose weight through lifestyle modification (involving diet, exercise and other behavior change). This approach has not only been shown to be inefficient in maintaining long term weight loss, but it "does not achieve the putative benefits of improved morbidity and mortality".

Conversely, this approach encourages unintended consequences: food and body preoccupation, repeated cycles of weight loss and regain, distraction from other personal health goals, reduced self esteem, eating disorders, and weight stigmatization and discrimination. Thus, there has been

increased attention to the ethical implications of this approach. From that, a growing trans-disciplinary effort called Health At Every Size (HAES) argues for a paradigm shift to weight-neutral outcomes. HAES has been proven to improve: blood pressure, blood lipids, eating habits, dietary quality, self esteem and body image.



**"You'll lose weight on any strict diet,
but it's mostly water...from crying."**

Size Acceptance and Intuitive Eating Improve Health for Obese, Female Chronic Dieters

Bacon, L., J. Stern, M. Vanloan, and N. Keim. "Size Acceptance and Intuitive Eating Improve Health for Obese, Female Chronic Dieters." *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* 105.6 (2005): 929-36.

The objective of the study was to examine the effectiveness of a "health at every size" approach in improving health, vs. weight loss. Health at every size encourages homeostatic regulation and eating intuitively (responding to internal cues of hunger, satiety and appetite). 78 obese, female, chronic dieters aged 30-45 participated in this randomized clinical trial. For 6 months, participants attended weekly group intervention (health at every size program vs. diet program) followed by 6 months of monthly aftercare group support. The following measures were monitored throughout the study: anthropometry (weight, body mass index); metabolic fitness (blood pressure, blood lipids); energy expenditure; eating behavior (restraint, eating disorder pathology); psychology (self-esteem, depression, body image); attrition; attendance and participation evaluation of treatment helpfulness. Attrition was high in the diet

It's knowing that your health and your worth as a person do not change, because you ate a food that you had labeled as "bad" or "fattening".

group (41%) vs. only 8% in the health at every size group. Post intervention, the diet group showed initial improvement in many variables, however weight was regained and little improvement was sustained after 2 years. In contrast, the health at every size group participants not only maintained their weight and improved in all outcome variables, but they were able to sustain the improvements. In

conclusion, the health at every size approach facilitated the participants to maintain long term behavior change. Also, encouraging size acceptance, reduction in dieting behavior and increased awareness to internal cues resulted in improved health risk indicators.

Intuitive Eating, Diet Composition, and the Meaning of Food in Healthy Weight Promotion

Smith, T and Hawks, S. "Intuitive Eating, Diet Composition, and the Meaning of Food in Healthy Weight Promotion." *American Journal of Health Education* 37.3 (2006): 130-136.

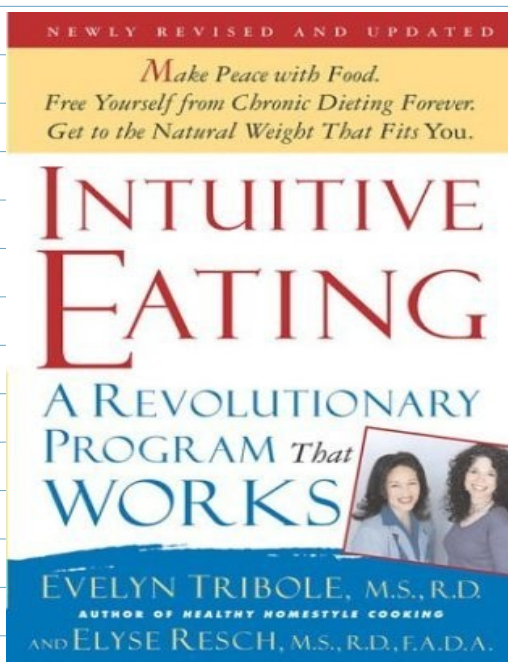
The purpose of this study was to evaluate the relationship between intuitive eating, diet composition and the meaning of food. Intuitive eating has been shown to be a viable approach to healthy weight management. A total of 343 students at a university participated in a survey regarding the Intuitive Eating Scale and a variety of diet related scales from other studies. The following are the study conclusions:

- Those who scored higher on the intuitive eating scale had lower BMI scores
- Those who scored higher on the intuitive eating scale had less health consciousness in relation to food
- Those who scored higher on the intuitive eating scale had higher levels of pleasure associated with food and eating.

There was a significant difference between males and females in intuitive eating, dieting, health consciousness, and eating for pleasure. Overall, high intuitive eating scores were associated with an increase in enjoyment and pleasure of food, lower BMI scores and fewer dieting behaviors and food anxieties.



Be a winner!



WHAT?

Evelyn Tribole and Elyse Resch's book about making peace with food, Intuitive Eating: A Revolutionary Program that Works

HOW?

Visit the "Healthy Eating Tip of the Month" board and enter your name

WHERE?

It is located in the University Hospital cafeteria on level 2

WHEN?

Anytime in the month of August!

Intuitive eating is an approach that teaches you how to create a healthy relationship with your food, mind, and body--where you ultimately become the expert of your own body. You learn how to distinguish between physical and emotional feelings, and gain a sense of body wisdom. It's also a process of making peace with food--so that you no longer have constant "food worry" thoughts. It's knowing that your health and your worth as a person do not change, because you ate a food that you had labeled as "bad" or "fattening".

The underlying premise of Intuitive Eating is that you will learn to respond to your inner body cues, because you were born with all the wisdom you need for eating intuitively. On the surface, this may sound simplistic, but it is rather complex. This inner wisdom is often clouded by years of dieting and food myths that abound in the culture. For example, "Eat when you're hungry and stop when you're full" may sound like basic common sense, but when you have a history of chronic dieting or of following rigid "healthy" rules about eating, it can be quite difficult. To be able to ultimately return to your inborn Intuitive Eater, a number of things need to be in place--most importantly, the ability to trust yourself!

Healthy Eating Tip of the Month



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Related websites

<http://www.intuitiveeating.org>

<http://www.ellynsatter.com>

<http://www.haescommunity.org>

<http://www.lindabacon.org>

<http://www.tcme.org>

<http://www.med.umich.edu/pfans/services/tip.htm>