

Mindful Eating Tips

Melissa Maher, CPC, ELI-MP

Purpose

To offer health & wellness clients a gateway into a regular mindful eating practice.

Benefits

A mindful eating practice can expand awareness, wisdom, self-trust and a sense of connection. It can cultivate presence and contribute to the healing of challenging relationships with food and the body.

Use of this Tool

Email these tips to clients who are struggling with catabolic eating habits and encourage them to read through and choose a few practices that align with their personal style to play with each day/week. NOTE: Focus on no more than two or three at a time in general to avoid overwhelm.

Mindful Eating Tips

Mindful eating is a powerful practice to expand awareness, wisdom, and wellbeing at the deepest levels. It is also a powerful practice for anyone struggling with their relationship to food, which can be a complex one for many people. Mindful eating is also a lovely practice for building presence.

"Learning to eat and live mindfully is the key to experiencing health and peace." -Thich Nhat Hanh & Dr. Lillian Cheung, Savor

Read through the ideas below and pluck out a few practices that align with your personal style to play with each day or week.

- Check in to see if you're physically hungry before eating. Ask your body what it most needs right now. If the answer to the real need isn't clearly food, see if you can give yourself the type of nourishment your system is most deeply craving.
- Make a conscious choice to eat.
- Create a pleasant, relaxing environment for your meal.
- For at least one meal per day, minimize distractions (i.e., technology) so you can have a "mindful meal" and fully focus on your food.
- Experiment with eating in silence for at least one meal a day or week.
- Sit down to eat.
- Set an intention before starting your meal.
- Pause to take food in with your senses before taking your first bite.
- Bring an attitude of celebration and appreciation to your meal.

- Reflect on all the forces that came together for you to enjoy this food: The Earth that grew the plant, the sun and rain that nurtured it, the blossom that delivered it, the farmers who harvested it, the workers who packaged it and drove it to your local market etc. Feel a sense of interconnectedness and gratitude.
- Take a few deep belly breaths with the eyes closed before diving in.
- Approach your food with a receptive attitude rather than one of "taking."
- Take small bites.
- Experiment with chewing three to five bites, 20-50 chews each.
- Notice the color, smell, flavors, textures, temperatures, and changes that occur to your food as you chew and swallow.
- Feel each bite as it makes its journey through your body.
- Set your fork down and take a conscious breath between bites.
- Savor each bite. Don't take the next bite until the last bite's been fully chewed and swallowed.
- Intend to be present with each bite. If you get "hooked" by a distracting thought, just return your awareness to this taste in the moment when you notice.
- Spend a few minutes sitting quietly after your meal.
- Feel and express gratitude for the life-giving nourishment you've just received.
- When you feel complete, move on with your day, carrying a sense of gratitude for your healthy, nourished body and life force with you.

Credit: The concepts inherent in this article are the author's interpretation of materials issued by iPEC®.