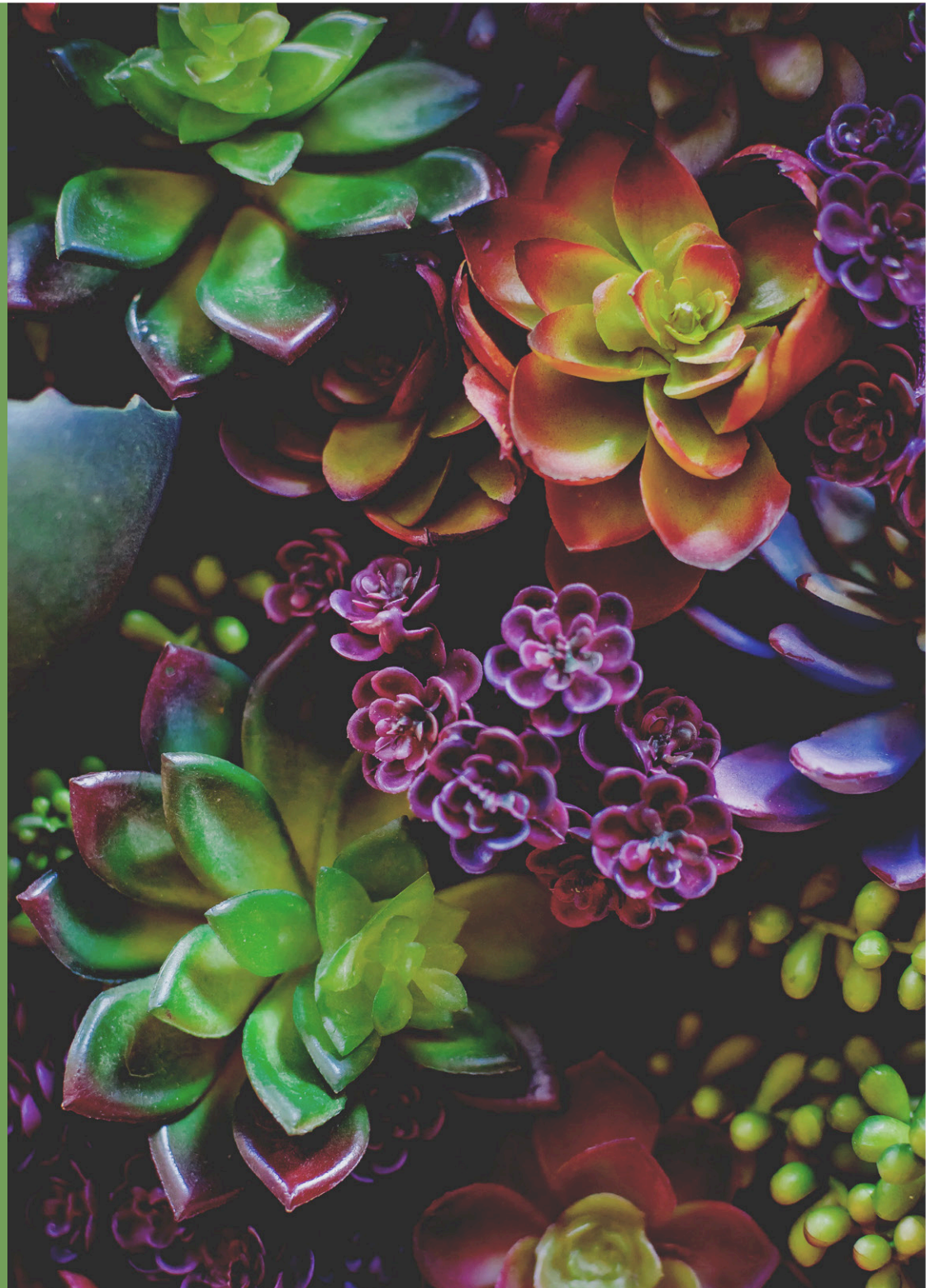


DR PAMELA RD

Mindful Eating



INTRODUCTION



Welcome! Thank you for downloading our Mindful Eating Toolkit. Here, you'll learn about the benefits of mindful eating, the mindful eating cycle, and how you can learn to develop a healthy relationship with your food. You also find our Mindful Eating Journal template that you can use to help track your own thoughts and feelings about food, and a list of recommended mindful eating resources.

What is Mindful Eating?

Mindful eating revolves around our presence and awareness of our own unique food experiences. With mindful eating, we learn to acknowledge our internal hunger cues and use all of our senses to fully embrace our food. Mindful eating welcomes us to develop positive relationships with the food we eat.

Mindful eating revolves around our presence and awareness of our own unique food experiences. With mindful eating, we learn to acknowledge our internal hunger cues and use all of our senses to fully embrace our food.

OUR MINDFUL EATING JOURNEYS



Your Mindful Eating experts are:



Pamela Fergusson, RD, PhD.

Private practice in Toronto, Ontario;
Lecturer in Nutrition at Ryerson University

www.pamelafergusson.com

“I grew up in a household full of love, but full of control too. My beautiful mom and grandmother had high standards for themselves in terms of their weight and appearance, and they did not always achieve their goals, leading to them sometimes feeling shame. I always felt that it was important for me to stay slim to be socially acceptable. That led to me making choices about food that were sometimes too restrictive; or sometimes I ‘ate my feelings’. Those feelings taste good going down, but I never felt good afterward. With time, love, self-acceptance and mindful eating I have learned to enjoy eating more and celebrate my relationship with food. I want to share what I have learned with you, to help to bring healing and light to your journey too.” - Pamela



Liz Higgins, MHSc.

Liz is a dietetic intern and masters student at Ryerson University. She grew up in Goderich, an agricultural community in Southwestern Ontario. Liz is passionate about nutritious cooking and sharing her love of food with others.

“I started dancing at the age of nine, and followed my dream of becoming a ballet dancer into my teen years. My world revolved around dance. I spent my days and evenings at the studio, and many weekends rehearsing. But, while dancing was a great form of artistic expression for me, it also became the root of an unhealthy relationship with food. I was very strict about what I allowed myself to eat, and how much I could eat during the day. In doing so, I completely unlearned how to enjoy food. It wasn’t until I stopped dancing that I discovered mindful eating and was able to re-establish a positive connection with the amazing variety of wholesome, nutritious food available to me.” - Liz

WAIT... ARE YOU REALLY HUNGRY?



Some days, it is so hard to have a healthy relationship with our bodies, and know when we are really hungry! There are many environmental cues that impact our desire to eat. Food advertising on buses, convenience stands, and snack foods at grocery store check outs are just a few examples. Our emotions can also affect our eating habits, whether we're celebrating a birthday or relieving stress at the end of a long day. Both the environment and our emotions are external factors that affect our eating habits- and we're often not consciously aware of it.

Eating without awareness is called mindless eating. You can think of it like eating on autopilot. Many men and women struggle with mindless eating. We eat upwards of five times per day (breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks in between)... which is about 1800 times per year. It's no wonder we can eat without really thinking about it!

From a biological perspective, we eat for energy. It's like putting gasoline in our car. We need food to survive, and our bodies send us hunger cues to remind us when to eat. But with mindless eating, our bodies get mixed up. When we eat mindlessly, it's usually in response to feelings (whether we're happy, sad, glad, mad, stressed, bored, or relaxed) or other reminders like sights, sounds, and smells that make us want to eat. Try to tell me you don't start salivating when you pass by the Cinnabon stand at the mall.... it's impossible!

When we eat, whether we're hungry or not, the neurotransmitter dopamine is released. This dopamine acts on the pleasure centres of our brain- much to the same effect of alcohol or drugs. This is the body's natural reward system that makes us feel good when we eat. Because after all... we have to eat to survive.

When we eat, whether we're hungry or not, the neurotransmitter dopamine is released.

The problem is: the more often we eat just to get that reward system fired up, to get those 'feel good' centers of the brain turned on, the less our brains actually respond to the food we eat. What does this mean? It takes more and more food to get the same feel good effect.

Dr. Pam Peeke describes this phenomenon in her book, *The Hunger Fix*. When we eat for pleasure only, we're responding to our 'food fixes'. And one of the biggest problems with this is we forget to how to recognize our hunger and fullness cues.

WAIT... ARE YOU REALLY HUNGRY?



If you've read this far, congratulations! This is a great starting point for becoming a mindful eater. There are many different strategies to retrain your brain to listen to your instinctual need for food. Whether it's intentional, intuitive or conscious eating... they all fit under the umbrella of Mindful Eating.

HOW TO DITCH YOUR DIET

As a former dancer, Liz is no stranger to the world of dieting and food restriction. She always felt pressure to maintain her physique, which led her down the scary path of yo-yo dieting and calorie counting. Like Liz, many men and women face similar challenges, and may turn to dieting in order to lose or manage weight.

Unfortunately, all diets are designed to fail. Research suggests that there is little to no lasting benefits of traditional dieting approaches. www.nutritionj.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1475-2891-10-9

And, up to 66% of dieters end up gaining back more weight than they had originally lost. Talk about wasted and disheartening effort.

Have you ever met anyone on a diet who was happy? Didn't think so. Diets that restrict food (low carbohydrate, low calorie, fat free, sugar free... the list goes on) can leave us deprived and craving these foods even more. Now, there are definitely certain foods that we should enjoy in moderation... but eliminating treats completely? That does not work for a lot of people.

Not only is dieting ineffective for losing or maintaining weight, it takes a great deal of self-control to restrict your eating for the long-term. And eventually, we're going to give in to our food cravings,

which can make us feel even worse. There's even evidence to suggest that dieting is related to having lower self-esteem and a more negative body image

www.nutritionj.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1475-2891-10-9

When Liz was dancing, she was so focused on what, and how much she ate. Food became mere sustenance, so much so that she completely forgot to enjoy the process of eating. And no matter which diet she followed, she never felt satisfied with her appearance. For Liz, mindful eating was the chance for her to reconnect with food, and find peace knowing that she'd never have to count calories again.

Pamela has also experienced being out of balance with her relationship with food. As a new mom, life was busy and sometimes overwhelming. She sometimes turned to food as an energy boost or emotional support, even when she was not hungry. After a while she thought, "Would I do this to my own child, try to heal their feelings with food?" Pamela learned to tune into her body and emotions, to explore what she really wanted and needed, rather than just turning to food.

It is a bit more work, but it is so much more healthy and rewarding. Instead of rewarding herself with food, Pamela tries to journal, or go for a walk, or cuddle with one of her kids to help get through

HOW TO DITCH YOUR DIET

stressful days. Check out these fun and inexpensive non-food ways to treat yourself.

www.init4thelongrun.com/10-non-food-ways-to-treat-yourself/

The underlying principle of mindful eating is that your body knows when you need to be nourished. More than that, you intrinsically know what type of food and how much food you need, too. It's about honouring, trusting, and nourishing your body, instead of depriving it. The more we fine-tune our ability to listen to our internal hunger cues (see our first post: Are You Really Hungry?), the closer we get to eating mindfully.

What are the three main features of mindful eating?

1. Eating because you're hungry
2. Listening to your own hunger and fullness cues
3. Now that you have learned to listen to your hunger and fullness cues, you can give yourself the freedom to eat when you want, how much you want, and whatever you want

Are you ready to tap into your own mindful eating abilities?

The Mindful Eating Cycle, created by Michelle May, MD, is a wonderful tool to help you get started. This six-stage cycle prompts us to reflect on why, when, what, how, how much, and where we eat.

www.thecenterformindfuleating.org/Resources/Documents/HandoutAmIHungryCycleandBriefInterventions.pdf

MINDFUL EATING JOURNAL

We've adapted Dr. May's cycle into the following 7 questions:

1. Why do I eat (are you hungry, bored, stressed, happy, sad, glad)?
2. What do I eat (what are your food likes, dislikes, cravings, things you'd like to try)?
3. When do I eat (when does food fit into your day- time, place, and situation)?
4. How do I eat (do you eat on the run, with family, by yourself, or in front of the TV)?
5. How much do I eat (are you still hungry or full after you eat)?
6. Where do I put my energy (your hobbies, activities, and goals)?
7. Who is affected by what I eat (friends, family, animals, the planet)?

To make the process easy for you, we've designed a free Mindful Eating Journal for you to use (included at the end of this toolkit PDF). This journal is meant to help you identify your own food triggers.

After a while, you'll begin to see patterns in your own eating habits. And as you get more familiar with the mindful eating cycle, you'll start to unconsciously check-in with yourself before, during, and after you eat.

As a starting point, we recommend you print off seven copies of our Mindful Eating Journal. Keep the journal with you, and take time after eating to fill it out. It's okay if you forget some things. This journal isn't meant for you to keep track of each and every thing you eat, but to help you develop an awareness of your own eating patterns and behaviours.

The journey to mindful eating can be challenging. It involves completely redefining our relationship with food. Ditching your diet is the first step. Instead, we learn to focus on our thoughts and feelings about food, and in doing so, harness an appreciation for the food we eat.

“One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well.”

Virginia Woolf

EATING YOUR WAY TO MINDFULNESS

We are all creatures of habit, and our busy schedules make it challenging to change our routines. This is especially true when it comes to food and eating. But, change is possible. Here are a few simple tips to help on your journey to a positive relationship with food.

1. Target your food triggers

Food triggers are the sights, sounds, smells, thoughts, feelings, and emotions we have that make us crave certain foods. Maybe you have a bad day at work and can't resist the drive-thru window on your way home, or a heaping bowl of pasta when you're bored. Whatever our triggers are, they usually end up with us eating for reasons other than physical hunger.

By identifying our own trigger foods, we become more aware of our cravings and can plan ahead so that we respond to these cravings with nutritious, wholesome food. To help you target your trigger foods, we suggest starting with this free Mindful Eating Journal.

2. Make small goals

Our relationship with food develops over time. Our food likes and dislikes change over time, and we can't expect to completely change this relationship overnight. Instead, focus in on one thing you'd like to change. Maybe you're going to eat leafy greens each day, have a smoothie for breakfast, prepare your veggies ahead of time, or step away from your

desk while you eat. It's great to be motivated, but research shows that sticking to small, simple, realistic goals is more effective for making bigger changes in our lives.

www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21852063

What are your mindful eating goals? Take some time to brainstorm what these might be. Then, hone in on goal that you think is top priority. How are you going to achieve this goal? What supports do you need? How long will it take? How will you know when you've accomplished it?

3. Accept your eating habits

Like learning to ride a bike, learning to eat mindfully takes time, patience, and lots of practice. You will likely begin to notice the many facets of your life that are affected by food: social occasions and family celebrations to work or study break rewards. In today's food environment, we tend to label foods as either 'good' or 'bad' for health. This can bring a lot of shame and guilt over eating certain foods. However, there can be a time and place for all types of food in your life.

Take a look at your own food habits, and then forget about them. Recognize that there is no 'perfect' way to eat. Instead of trying to control what you eat, be in charge of how you eat. Mindful eating can even improve your eating habits. As you become more present while you eat, your food choices may even begin to change.

www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26474781

4. Celebrate your relationship with food

Food can be fun! Try to enjoy it more by making it a ceremony. Make sure you sit down a table to eat, and take the time to prepare a plate with attractive presentation; we eat first with our eyes. Be grateful, remember that not everyone has enough to eat, or can choose what they eat. Try to eat with friends and family more often, enjoying good food and good conversation; remembering that food is part of our culture and it can nourish us, body, mind and soul.

But Does the Mindful Eating approach really work?

The quick answer: probably. A recent review of all studies measuring the effects of mindful eating showed positive effects on eating behaviours 86% of the time. This meant improvements in binge eating, reduced emotional eating, less external eating, and better weight outcomes.

www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24636206

What we do know, it that mindful eating brings a deeper appreciation for our food and the positive effects that it brings. Food is much more than just energy for our bodies. Food can help improve our health and minds, bring us closer to others, and connect us to our environments.

Most importantly, mindful eating can help us to override negative thoughts about our bodies and weight. We internalize media portrayals of thinness and beauty less. We learn to love- and nourish- ourselves. Sounds pretty good, doesn't it?

These tips are helpful to build a healthier relationship with food through mindful eating, but if things have gone further than that, and if you feel you may be struggling with an eating disorder, please call the NEDIC helpline at 1-866-633-4220



Bacon, L., & Aphramor, L. (2011). Weight science: Evaluating the evidence for a paradigm shift. *Nutrition Journal*, 10(1), 9-9. doi:10.1186/1475-2891-10-9

Spoor, K. D., & Madanat, H. (2016). Relationship between body image discrepancy and intuitive eating. *International Quarterly of Community Health Education*, 36(3), 189-197. doi:10.1177/0272684X16641847

May, Michelle. (2011). *Eat What You Love, Love What You Eat: How to Break Your Eat-Repent-Repeat Cycle*. Are You Hungry Publishing.

Pearson, E. S. (2012). Goal setting as a health behavior change strategy in overweight and obese adults: A systematic literature review examining intervention components. *Patient Education and Counseling*, 87(1), 32-42. doi:10.1016/j.pec.2011.07.018

Mason, A. E., Epel, E. S., Kristeller, J., Moran, P. J., Dallman, M., Lustig, R. H., . . . Daubenmier, J. (2016). Effects of a

mindfulness-based intervention on mindful eating, sweets consumption, and fasting glucose levels in obese adults: Data from the SHINE randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 39(2), 201-213. doi:10.1007/s10865-015-9692-8

O'Reilly, G. A., Cook, L., Spruijt-Metz, D., & Black, D. S. (2014). Mindfulness-based interventions for obesity-related eating behaviours: A literature review. *Obesity Reviews*, 15(6), 453-461. doi:10.1111/obr.12156

Bruce, L. J., & Ricciardelli, L. A. (2016). A systematic review of the psychosocial correlates of intuitive eating among adult women. *Appetite*, 96, 454-472. doi:10.1016/j.appet.2015.10.012

Peeke, Pam. (2012). *The Hunger Fix*. Rodale Books.

Anderson, L. M., Anderson, D. A., Schaumberg, K., & Reilly, E. E. (2015). Is level of intuitive eating associated with plate size

effects? *Eating Behaviors*, 18, 125-130. doi:10.1016/j.eatbeh.2015.05.005

Mindful Eating Resource List

Websites:

The Centre for Mindful Eating: www.thecenterformindfuleating.org
Am I Hungry?: www.amihungry.com

Books:

The Hunger Fix by Pam Peeke, MD
Eat What you Love, Love What you Eat by Michelle May

Blogs:

Savor: Mindful eating, mindful life: www.savorthebook.com/blog
Worthy & Well by Casey Berglund, RD: www.worthyandwell.com

Apps:

Shedding the Weight: Mind, Body, and Spirit by Oprah Winfrey and Deepak Chopra
Headspace

MINDFUL EATING JOURNAL

Date: _____

Day: M Tu W Th F Sa Su

Time	Hunger rating		Place	Food / beverage	Thoughts & feelings
When did you eat?	Rate your hunger on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 = starving 10 = very full		Where did you eat? Were there any distractions around you? Who did you eat with?	What did you eat?	How did you feel before, during, and after eating?
	Before eating	After eating			

Daily Reflection

Were there any events or situations today that provoked food cravings? What cravings were they? Did you eat anything out of habit? Or because of how you were feeling (i.e. happy, stressed, bored)?

Were there any foods that you enjoyed eating? What were they? Did you try any new foods today? Or any you'd like to try?

Other Notes:
