

ASK THE NUTE GURU

THE NUTE (NUTRITION) GURU IMPARTS WISDOM ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF NATURAL, WHOLE-FOODS NUTRITION FOR MIND/BODY WELLNESS.

Q

I've always been a slow eater and although I'm sort of a "foodie", I eat for function instead of pleasure frequently. I've recently moved in with my girlfriend and she constantly eats for pleasure (with gusto) instead of for function. It is wreaking havoc on our lifestyle and my waistline. Do you have any tips to help me get her to slow down and realize that every meal doesn't have to be gourmet?

A

I've heard this story many times. Eating is an incredibly important part of our lives and some people use it to satisfy needs other than nourishment. Whereas eating should be a joyful experience, its primary function should still be to give your body what it needs to thrive. Because eating also becomes a habit, it is sometimes helpful to make a lifestyle change and make your eating more intuitive. Intuitive eating is a way to bring more meaning to this daily act, taking it from mundane and distracted to mindful and sacred. It is also a great way to connect with those that you share a meal with.

Here are six steps to cultivate an intuitive eating practice:

- 1. Identify your hunger.** - Is it a physical need or emotional desire? If it's emotional, write down what feelings are coming up and what foods you're craving. Use the process of writing to clear the way for receiving what your body truly needs.
- 2. When you're ready to prepare your meal, eliminate any clutter or distractions from the kitchen.** - Turn off the TV, take out the trash and wash the dirty dishes. A clean kitchen means a clear mind as you begin to prepare your mindful meal.
- 3. Before you eat, take a few deep breaths to relax and ground yourself.** - This also shifts your nervous system in a resting state – the parasympathetic nervous system – where your body can digest and receive the maximum nutrition from your meal.
- 4. Eat slowly, without excessive talking, loud music or TV in the background.** - Quiet the chatter around you and connect with each bite. As you eat, practice chewing until your food has become a liquid (50 bites or more!). In the process of chewing, our bodies secrete enzymes that help break down food and signal digestion to begin.
- 5. Take a pause for a few minutes and check in with your body to gauge your fullness level.** - If it is helpful to you, rate your fullness (0 = empty, 10 = overstuffed). Aim for around a seven on the fullness level, leaving at least a 20-30% feeling of empty.
- 6. When you feel comfortably satisfied, take a few deep breaths and reflect on the experience and give gratitude for all those who've had a hand in your meal.** - Honor the farmer, the truck driver, the grocery store stocker and all those in between the farm and your table. At the end of your meal, remember to thank your body for receiving the nourishment you've prepared, for gratitude inward and outward is truly the best medicine.

<http://www.mindbodygreen.com/0-16399/6-steps-to-intuitive-mindful-eating.html>

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