

9 Tricks to Eating Healthier

What are the best tricks for eating healthier? Turning to science may be the best way to learn. The Food and Brand Lab at Cornell University conducts research on food psychology and on the behavior of consumers. They look at how humans relate to food with the end goal of finding solutions to help individuals eat better.

Here are 8 tips that they have found proven to help individuals eat better:

1. Eat healthy foods before you go shopping.

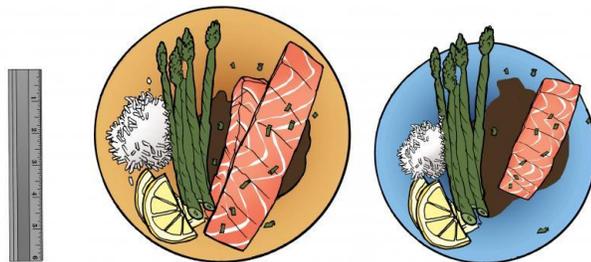
Eating a healthy snack like an apple before grocery shopping is a great, easy way to help us improve our shopping habits. We can be primed to buy more produce and healthy foods when we eat a healthy snack before shopping. Having a small, healthy snack before shopping can put us in a healthier mindset which steers us towards making better food choices.

2. Use smaller dishes.

Typically, when we are serving a meal, we tend to fill our whole plate with food no matter what the size our dish may be. When we do this with larger dishes, it causes us to eat a larger portion size. When we do this with smaller dishes, it allows us to eat a healthier portion size of food.

Also, larger plates and bowls can make a serving of food appear smaller and less satisfying compared to using smaller dishes which can lead us to misjudge that very same quantity of food to being significantly larger and more satisfying. Being aware of this illusion is usually not enough to overcome it. Changing our environment by replacing larger dishes with smaller dishes is the best solution.

SMALL PLATES LOSE WEIGHT



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3. Never eat directly from a package and always portion out food onto a dish.

Adding to the previous tip, portioning out food onto a dish instead of eating it from a package can prevent us from overeating. Grab what you need, place on the dish, and seal the rest!

4. Keep your kitchen clean and clutter free.

We tend to eat more indulgent foods in cluttered kitchens. Cluttered and chaotic environments can cause stress, which leads us to grab more indulgent snacks. To avoid over snacking, de-clutter your kitchen before eating. If you don't have time to de-clutter, put yourself in an "in-control" mindset before reaching for the food.

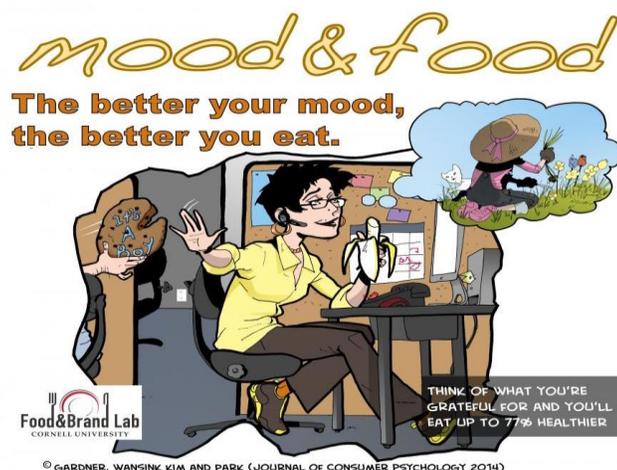


5. When you're hungry, drink a glass of water before eating food and drinking a calorie-filled drink.

Sometimes, our hunger and thirst mechanisms cross paths, and what we crave in a dehydrated state changes once we are hydrated! We also tend to eat or drink fewer calories once we've had that water just before. Since the majority of Americans can afford to give up a few calories *and* are chronically dehydrated, this trick has benefits on all sides!

6. The better your mood, the better you eat.

We tend to select healthy or indulgent foods depending on whether we are in a good or a bad mood, respectively. The Food and Brand Lab found that individuals in positive moods who make healthier food choices are often thinking more about future health benefits than those in negative moods, who focus more on the immediate taste and sensory experience. If you are in a bad mood, focus on something other than the present to reduce consumption of indulgent foods. If your bad mood becomes a chronic scenario, don't skip exercise, as exercise can help elevate your mood.



7. Avoid going more than 3-4 hours without having something small to eat.

Eating small snacks throughout the day helps us prevent overeating at meals. By not eating for 3 to 4 hours, our growing hunger causes us to overdo it when we eventually sit down to eat. Recommendations vary amongst nutrition professionals, but most agree that you should have at least 4 meals/snacks meals throughout the day. We introduce nutrient timing and frequency to you in FitSTART, but it should carry over into your life after the program ends, too!

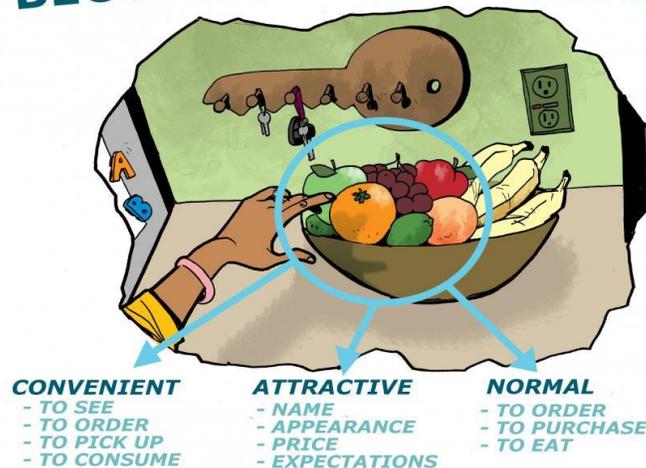
8. Prepare meals ahead of time on a day when you have the freest time.

For many Americans, “meal prep day” is best done on Sunday. When you’re cooking your dinner, start earlier and cook extra for the week ahead. Be sure to include a vegetable side for all of these meals, as well as lean protein and complex, fiber and nutrient-rich carbohydrates for sustained energy.

9. Make healthy food convenient, attractive and normal.

Make healthy foods visible and easy to reach! For example, put a fruit bowl on the counter by the door so you can conveniently grab it when you are leaving in a rush. Also, be creative when preparing and displaying healthy food. Make sure to add as many colors as possible to your meal to not only add nutrition to your food but also to make it look beautiful and more appealing. Lastly, make healthy foods more abundant in your refrigerator and cabinets so it becomes the default, normal option.

USE THE C.A.N. APPROACH TO BECOME SLIM BY DESIGN



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