

# BREAKING BAD EATING HABITS



Many of our eating habits are just that-----HABITS.

Whether we are talking about snacking before dinner or eating on the run, we find ourselves falling into patterns with little or no thought at all.

Mindfulness is often the missing link when it comes to healthy eating.

Take a look at the “old habit” in each paragraph and check out the new approach.

## **Old Habit---Speed eating**

### **New Habit—Slow down and chew.**

We tend to ignore the sensory aspects of food—the smell, the look, the taste and texture when we are busy “shoveling”. Try intentionally noticing the first and last bites of every meal for a week. Slowing down when eating will be easier without distraction—avoid watching TV, reading, checking email, or Internet surfing during mealtime. If you can’t do this at every meal, at least commit to one distraction –free meal every other day.

## **Old Habit—Portion Overload**

### **New Habit—Less is More**

It seems that much of America’s obesity problem has to do with volume. When we pay no attention to what we eat, we often eat way too much. Try keeping in mind some portion size guidelines—4 ounces of protein =a deck of cards, one cup of grain or starchy vegetables =the size of your palm, an ounce of cheese is about thumb size. Even using smaller serving plates can fool the eye into thinking “less is more.”

## **Old Habit—Daily Sweets**

### **New Habit—Cultivate the Palate.**

Does every meal have to end with dessert? We get into the habit of something sweet and feel deprived if we don’t have it. One suggestion is to wait 20 minutes after eating to decide if you really want dessert, have a few bites of something instead of a standard slice. If you can share a slice of pie or a brownie, you can still be satisfied with half the calories. Fruit is always a naturally sweet option too.

## **Old Habit—Reckless Grazing**

### **New Habit—Be Prepared.**

Pre-dinner snacking can ruin the best planned meal. The cause is simple—we let ourselves get too hungry—our blood sugar drops and that triggers the “let me eat anything in my path” habit. You can prepare for this by having a healthy late afternoon snack or having some veggies, fruit or cheese cut up and ready to grab when you walk in

the door. Pre-measure single serving size bags of trail mix, crackers or almonds. If you crave chips, place a small handful in a bowl, close up the bag and put it away so it becomes more work to have a second helping. Avoid eating anything out of a multi-serving bag or carton. Keeping a food diary even for a few days, can give you a new perspective on what is being eaten in a single day and opens the door to thinking about new choices the next time around.

The source for these tips comes from an article in the Magazine “Body and Soul” by Sharon Goldman called “Conscious Eating”.