



Mindful Eating

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is a practice based on Buddhist tradition in which our attention is focused on sensations in the present moment, without judgement, as a technique to quiet the mind.

Practicing mindfulness is simple:

- Sit in a comfortable position with your back upright
- Relax
- Notice the natural rhythm of your breathing
- Focus on your bodily sensations without judgment or control
- Observe your thoughts and feelings

Mindfulness involves allowing yourself to be where you already are, to become more familiar with your own experience moment by moment. — Dr. Kabat-zinn

Principles of Conscious Eating

- **Chew, Chew, Chew.** Each mouthful 35 times. Releases digestive enzymes, improves digestion and assimilation and satiety.
- **Eat only when hungry.** Do you really need a snack? Or is it a walk, a tall glass of water, or a rest that you truly require?
- **Eat simple, whole foods.** If it won't rot, don't eat it. Enough said!
- **Drink Water.** Chronic dehydration can cause fluid retention and bloating. You wouldn't wash your floors with milk or juice, would you? Water is the universal cleanser.
- **Breathe, Relax, Feel.** Use mealtime to connect with your body.
- **Practice Gratitude.** When we consciously and deeply acknowledge what we receive, we assimilate the benefits and open ourselves to the sense of abundance that we crave.

- **Keep a food journal.** Observe your body's responses to food and learn the truth of what works for you. Your needs may change with the seasons, stress levels and aging.
- **Exercise every day.** Whether it's yoga, walking, aerobics or swimming, daily exercise creates a healthy appetite. It also tones all our muscles and organs, oxygenates our brain and creates feel good hormones. It is essential to good health.

Mindful Eating

Mindful eating is a way of connecting with and appreciating food as nourishment.

Try this:

- Eat in silence.
- Focus on the sight, the taste and the smell of the food before putting it into your mouth.
- Once in your mouth, notice the texture, the flavor, and any thoughts you are having as you chew.
- Consider the food's journey: from seed, to harvest, to market, to skillet, and so on.
- After you finish, note any sensations, such as satiety, wanting more, or digestive discomfort, etc.
- Remember to breathe throughout this exercise!

Benefits of Mindfulness

Why practice mindfulness?

Studies indicate that this technique can:

- Relieve stress
- Reduce anxiety
- Lift depression
- Improve attention
- Reduce insomnia
- Decrease hot flashes
- Manage chronic pain
- Soothe cravings

So...by focusing attention on our relationship with our bodies, we can become more aware of our emotions, less re-active to stressors, and more mindful in our responses.