

# Choose Life Balance

*Feed Your Body*

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Welcome to the Choose Life Balance self-study course from K-State Research & Extension.

## Balanced Living Topics

- Manage Your Time
- Manage Your Stress
- **Feed Your Body**
- Move Your Body
- Rest Your Body



This self-study course will examine five topics that are important for balanced living: time management, stress management, nutrition, physical activity and sleep. This session will focus on the importance of healthy eating in balanced living.

## Balanced Living Definition

- Stability, equality, harmony
- Caring appropriately for all life areas
- Don't over-do or under-do



A reminder that the definition of balance is stability, equality, and harmony. Overdoing or underdoing even good things can lead to imbalance. Ultimately, living an unbalanced life can lead to stress, health problems, poor relationships, and lost productivity.

## Overview

- Feed your body mindfully
- Reject dieting for weight loss
- Nurture your body



Today you will learn to feed your body mindfully, reject dieting for weight loss, and nurture your body. You will be asked to look at food in a different way. Feeding your body mindfully and nurturing your body will help you continue your progress in balanced living.

## Mindful Eating

- Pay attention to
  - What you eat
  - Why you eat
  - What you think and feel about food



People have many styles of eating. Some are very careful eaters, agonizing over every bite they put in their mouths. Others don't eat until they are starving and end up overeating. Emotional eaters use food to alleviate stress, loneliness, or boredom. And many people eat while doing other things, so don't really enjoy the food they eat.

A very powerful and beneficial eating style that you will learn about today is mindful eating, sometimes called intuitive eating. As you gain skills in mindful eating, you will learn to pay attention to what you eat, why you eat, and what you think and feel about food.

## To Eat Mindfully

- Eat when you are hungry
- Eat what you want
- Pay attention while you eat
- Stop when no longer hungry

1.



Eating is more than just putting food in your mouth and swallowing it. As a mindful eater, you will learn to eat when you are hungry, eat what you want, pay attention while you eat, and stop eating when you are no longer hungry.

# Eat When You Are Hungry

- Hunger prompts you to eat food
- What does hunger feel like?
- Hunger vs. appetite



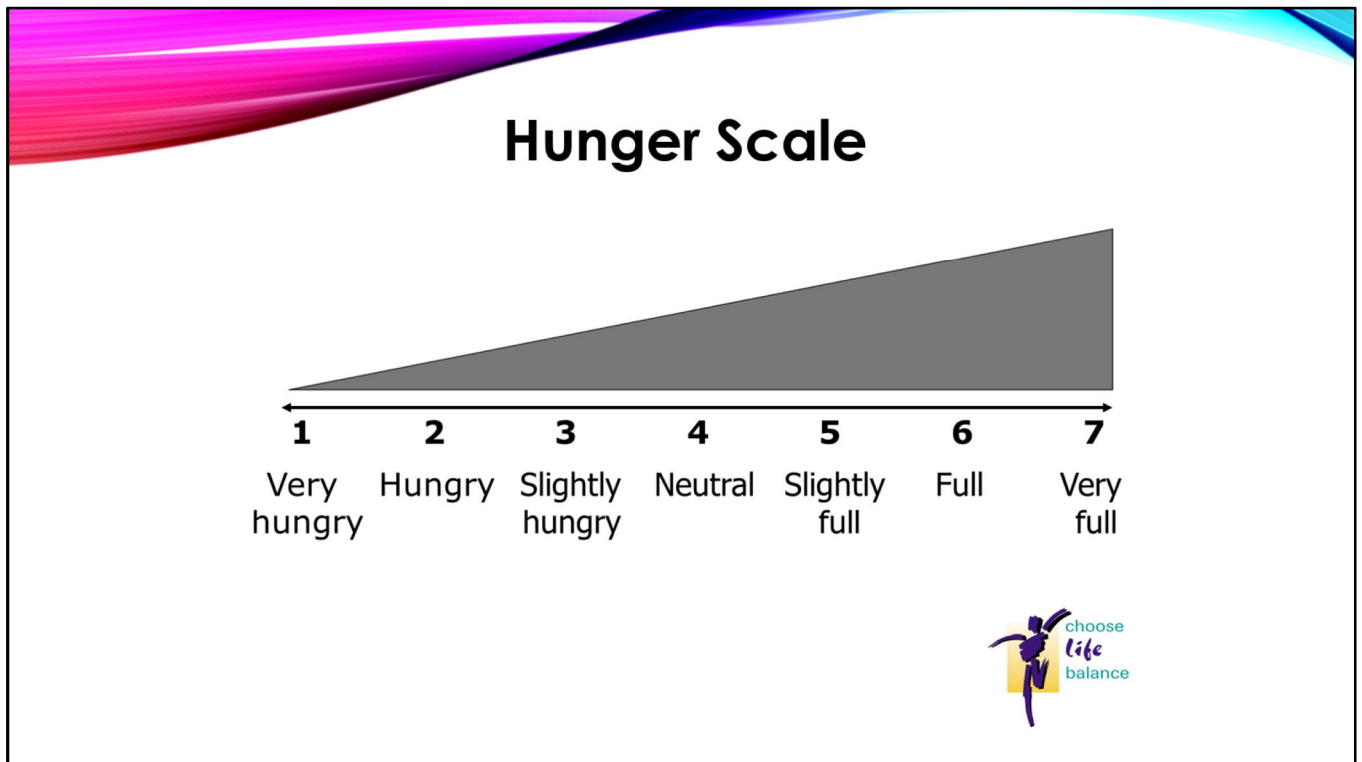
Hunger prompts you to eat food, and food is a basic biological need that is necessary to sustain life. Some people work hard to deny hunger, but this almost always leads to overeating later on. Do you know what hunger feels like? Are you able to feel hunger? Many people have spent so much time denying their hunger that they lose their ability to feel hunger. While specific feelings of hunger may vary, some common sensations or symptoms are:

- Gurgling or growling noises in your stomach
- Difficulty concentrating
- Light-headedness or feeling faint
- Irritability
- Uncomfortable stomach pain
- Headache

It is important to remember that there is a difference between hunger and appetite.

Hunger is a physical need for food, appetite is a psychological desire to eat and is often related to specific foods.

Appetite is a more learned response associated with pleasant-tasting and satisfying food. Today you will learn and practice rating your hunger, eating when you are hungry, eating what you want, and not eating when you are not hungry.



A helpful tool to gauge your hunger is the Hunger Scale, which can be found on Handout 1. Whenever you have an urge to eat, pause for a moment and check where you are on the hunger scale. Here is a description of the numbers on the scale:

- 1—Very hungry. You have either ignored your hunger for a long time or have been unable to eat for some reason. You are beyond hungry and will likely overeat when food is available.
- 2—Hungry. This is a good time to eat.
- 3—Slightly hungry. You can wait to eat but know that you will soon be hungry.
- 4—Neutral. You are neither hungry nor full.
- 5—Slightly full. You sense food in your stomach and know that you will soon be full.
- 6—Full. Your hunger is gone but you are not uncomfortable.
- 7—Very full. You are uncomfortable. Think of how you may feel after overeating Thanksgiving dinner or at an all-you-can-eat buffet.



## Are You Hungry?

- Where are you on the scale right now?
- How could you use the hunger scale to eat mindfully?



Considering the hunger scale, where are you on the hunger scale right now?  
How could you use the hunger scale to eat mindfully?

## Eat What You Want

- Avoid 'food rules'
- Allow yourself freedom to choose
- Requires mindfulness



Many people have a set of food rules that prevent them from eating what they want. Examples of food rules include not eating bread or red meat, not eating after 6 p.m., or eating only a vegetable salad for lunch. Are there foods you avoid?

Allowing yourself freedom to choose all foods empowers you and builds trust in yourself and your ability to regulate your food intake based on internal hunger cues. What would happen if you allowed yourself to mindfully eat all foods?

Eating what you want requires *mindfulness* if you do not want to overeat. Mindful eaters don't label foods as good or bad and tend to eat a greater variety of foods.

## Mindful Eating Experiment

- Buy a favorite 'forbidden' food
- Choose a time to enjoy it
- Use all of your senses
- Trust yourself



Here is an interesting experiment to try.

- Buy a favorite food that you usually don't allow yourself to eat. For example, if you love brownies but most of the time don't allow yourself to eat them, you could buy a brownie. What food will you use for this experiment? If you have health issues such as food allergies that require you to restrict your intake of some foods, alter this exercise so that you do not include food that causes your allergic reaction.
- Eat it mindfully. Choose a time to eat this favorite food mindfully. Pay attention to the aroma and how it feels in your mouth.
- Ask yourself, how does it taste? When you eat the food mindfully, does it taste as good as you expected? You may find that it tastes wonderful or that you don't like it as much as you thought you would.
- Trust yourself. Practice eating more and more foods this way. Trust yourself to become great at listening to your body's hunger and fullness cues. Although you will make mistakes, such as eating too much or too little food, you can learn from them and continue to progress in mindful eating. Trust yourself that your body will tell you when it is hungry and full if you listen. You may eat more of the

previously forbidden foods at first, but your intake will likely level off after a while.

## Pay Attention When You Eat

- Eat slowly
- Don't eat while doing other things
- Focus on the food and how you feel
- Pause to check whether you are still hungry



Here are some ideas to help you pay attention while you eat.

- Eat slowly. This allows you to really enjoy your food and makes it less likely that you will overeat. When you eat quickly, you may go past the point of fullness without realizing it.
- Don't eat while doing other things. Doing something else while you are eating will distract you from being mindful. If you normally eat while doing other things, discover how it feels to just focus on your food. That means turning off the television, computer, or music, and not working, reading, or doing anything else that would distract you.
- Focus on the food and how you feel. Eat foods that taste good and make you feel good.
- Pause to check whether you are still hungry. It takes about 15 minutes for your stomach to send a message to your brain that you are full. So pause every few minutes to check yourself on the hunger scale. You may find that you are satisfied before your food is gone.

## Stop When You are No Longer Hungry

- Use hunger scale
- Give yourself permission to eat when hungry again



Many chronic dieters do not know what being comfortably full feels like because they go between being very hungry and very full. Some have described being comfortably full as a subtle feeling of stomach fullness, feeling satisfied and content, and feeling nothingness—neither hungry nor full.

- Use hunger scale. To assess your fullness, pause every few minutes to check yourself on the hunger scale. Pay attention to your internal cues, and aim to stop eating when you are between 5 and 6 on the scale.
- Give yourself permission to eat when hungry again. If you know that you can eat again when you are hungry, it will be easier to stop eating when you are no longer hungry. In contrast, if you have a food rule that states you cannot eat for several more hours, you would want to keep eating even if you no longer felt hungry.

## Want to Eat But Aren't Hungry?

- Eat anyway
- Distract yourself
- Meet your true needs



What if you are not hungry, but still want to eat? At least three options are available to you.

- Eat anyway. Many people eat even if they are not hungry. Perhaps a friend brings you a donut. Even though you're not hungry, you eat the donut anyway. Use the handout "Want to Eat but Aren't Hungry?" to write down an instance when you were not hungry but ate anyway. How did you feel? Unfortunately, if you eat when you are not hungry, it will be hard to know when to stop. You might end up feeling overly full or uncomfortable instead of feeling satisfied.
- Distract yourself. You could distract yourself by saying that you will think about eating again after you have completed a task or after a certain amount of time has passed. Use the handout to write down an instance when you distracted yourself. How did you feel?
- Meet your true needs. The last and most helpful option when you want to eat but aren't hungry is to figure out what you really need, because if hunger is not the problem, then food is not the real solution. For example, if you are eating to overcome sleepiness, take a nap instead. This option can be very challenging because many people have always eaten to

deal with emotions and situations rather than discovering and meeting their true needs. However, trust that you can learn to recognize and meet your true needs.



## What is Your TRUE Need?

### What You Feel

- Tired?
- Bored?
- Stressed?
- Happy?
- Lonely?
- Angry?

### What to Do



How do you think it will feel if you meet your true needs? Use Handout 2, “Want to Eat but Aren’t Hungry?” to make a plan and write down what you might do to meet your true needs if you want to eat but aren’t hungry. Some possibilities include:

#### What You Feel    What to Do

Tired  
night

Sleep—either a nap or go to sleep for the

Bored  
book

Find a new hobby, take a walk, clean, read a

Stressed  
“Manage Your Stress”

Follow a stress-management tip from

Happy  
Lonely

Smile, celebrate with a nonfood reward

Angry  
talk with someone

Call a friend, help someone in need

Exercise, clean, write down your feelings,

## Reject Dieting!

- Expensive and time-consuming
- Leads to only short-term weight loss
- Has very low long-term success rate



It is estimated that 20 to 30 percent of Americans are on a weight-loss diet at any one time, and many more have just finished dieting or are contemplating starting a new diet. This is particularly common at the start of the new year. Unfortunately, all of this dieting isn't making everyone thin. Here are some things to consider.

- Weight-loss diets are expensive and time-consuming. In 2008, Americans spent a total of \$58.6 billion on weight-loss products and services. Tufts University Health and Nutrition Newsletter reported in 2009 that the average woman tries 104 weight-reduction diets between the ages of 18 and 70, each lasting an average of 5 weeks. That equals 10 years spent trying to lose weight. Do you identify with any of these statistics?
- Weight-loss diets only lead to short-term weight loss. You can lose weight on any kind of diet. A general pattern is for a person to lose weight for up to 6 months. Depending on the diet and how strictly the person follows it, he or she may lose as much as 5 to 10 percent of body weight or 10 to 20 pounds for a 200-pound person.
- Weight-loss diets have a very low long-term success rate. The general pattern continues with gaining back as much or more weight

than was lost. People then blame themselves rather than the diet, start a new diet, and the cycle continues. Unfortunately, the long-term success rate for maintaining weight loss is between 2 and 5 percent of dieters.

## If Not Diet, Then What?

- Mindful Eating
- Physical Activity
- Nurture Your Body



The realization that diets have such poor long-term success rates can be very discouraging. It's easy to think that the next diet you read about will be the one that really works for good. However, you can do many things to move toward a healthy lifestyle, no matter what your weight is.

- Mindful eating. You have learned about eating mindfully today. Continue to practice mindful eating.
- Physical activity. Be physically active every day. Next week, you will review the basics of physical activity, learn strategies for increasing your physical activity, and gain tools for overcoming barriers to physical activity.
- Nurture your body. How can you nurture yourself? Using the stress management tips already covered is a great start. More nurturing tips are coming up.

## Nurture Your Body

- Value and care for yourself
- Think
  - Neutrally/Positively
  - Nonjudgmentally



Balanced living encompasses so many things, as we have discussed over the past few weeks. We often take for granted how much our bodies do for us and often abuse them through stress, poor eating habits, lack of physical activity, and insufficient sleep. As you nurture and love your body, other areas of your life will come into better balance.

- Value and care for yourself. You take care of things you value, so as you value all the things your body does, you will be more likely to take care of all aspects of your health, including physical and emotional health.
- Think. Learn to think neutrally or, better yet, positively about yourself. Don't be judgmental about your habits or your body. Remind yourself that you are working toward mindful eating and that you have value just because you exist.

## Nurture Your Body

- Accept
  - Your hunger
  - Your body
  - Your genetic blueprint
- Embrace size diversity
- Replace negative with positive



Accept. When you accept your hunger and your body as it is, you are able to stop unhelpful practices. You are then able to shift your attention to mindful eating and caring for yourself in healthy ways.

- Accepting your genetic blueprint is very powerful. Although society makes it seem that everyone should be able to have the perfect body, genetics does not work that way. You cannot make yourself taller through willpower. You cannot diet your way to a smaller shoe size.

Although you can develop a mindful eating style, your genetics still determine many of your physical characteristics. As you accept your genetic blueprint, you will feel good about yourself and be able to treat your body more kindly.

- Embrace size diversity. Just as different flowers grow in diverse colors, sizes, and patterns, humans grow in diverse ways. Nurturing your body includes embracing size diversity in ourselves and others. As we discussed in a previous slide, think neutrally or positively about yourself and others. Every time you put yourself or others down or judge yourself or others based on body size or shape, stop yourself.

- Replace negative thoughts and words with neutral or positive thoughts and words. Some people find it helpful to journal the negative thoughts and words with a neutral or

positive replacement. You may make mistakes in accepting and embracing your size and shape but don't give up. It can take time to change your perspective. Learning to embrace size diversity will enable you to value, care for, and nurture yourself.

## Keep a Journal

- Journaling has many benefits:
  - Fewer doctor visits
  - Greater sense of well-being
  - Ability to fight stress, infection, disease
  - Improved emotional and physical strength



Journals can be used to keep a record of your thoughts and experiences. They can be used to track a challenging project. Research shows that people that keep journals have fewer doctor visits; a greater sense of well-being; the ability to fight stress, infection, and disease; and improved emotional and physical strength.



## Mindful Eating Journal

- Record hunger level when you eat or are thinking about eating
- Journal your experiences, successes, challenges, and goals



Journals can also be used to record your progress toward mindful eating, like Handout 3, “Mindful Eating Journal”. Use this journal page to record your hunger level when you eat or want to eat. You may make copies of the journal page for further journaling. If you are not hungry but want to eat anyway, refer back to Handout 2, where you identified ways to meet your true needs. The bottom of each journal page has space for you to journal your experiences, successes, challenges, and goals. Remember that becoming a mindful eater is a journey where you will experience progress as well as mistakes. Continue to trust yourself to become great at listening to your body.

## SMART Goals

- Set a mindful eating goal that will help balance your life.
  - S = Specific
  - M = Measurable
  - A = Achievable
  - R = Rewarding
  - T = Time-bound



Today you have learned to feed your body mindfully, reject dieting, and nurture your body. You have been asked to look at food and nutrition in a way you may not have thought of much before. Remember that as you feed your body mindfully, reject dieting for weight loss, and nurture your body, you will continue your progress in balanced living.

Using **Handout 3**, set a specific mindful eating goal that will help balance your life.

- **S = Specific.** Rather than say, “I will simplify my mornings,” choose something specific such as “I will set the table for breakfast before I go to bed.”
- **M = Measurable.** If your goal is measurable, it is easier to track. An example would be to say “I will relax for 30 minutes before bed each night,” rather than “I will relax more.”
- **A = Achievable.** Goals that are too lofty set you up for failure. Paying off all your debts in a year may not be achievable. It would be better to set a goal to not add further debt and to focus on paying off one debt at a time.

- **R = Rewarding.** You will be more motivated to complete goals that are personally rewarding.

- **T = Time-bound.** Set a time frame for accomplishing your goal. Don't say "I'll clean out my closet when I have time." Set a deadline instead, such as "I will spend 10 minutes per day cleaning my closet until it is done," or "I will clean my closet on Saturday morning before lunch."

## Please Provide Feedback

Your thoughts and opinions matter! Please provide feedback to help us to improve this program.

The link below will take you to our online survey system where you can tell us how you will use this information and evaluate the program.

[https://kstate.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_cuzK1cQozwkyqcB](https://kstate.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_cuzK1cQozwkyqcB)



## Acknowledgement To

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