

7 Tips For Controlling Your Appetite

When it comes to the math behind weight loss, it's all about "calories in, calories out." However, it's not always that black and white. If you suffer from constant food cravings, it may not always be an issue of hunger. Thankfully, there are some steps you can take to remedy the situation. If you're certain that you are eating as you should for your metabolic type and you *still* feel hungry all the time, use these tips to help curb your appetite.

1. Don't Skip Meals

You should be eating three square meals a day, plus one snack. You should also be making sure to space your meals throughout the day so that you don't go longer than four hours without eating. This is incredibly important when it comes to avoiding that nasty stomach grumble because it will keep your blood sugar levels and hunger hormones stable. But my most important rule here? You **MUST** eat breakfast. It is the most important meal of the day (your mother was right about this one). Eating a hearty breakfast helps reduce levels of the hunger hormone ghrelin, keeping you satisfied throughout the morning

2. Hydrate!

When you feel as if you're starving, pour yourself a huge glass of water or grab a bottle of seltzer — it will help quell the urge to snack. If you feel like you just can't look another glass of ice water in the eye, try mixing things up by adding a slice of lemon (or lime) or getting creative with a sprig of fresh mint. Water is one of the best things you can put in your body. It keeps you hydrated and flushes out any toxins that may have taken up residence in your system. So, do you really need another reason to become BFF with H₂O? Didn't think so.

3. Catch Some Zzz's

I know, I know — you're all as crazy busy as I am! No matter what I have going on, I always make a point to get seven hours of shut-eye. Sleep is not just a luxury — it's a necessity! Two hormones, leptin and ghrelin, regulate our appetite, and both are directly affected by how much sleep we get. These hormones work in a kind of "checks and balances" system to control feelings of hunger and fullness. Getting seven hours of shut-eye each night helps the hormones work properly, which in turn will help curb your appetite.

4. Think Before You Snack

Hunger isn't always the reason behind eating. For a lot of people, there are a number of emotional triggers, such as feeling bored or stressed, that are often disguised as hunger. So, the next time you feel hungry between meals, consider the last time you ate. If it was less than three to four hours earlier, your stomach isn't growling, and you're not weak or tired, you're probably emotionally unsatisfied in some way rather than genuinely physically hungry. Keep a journal handy to write down every time you find yourself reaching for some food when you know you're not hungry so that you can recognize the feelings and intercept before they get worse.

5. Think About Something Else

Like I mentioned, eating can be a soothing mechanism if you find yourself bored, stressed, or emotional. If you know that these hunger pangs you're experiencing are **NOT** due to a lack of food, find a way of diverting your attention so that you don't fall victim to the instant gratification. Steer yourself toward positive feelings of self-worth and you'll choose activities and behaviors that inherently contradict self-loathing and self-destructiveness.

Call a friend you haven't talked to in a while, paint your finger nails, pick up a book or magazine, or even better – get outside and do something active! By taking your mind off of those hunger pains, they'll most likely disappear.

6. Take it One Day at a Time

Just because you might be struggling with hunger does not mean all is lost. You can and will lose weight. Even if you're eating a little more than your calorie allowance, you can still lose — it just might take a little longer. Exercise is also a crucial component of a healthy weight-loss journey. Working out harder and more often will help burn the extra calories you might take in if you have a bad day.

7. Stick With It

Sometimes we slip up, and that's okay — healthy living is not an all-or-nothing proposition. Allowing yourself to make mistakes and understanding that you can get back on the wagon and keep moving forward is crucial. I know you can do this. Believe in yourself and try to incorporate my suggestions into your life, and let's see how you do.