

# Reducing Distractions

Are you distracted while dining? You may be eating more than you think! By learning how to cope with regular distractions, you can become a more mindful eater. Many of these distractions go unnoticed because they seem like normal, everyday parts of life. Acknowledging these distractions and learning to take notice of hunger cues while we are eating are important steps in making effective and long term lifestyle changes. The table below describes some of the distractions and situations you might find yourself in, ways to cope with those distractions, and questions to ask yourself in those settings.

Challenge/Distraction Scenario	Ways to cope	Questions to ask yourself
<p>Eating in a group</p> <p>This can be a distraction as there are people to interact with, conversations to be a part of, visual and audible distractions if at a restaurant.</p>	<p>When food arrives and before you begin to eat it:</p> <p>Take a moment to appreciate the food in front of you.</p> <p>Take a self inventory: no need to judge, just create awareness.</p> <p>Check in on hunger level.</p> <p>Begin meal but take a break in a bit to check in again.</p> <p>Continue to check in a few times throughout the meal. Start to pay close attention to fullness and how the food is tasting. This will help you to know when you are satisfied and done.</p>	<p>What will it taste like?</p> <p>How do I feel mentally, emotionally, physically?</p> <p>Where am I on the hunger scale?</p> <p>How does the food taste to me?</p> <p>What is my hunger/fullness now?</p> <p>What is the food's texture?</p>

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Challenge/Distracted Scenario	Ways to cope	Questions to ask yourself
<p>Eating while working or reading</p> <p>Often, we feel we are too busy with work to take a real lunch break and simply eat our lunch without the distraction of work.</p> <p>How could we bring some mindfulness to this type of meal?</p>	<p>When it is time to eat:</p> <p>Stop your work momentarily, acknowledge your food, and give it your focus.</p> <p>Check in with yourself and notice your hunger level.</p> <p>Take the first bite and chew it thoroughly, noticing the flavors and texture of the food.</p> <p>Finish the bite completely and then turn back to your work.</p> <p>Alternate between giving your full focus to your food and your work; each time you take a bite, check in with yourself again.</p>	<p>How am I feeling?</p> <p>What is my hunger level?</p> <p>What are the flavors? Textures?</p> <p>What do I like about this?</p> <p>How does it taste now? What is my hunger level?</p>
<p>Eating in front of the TV</p> <p>The ultimate in mindless eating!</p>	<p>Try turning off the TV when eating; instead, listen to music or a podcast.</p> <p>If you are watching TV and think you'd like a snack, check in with yourself. Are you hungry or eating out of habit?</p> <p>Try pausing what you are watching and then eating your snack in another area away from the TV.</p> <p>If you are looking for an experience of eating while TV watching, bring a mindfully portioned amount to eat while watching TV. Then you have a built in check-in moment when you finish your portion.</p>	<p>Am I hungry? Thirsty?</p> <p>If this is a craving, ask why you might have that craving at this time. What cue is telling you to eat?</p> <p>If you are not hungry, ask yourself, what does my body really want at this moment? Will that be satisfying? What are some other options?</p>

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Think of some distractions that you encounter when eating. What are some ways you might be able to reduce distractions and eat more mindfully?

## Did you know?

Did you know our brain has what's called "spotlight focus"? It can only focus on one thing at a time (even though we think it can multitask).

Distraction	Ways to cope