

## Slow Down and Savour

Did you know that the the simple act of multitasking or being distracted at meal times can impact the choices we make, how we digest our food and how well we absorb nutrients? Paying attention while eating can improve digestion, increase meal satisfaction, and even help with weight management.

### Control the Environment

Avoid mindless eating by setting yourself up for success.

- **At the office:** Pack healthy snacks to avoid mindless eating and poor food choices
- **In the car:** Keep a healthy snack on hand such as a handful of almonds and a piece of fruit. This can help prevent a trip to the take-out window
- **At home:** Keep junk food out of sight

### Eliminate Stressors

Digestion takes place in a resting state and even our thoughts can influence digestive capacity.

Remove distractions:

- Step away from your desk
- Leave your cell phone behind
- Turn off the television or radio

Relax:

- Take a few slow, deep belly breaths before your first bite and throughout your meal

### Slow Down

Carbohydrate digestion begins in the mouth. The salivary enzyme amylase helps to break it down.

- Take time to chew every bite thoroughly
- Pay attention to social cues, and the speed at which those around you are eating. Try not to keep the same pace
- Use your non-dominant hand to eat your meal
- Take a few seconds between bites to check in with yourself to see how you are feeling



### Savour with your senses

The digestion process begins with our senses.

**Seeing:** Take the time to explore your food. Pay close attention and notice colours, textures, shapes and sizes.

**Smelling:** Holding your meal close to your nose, inhale deeply and notice the fragrance or aroma. See if you can differentiate between ingredients. Pay attention to any digestive cues you may be feeling. Did your stomach begin to rumble? Are you salivating?

**Tasting:** Bring a spoon or forkful of food to your lips. Place it in your mouth and very consciously take one or two bites. Pay close attention to how your food tastes. Note the texture and taste and how these change as you continue to chew.



Source:

<http://psychologyofeating.com> | <http://eatingmindfully.com/>  
Mark Williams, John Teasdale, Zindel Segal, and Jon Kabat-Zinn (2007). The Mindful Way through Depression: Freeing Yourself from Chronic Unhappiness. New York: Guilford Press.