

Eliminating food triggers



When you are trying to watch your weight and develop better eating habits, it's important to limit your exposure to food and learn what your vulnerabilities are. List what turns on your "time to eat" signal. Triggers could include temptations like vending machines, restaurants, watching television or the movie theater concession. Your triggers also may be related to negative emotions such as boredom, anger or stress.

My food triggers are:

The following are some proactive strategies to help you achieve your weight loss goals.

Storing Foods

- Keep foods out of sight
- Keep high-calorie foods in the back of the refrigerator where they are harder to spot. If you have two refrigerators, keep the higher calorie snacks in the refrigerator that is used the least
- Unwrap foods only when you are ready to eat them
- Store cut up fruits and vegetables in a bag or container for quick access

Serving Food

- Serve food from the stove in appropriate portion sizes
- Keep serving dishes away from the table to help you resist having seconds



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Eliminating food triggers *continued*



Clean up

- Clean up right away. If you can have someone else do the job, that's even better
- Immediately put away leftovers before you're tempted to snack
- Eat food from your plate only, not someone else's
- Soak cooking utensils while you eat so you won't be tempted to go back and use them

After dinner

- Get up from the table as soon as you finish eating and have an activity already planned
- If you need to stay at the table, remove all serving dishes and food. Sip on a low-calorie beverage
- Brush your teeth after eating. A clean, fresh mouth will help curb the urge to snack
- Clean up quickly. Or, better yet, assign this job to the kids
- Serve coffee or tea in another room to minimize your exposure to the kitchen

Eating locations

- Designate where you will eat meals and snacks. Make it comfortable and inviting
- If everyone has assigned seats at the dinner table, change seats periodically to increase your awareness
- Ninety-five percent of eating is unconscious. Always sit down when eating to help avoid unconscious munching at the kitchen counter or in front of the refrigerator
- Dine at restaurants where food is served at the table instead of ones with all-you-can-eat buffets
- Use the kitchen for eating as much as possible. Write letters, chat on the phone, read and visit with friends in another room

What else are you doing?

- Try to eliminate any distractions when you eat. Watching television or reading can distract you from enjoying your food
- Slow down so you can taste each bite and savor the flavors
- Ask yourself if you're eating out of hunger or for another reason, such as boredom, loneliness, stress or fatigue

Source: *The Balancing Act*, G. Kostas and K. Rojohn

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Don't Weigh to **Feel Great**