

Never Overeat Again

BY HOLLY PEVZNER

Our strategies will halt even the fiercest urges to indulge—no matter what deliciousness is in front of you.



Boost your breakfast

Beginning your day with protein greatly reduces cravings for sweet and fatty food later on. (On the flip side, breakfast skippers have lower dopamine levels, which can lead to eating more.) “About 25 to 30 grams of protein is the sweet spot for feeling satisfied,” says Retelny. Her fave morning option: warm quinoa (1½ cups) made with 1 cup milk and topped with 1 ounce walnuts (14 walnut halves), ¼ cup chopped dates and a dash of cinnamon.

Be the influencer

Chances are you’ll order burgers if your dinner companions do. “It’s human nature to fall into temptation when friends are indulging,” says Mark Hyman, MD, director of the Cleveland Clinic’s Center for Functional Medicine in Ohio. Instead of waiting to be swayed, order first and order healthy, says Hyman. Don’t be surprised if your friends follow suit.

Eat last

While it’s smart to order first, aim to be the final person to pick up their fork. It’s easy to get caught up chowing down as fast as those around you, says Jessica Penner, RD, creator of the “I Quit Overeating” online program. Let others start so you can set your own pace.

Drink this before dinner

Just two 8-ounce glasses of water sipped 30 minutes prior to a meal keeps overeating at bay, according to research. Water fills you up, so you feel satisfied and eat less. “Broth-based soups, tea and water-laden fruits and veggies work

similarly,” says Vicki Shanta Retelny, RDN, author of *Total Body Diet for Dummies*.

Just focus

Multitasking can make you pack on pounds. Although you might save time by eating while driving, checking email or watching TV, what you’re

definitely not doing is saving calories. “When food hits your stomach, ‘stretch receptors’ send a signal to the brain saying ‘You’re full!’” explains Kimberly Gomer, MS, RD, the director of nutrition at Pritikin Longevity Center + Spa in Miami. “But multitasking disrupts that pathway, and the signal doesn’t come through.”



Take advantage of fatty foods

Nuts, olive oil, full-fat dairy, avocados and even dark chocolate work to quell overeating—especially when you have them instead of quickly digested carbs like bread and white rice, says David Ludwig, MD, PhD, director of the New Balance Foundation Obesity Prevention Center, Boston Children's Hospital. Processed carbs overstimulate insulin production, which signals fat cells to hoard calories. This leaves you super hungry post-snack, craving more food to replace the calories being siphoned off. The upshot? Once you start swapping in healthy fats, which don't raise insulin, you'll retrain your fat cells, says Ludwig.



Shrink portions

The average adult eats 92% of what she puts on her plate. Just knowing this may make you more mindful when doling out portions. If you're still hungry 20 minutes after your first helping, go back for seconds only on vegetables, says Hyman. "After all, it's nearly impossible to pig out on broccoli."

Eat when you're hungry

Headaches and stomach growls are often your brain and belly's way of telling you fuel is needed. "Focus on listening to hunger and satiety cues, and eat only if you are truly hungry," says Gomer. Keep nutritious snacks (like apples) on hand to help avoid unhealthy choices when you're starving.

Schedule an interruption

Can't stop snacking? Keep some gum handy to pop in your mouth after a few bites. Do you automatically go for seconds? Brew and sip a cup of tea between servings. Tend to overdo it at restaurants? Set your phone to vibrate 20 minutes after food hits the table to go for a bathroom break. "These types of mindful distractions allow you to become aware of your hunger and fullness," says Retelny. "And once you're in tune with your internal cues, you'll naturally stop overriding satiety for the sake of another bite."

Take five at 3

Instead of reaching for a treat when that afternoon slump strikes, spend 5 to 10 minutes with your eyes closed or go for a walk. "We often confuse midday exhaustion with hunger," says Michelle May, MD, author of *Eat What You Love, Love What You Eat*. "Once the fatigue is taken care of, the desire to eat fades."

Reposition your vino

Alcohol makes food smell better, which can result in eating more. But don't pour out your pinot just yet. Instead, enjoy it *with* dinner rather than *before*. "This helps you think of it as 'food'—with calories and nutrients—just like the rest of your meal," says Retelny. Also consider moving your glass of wine to the side of your plate near your non-dominant hand and your glass of water near your dominant hand. "When you mindlessly reach for wine, you'll touch the glass of water and have to consciously think to grab the wine," says Penner.

Front-load with veggies

Put out the vegetable sides ahead of your main dish. If you have a large portion that's all veggies first, you'll naturally partake of less of the protein and carbs, which are typically higher in calories, says Penner.



Plan the leftovers

When reading a restaurant menu, think about tomorrow's lunch. "It's natural to want to get our money's worth, so we may feel compelled to clean our plate," says May. "But if we view a serving as two meals, we do get our money's worth." To

help, ask the waiter to bring a takeout box with your meal so you can fill it up right away. "I also like to create a speed bump on my plate by dividing my meal in two," says May. "When I'm about to reach the second portion, I reassess how hungry I am—and think about how good this will be tomorrow."

Skip the "healthy" dessert

You're more likely to scarf down "lite" cookies than regular ol' full-fat yummys, according to new research in the *Journal of the Association for Consumer Research*. Quite simply, if we perceive a food to be on the healthier side, we're more likely to overdo it. So when you want to treat yourself, just go for the real thing—you may polish off a smaller amount. To help, Retelny serves regular ice cream in a ½-cup bowl. "I also love to order the kiddie cone or any small version of a dessert, like a cake pop," she says.

Don't eat past 8 p.m.

The hours between dinner and bed are prime time for feasting. "Many of us try to 'be good' all day, and we're left with a calorie deficit at night that can lead to a binge," says Mary Purdy, MS, RDN, an adjunct nutrition professor at Bastyr University in Seattle. Try brushing your teeth three hours before bedtime. Says Purdy, "It'll help you commit to the fact that mealtime is officially over."



A cheat day here and there is fine, but a longer streak can have lasting consequences. Just one month of overindulging and under-exercising can change your physiology, making it significantly harder to lose—and keep off—weight even after returning to your healthier ways, according to research.