



Manage Your Food Cues

WHAT TRIGGERS ARE IN YOUR ENVIRONMENT THAT SABOTAGE YOUR EATING & EXERCISING?

Types of Hunger



PHYSICAL HUNGER



PSYCHOLOGICAL HUNGER





PHYSICAL HUNGER

- **Physical hunger** internal signals provided by your body letting you know it is time to eat. This is a normal physiological process. When you are hungry, do you find yourself enjoying your food more?

Is physical hunger a bad thing? No, it is a normal process of our body telling us it is time to refuel. Our bodies require food for energy.

But, if we go too long without eating (greater than 4 – 5 hours) we set ourselves up for extreme hunger and then find ourselves eating fast and eating too much! When we are overly hungry, we look for something, anything to fill the gap.

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PSYCHOLOGICAL HUNGER

- **“Head hunger.”** Head hunger is different from physical hunger, because you are not hungry but go ahead & eat. There are a lot of reasons why we eat when we do. “Head hunger” can be based on our senses (sight, smell, taste), emotions such as stress, or a particular time of day. Just the sight or smell of food can lead us to want to eat. These eating episodes can be out of habit, such as eating at a certain time of the day. You go take a break with co-workers; everyone else eats a snack so you do to. The family eats snacks in the evening so you do to.
- The purpose of this class is to have you start thinking about why you eat when you do. When you eat, ask yourself is it based on a physical hunger or a head hunger?
- Let’s explore the environmental cues that may be trigger the head hunger leading you to want to eat when you are not hungry and have not planned to eat.

Types of Hunger - Physical Hunger

- Stomach pangs
- Empty feeling in the stomach
- Light-Headedness
- Slight Headache

The Hunger Scale	
1	Physically faint
2	Ravenous
3	Fairly hungry
4	Slightly hungry
5	Neutral
6	Pleasantly satisfied
7	Full



Types of Hunger – Psychological Hunger

- Food smells good
- Food looks good
- Cravings
- Specific food
- Time of day
- Emotions: stress, boredom, fatigue



Environmental Cues

What in your environment triggers you to want to eat inappropriately?

Social Cues

Family/friends

Parties/Special Occasions

Conducting business over a meal

- **External Cues**

- Sight or smell of food
- Specific food
- Particular places i.e., kitchen, buffets, car
- Specific activity i.e., TV
- Certain times of day:
 - Break time at work
 - Arriving home from work
 - After dinner, before bedtime

Environmental Cues

- Do you use food to medicate or make yourself feel better?
- Is food your friend?
- Is your motivation to eat healthy reduced when you are tired?
- Do you have, at times, negative thoughts or feelings of failure when you are not able to accomplish your goal of healthy eating?

**If you answered “yes” to one or more of the questions on the left, you may be an emotional eater.



Emotional Eating

- We all have emotions and have learned to deal with those emotions in various ways. There are different ways to effectively deal with emotions, but food is not one of them.
- Not all emotions are negative. What do we often do when we are happy & celebrating?
- Bariatric surgery alters the stomach but it does not change your thoughts or emotions. Now is the time to identify those emotion(s) that trigger you to eat inappropriately. If you are an emotional eater, now is the time to find non-food ways to deal with the emotional cues in your environment that trigger you to use food to feel better or self-medicate.

Environmental Cues

- **Internal Cues (Emotions)**

- Depressed
- Stress
- Anxious
- Lonely
- Bored
- Tired
- Happy

12 INDICATIVE SIGNS OF EMOTIONAL EATING

1. You **eat** when you are **stressed**
2. You **eat** as a response to **your emotions**
3. You **seek solace** in **food**
4. You have **trouble losing weight** (due to the way you eat).
5. Your eating is **out of control** (You can't stop yourself from eating)
6. You eat to **feel happy**
7. You eat **when you feel happy**
8. You are **fascinated** with **eating / food**
9. You use **emotionally-charged** words to **describe** food / eating
10. You **eat** even though you are **rightfully full**
11. You **think of eating** even though you are **rightfully full**
12. You have **random food cravings** out of the blue

Physical Hunger

vs.

Emotional Hunger

Comes on gradually &
can be postponed

Comes on suddenly &
feels urgent

Can be satisfied with any
type of food

Causes specific cravings,
Pizza, chocolate, ice-cream...

Once you're full you can
stop eating

Eat more than you normally
would. Feel uncomfortably full.

Causes satisfaction,
doesn't cause guilt

Leaves you feeling guilty
& cross with yourself.



EMOTIONS!

Don't let your emotions get the best of you.

Coping with Food Cues

1. **Identify** the type of hunger: physical or head hunger.
2. If **physical hunger**, include a healthy snack if the meal is greater than 1 hour until your next meal.
3. If **head hunger**, identify the trigger that is cueing you to eat.
4. How will you deal with this cue?
Practice overcoming it.



Two basic strategies to deal with cues:

The logo for 'strat·e·gize' is displayed in a white box. The word is written in a lowercase, sans-serif font with dots between the 't' and 'e', and between the 'e' and 'g'.

1. **Adapt** your response to the cue by using preplanned strategies.

or

2. **Eliminate** the cue.



Cue



1. Can this cue be avoided?
2. If not avoidable, how can I adapt my response to this cue?
3. What is the best solution for coping with this cue?
4. What steps do I need to take to implement this solution?
5. How will I know when I have successfully managed the cue?

Identify, strategize, practice

1

Identify the trigger that cues you to eat.



2

Brainstorm for ways to avoid or adapt to the problem cue.



3



a plan for attaining the goal.

Identify, strategize, practice

4



5

Don't give up!



6

Revise the plan as needed and
continue to practice 😊

Adapt by planning for alternate activities

- Develop a list of “**Alternate Activities**”
 - Activities you enjoy
 - Activities you need to accomplish
 - Activities you want to try

Plan ahead and make a list of alternative activities that you can refer to and incorporate when the urge to eat hits. The more planned you are, the more likely you are to succeed.



Example of Cue Adaption

- Doughnuts are frequently brought to the office by the manager or other employees and are left on a counter for anyone passing by. I love doughnuts! I have to pass by the box of doughnuts frequently. Help!



Examples of adaptation:

- 1) Take healthier snacks that you like to work to eat in place of doughnuts or other junk foods that are brought into the office.
- 2) If you must have the doughnut, try eating a couple of doughnut holes in place of the large doughnut and log it.

Example of Cue Elimination

- I am tired & hungry when leaving work. I drive by “Dairy Queen” which is on my way home and frequently go thru the drive-thru to purchase something to eat as a snack



Example of elimination: Plan to take a different route home, therefore not driving by DQ.

Managing Your Food & Activity Cues

- Urges to eat can be thought of as waves, they start small but quickly build.
- Learn to ride out the urge to eat!





**LOSING WEIGHT AND GETTING HEALTHIER TAKES TIME,
PLANNING AND PRACTICE!**