



Top 10 Tips for Weight Loss *

by
Peter Field

We see many clients who are having trouble controlling their weight, here in our UK hypno-psychotherapy practice. Here are my top 10 tips for helping to manage your eating:

- 1. Eat what you feel like eating** – Remember, no food in and of itself is fattening – it's the excess of food that puts the weight on. Allow yourself to eat what you feel like, consciously, in small quantities and **only** at meal times. Denial just isn't the way to go. Being reasonable is.
- 2. Never eat while watching TV** – When we watch television, or sit in front of a computer screen, we tend to automatically enter into a form of hypnosis. In this state our critical faculty becomes disengaged, which is why we can cry at a sad movie that we know is not real, and why time can pass so rapidly when in front of the pc. If we eat in this state we miss many of the cues that tell us we're satisfied. To manage your eating, **never** eat in front of the TV or pc screen.
- 3. Get enough sleep** – The hormone which regulates hunger is called leptin. Too little sleep causes leptin levels to drop. Since leptin is the trigger that notifies the brain that the stomach has eaten enough, lack of this important hormone can affect our eating patterns and consequently our weight. The amount of sleep each individual needs is personal to each individual, with children needing more and older people often needing less. Be sure you are getting the right amount of sleep for your needs.
- 4. Ditch the Scales** – Scale weight can fluctuate wildly depending on many factors not necessarily directly connected with eating. The **real** indicator of how well you're doing is the fit of your clothes and the way you feel inside. You know you're doing fine when you can fit into that dress or those trousers that were previously bursting at the seams. Focusing on scale weight does you no favours and can even de-motivate you. Let your clothes and feelings tell you how well you're doing instead.
- 5. Learn to listen to your inner self** – You have your own inner wisdom that knows exactly what you need in order to be healthy. Learn to listen to it. Diets don't usually take this into account. They work at the symptom level – the overeating – and on denial: 'No, you can't have this'; 'No you mustn't have that'. And each time the inner self is being ignored. Then, when the diet is at an end, the weight is put right back on again, often with a vengeance! The fact is that the more we understand our feelings and what they're telling us, the more in control we are capable of becoming. There's a lot to be said for working with a good therapist who knows how to help you in this area.
- 6. End emotional eating** – Eat only when hungry. Easier said than done? Here's a simple A B C way to start.

A: When you feel like putting something into your mouth STOP and ask yourself if it's **really** hunger, or is it boredom, frustration, loneliness or some other emotion that you're attempting to feed?

B: Identify the cause of the **feeling**. Give it a name. Only then can you really do something about it – other than eating.

C: Take care of the **feeling**. For example, if it's boredom, maybe this means you need to challenge yourself a bit more; if it's frustration, perhaps you need to change what you've been doing, so try something else. Loneliness means we have a healthy need for human company: talk to a friend, call someone, develop an outside interest that involves others. You get the idea – A B C.
- 7. Smaller plates equal smaller quantities** – The way food is presented to the eye influences the way the mind perceives it. Remember, the average adult stomach is only about the size of a fist. It really doesn't take all that much food to fill and satisfy it. By using smaller plates, we programme the subconscious mind to appreciate and accept a plateful of food, thereby increasing our chances of eating more reasonable quantities.
- 8. Chew each bite thoroughly** – There is a saying in India: 'Drink your food'. What's meant by this is that food should be so thoroughly chewed that it becomes paste-like and easy to swallow. Many people just bolt down their food without sufficiently chewing it. Needless to say, this does nothing for the waistline! A useful trick is to **put your eating utensils down** in between mouthfuls. Change the way you treat food in your mouth and you give your body the very best chance of proper absorption and your mind of knowing when your stomach is full.
- 9. Eat some carbohydrates** – The brain runs on a fuel called glycogen, produced when carbohydrates are converted to sugars that are in turn converted to glycogen. Insufficient quantities of glycogen affect our mental functioning and consequently our mood. And we know that overeating has a lot to do with mood and how we **feel**. So make sure you eat some complex carbohydrates – whole wheat bread, brown rice, etc – in order to give your brain, and your mind, what it needs. The key here, of course, is moderation.
- 10. Do NOT beat yourself up if you slip** – Mistakes are there to be learned from, which is why psychologists call them 'successive approximations'. Each time we make a mistake it's an opportunity to learn how to get it right. So do just that. Then pick yourself up and get on with it. You can do it, you know you can!

*** IMPORTANT: This Information is not a replacement for medical or nutritional advice. Be sure to consult your doctor or medical advisor before beginning any programme of weight reduction.**

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