

The Hunger Level Scale

Over time, people often lose touch with how physical hunger and fullness actually feel. The Hunger Level Scale can help you to think about how hungry you really are and decide whether your desire to eat comes from real hunger or other reasons.

To manage your weight successfully:

1. Ask yourself, “Am I really physically hungry?”

Use the Hunger Level Scale below to determine your level of hunger. The table on the following page describes what physical hunger typically feels like.

2. Rate your hunger before you eat

Wait until you are at ‘3’ on the scale before eating and then stop when you reach ‘6’. Regular meals are important to prevent you from reaching ‘1’ or ‘2’ on the

scale. At ‘1’ or ‘2’ you can experience a loss of control, over eat poor food choices, and potentially reach a ‘7’ or more on the scale.

3. Think about other reasons you may want to eat

If you rate yourself 6 or above on the hunger scale, think about other reasons that may be triggering you to eat:

- Places/Situations
- People
- Emotions

4. Plan and take control

Instead of eating, try doing something else. Swap eating with other activities such as walking, playing with your dog, calling a friend, repairing something, or meditating, for example.

Hunger Level Scale		
Rating		Physical Sensation
	1	Starvation, need to eat now, hunger pains, shaky, light headed
	2	Slight pain in stomach, hard to concentrate, lack of energy
	3	Beginning of physical signs of hunger, stomach growling sometimes
	4	Could eat if it were suggested
	5	Neutral
	6	Satisfied
	7	Feel food in stomach
	8	Stomach sticks out
	9	Bloated, clothes feel tight, sleepy and drained
	10	Definitely full, stomach uncomfortable, no energy, physically sick

Physical hunger	Psychological hunger
Increases gradually	Makes a sudden appearance
An apple would do	You want a certain type of food, tends not to be an apple
Can wait for food ('I need to have something to eat soon')	Want food now; sense of urgency, panic
A response to your body's definite need (i.e. rumbling tummy)	In response to a feeling: upset, bored, tired etc.
A deliberate choice eaten with awareness	Impulsive choice, eaten quickly. You may not even taste the food
Sense of satisfaction after eating	You still want more, or a different type of food e.g. sweet after salty
No guilt	Lots of guilt and promises about next time

Learn your body's hunger signals

Learn the difference between physical hunger and psychological hunger. The table above describes the difference.

The Hunger Awareness Diary

Use the Hunger Awareness Diary, on the next page, to help you:

- Rate your hunger and fullness before and after you eat will help you better understand what makes you stop and start eating.
- Find out how often you eat for reasons other than hunger.

Useful apps

Using an app to monitor your hunger and to help you slow down at meals may be a more fun and convenient option for you. There are many apps available to help with mindful eating; these are some examples:

- Eat Chew Rest – available from:
<https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/eat-chew-rest/id471276220?mt=8>
- Eat Slowly – available from:
<https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/eatslowly/id659029209?mt=8>



Queensland
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Hunger Awareness Diary

Day:

Date:

Time	Before eating			Food eaten	After Eating	
	Where are you eating? Who are you eating with?	Thoughts and feelings before you eat	Hunger before eating (scale 1-10)		Hunger/fullness after eating (1-10)	Do you feel satisfied? If not, what do you think would have satisfied you?