



Session 15: Mindful Eating, Mindful Movement

Are there times when you realize that you are still eating and simply haven't noticed that you are not even hungry anymore?

Do you ever get to the end of a long day and realize how little you have moved and how much time you spent sitting?

These patterns are common.

All of us can benefit from practicing being more "**mindful**" of our eating and movement habits throughout the day.

Being more **mindful** can help us to reach or maintain our healthy lifestyle goals. It may also help our physical and mental well-being.

Let's start with **mindful eating**.

1. Mindful eating means to eat slowly and with awareness.

- Tune into all your senses while you eat.
- Be aware of your level of hunger and fullness.

2. Mindful eating helps with weight management.

- Your brain has time to register that you are full. This takes about 20 minutes. If you eat too quickly, you are more likely to overeat.
- When you notice and enjoy every mouthful, you will feel more satisfied at the end of the meal.

3. Prepare to eat slowly and mindfully.

- **Create a calm eating environment.** This lets you pay attention to what you are eating. Put flowers, plants, or a candle on the table. Turn on calming music.
- **Decrease distractions.** Avoid (or limit) eating while doing other things at the same time. Turn off the TV, electronics, phones, and put away reading material.
- **Sit down and relax.** Avoid (or limit) eating while standing in the kitchen or when on the run.
- **Appreciate the moment.** When you first sit down to eat, pause for a minute. Take a few deep breaths. Say grace, if that is your tradition. Or think about all of the hands that brought the food to your table.



4. Focus on your food. Eat slowly, with awareness. Try to make each meal last at least 20 minutes.

- Look at the food on your plate. Notice the colors, shapes, and aroma of the food.
- Take small bites. Be aware of how the food feels in your mouth, the texture. Take time to savor the taste of the food.
- Chew slowly and be aware of how much you are chewing. Try to chew at least 5 times more per mouthful than you usually do.
- Finish chewing and swallowing each bite before you put more food on your fork.
- Put your fork down for 10-15 seconds after a few bites. Pause to take a sip of water or take a deep breath. These small changes will really help you extend your mealtime.
- You may be distracted by others or your own thoughts. Pause, and return your focus to the food in front of you.

5. Stay tuned to your level of hunger and fullness.

- Several times during the meal, check your level of hunger and fullness. Do you **need** more food? Do you **want** more food?
- Are you still eating just because there is food left on your plate?

Session 15, Page 3

- Are you ready to stop eating? If so, push away your plate and pay attention to any physical sensations.

6. Practice eating mindfully with others and alone.

- Take time to enjoy one another's company.
- You may want to try eating a meal in silence. Even short periods of silence can be very calming.

Enjoy each and every bite of your food.

Practice eating slowly and mindfully.

This may help you feel physically and mentally satisfied with a smaller amount of food.

What can you see yourself doing to improve your mindful eating experience?



Mindful Movement

Life is busy. Many people tell us that they feel stressed and overwhelmed by all they need to accomplish at home, at work, for their family and community.

For some of you, this means long periods of sitting with little time spent stretching, moving, or doing much planned physical activity.

Practicing **mindful movement** can help you break this pattern.

1. Mindful movement means to be aware of your total movement throughout the day.

- Tune in to how much sitting you do.
- Add movement and activity when and where you can.

2. Mindful movement also means doing physical activity (such as a simple 15-20 minute walk) with purpose and increased awareness of the full experience.

- Tune into your posture and breathing as you prepare for walking (or any other exercise). Notice how your body feels.
- Pay attention to the rhythm of your breathing and how it changes as you move.
- Notice the movement of your feet. Feel how your feet make contact with the ground and then move through the air. Also notice the contact between your feet and your socks or shoes as you move.
- Do you notice any other physical sensations? Some people get distracted by changes in body heat or other minor discomforts. Try to counter these thoughts by reflecting on the opportunities that movement allows. Gently bring your attention back to the present moment.
- Appreciate the outdoors. Tune into the sights and sounds of nature.

3. Pay attention to how your body feels when moving after long periods of sitting.

- Be aware of how you feel when you make a shift from long periods of sitting to stretching, moving, and being active.

4. Stop and consider all the amazing work your body does day in and day out. Think about adding movement to your routine that increases awareness of and appreciation for your physical well-being (such as simple stretches or gentle yoga).

- Use mindful movement to relax, release tension, and reduce stress.
- Use mindful awareness to notice how often you give yourself permission to be physically active or to take movement breaks during long bouts of sitting.

Use mindfulness to identify any positive feelings you get from movement.

Moving mindfully means being alert to any and all opportunities for movement. This may include sitting less or making time for planned physical activity you enjoy.

- Use your Activity Tracker to stay aware of how much you move during the day. What happens to your steps as you become more mindful about movement?
- Use the **Active Head Challenge** (Session 8) to help you find ways to add as many short bursts of “spontaneous activity” as you can. Do you feel better at the end of an **Active Head** day?
- How can you turn a spare minute into an “active minute”?
- List ways you could put mindful movement into a typical day.



To Do:

Check the boxes when you complete each item:

The Basics:

- Keep track of your weight.
- Record what you eat and drink using your preferred method. Come as close as you can to your calorie and fat gram goals.
- Record your physical activity using your preferred method. Come as close as you can to your activity goals.
 - Be physically active for at least 150 minutes per week.
 - Aim for an average of at least 50,000 steps per week.
 - Include resistance training at least 2 times per week.
- Keep moving throughout the day.

What's New:

Practice Mindful Eating

- Create a calm eating environment. See suggestions on page 1.
- Practice eating slowly and mindfully. Try to make each meal last about 20 minutes. See suggestions on page 2.
- When practicing mindful eating were you aware of any new thoughts or feelings? _____
- On a scale of 1-5 (1=none and 5=a lot) rate your experience of:

Physical fullness	1	2	3	4	5
Enjoyment of the food	1	2	3	4	5
Overall satisfaction	1	2	3	4	5

Practice Mindful Movement

- Be aware of how much time you spend sitting.
- Add movement and activity when and where you can.
- When practicing mindful movement were you aware of any new thoughts or feelings? _____
- Try some of the strategies listed on page 4-5. How did it go?
