



Wellbeing Insights

Living a Better, More Vibrant Life



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Mindful Eating A Practical Approach to Restoring Balance with Food

Eating is a natural, healthy and pleasurable activity to meet our energy and nutritional needs. But many people struggle with balance – either overeating and feeling out of control or trying to follow confusing and unsustainable rules in order to maintain control. In our food-abundant, diet-obsessed culture, eating can become mindless, consuming and guilt-inducing.

Mindful eating is growing in popularity as an alternative to the conventional rules-based diets. It's proven to restore balance to our relationship with food and return eating to the natural, joyful activity it's supposed to be.

What is mindful eating?

- Eating with the intention of caring for yourself

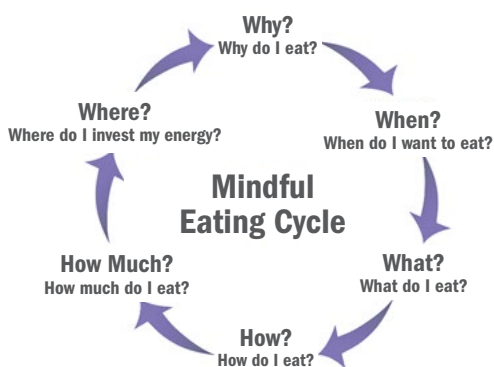
- Eating with the attention necessary for noticing and enjoying your food and its effects on your body
- Developing greater awareness of physical, environmental and emotional cues for eating
- Learning to address non-hunger triggers in more effective ways than eating
- Choosing food in a way that balances your needs for enjoyment and nourishment
- Using the fuel you've consumed to live the vibrant life you crave

Mindful Eating

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The Mindful Eating Cycle

Perhaps the best way to understand how mindful eating helps is to become familiar with the Mindful Eating Cycle, a powerful decision-making model developed by the founder of *Am I Hungry? Mindful Eating Programs and Training*, Michelle May, M.D.



It can help you take control of the hundreds of decisions made about eating every day by addressing six decision points:

1. Why do I eat?

The underlying reasons a person eats drive every decision that follows; however, many people lack awareness and understanding about why they eat the way they do. When eating doesn't adequately address their underlying need (e.g., boredom, stress), they may eat to excess yet still feel unsatisfied. Conventional approaches to food focus on what and how much people should eat without addressing why they're eating in the first place. As a result, they don't learn to recognize and meet their true needs. By exploring why they do what they do, most people will learn to recognize the triggers that drive them to eat when they're not hungry or continue to eat past the point of satiety.

2. When do I eat?

Many traditional approaches to eating give people rules about when to eat, which disconnect them from their natural fuel needs and encourage them to ignore or distrust their internal signals of hunger and satiety. Asking the question, "Am I hungry?," whenever they feel like eating helps people re-establish fuel needs as the primary cue for eating. This simple but powerful question helps differentiate hunger from environmental and emotional triggers.

Through experience they can rediscover how to use hunger as their most effective cue for knowing when to eat. When they recognize that the desire to eat is not due to hunger, they can identify opportunities for meeting their needs in more effective ways.

3. What do I eat?

The traditional approach to food selection is often restrictive in nature, requiring individuals to maintain willpower indefinitely in order to comply with the rules, which are often confusing and change frequently. Research has shown that people who eat restrictively become more preoccupied with food, often experience feelings of deprivation and guilt, and are more likely to overeat when they are no longer able to follow the rules. This cycle is counter-productive, exhausting and ultimately decreases wellbeing over time.

Mindful eating recognizes that "normal" eating includes consuming a variety of foods, including foods eaten for pleasure. The "all foods can fit" approach empowers individuals to make choices about what they eat based on the principles of balance, variety and moderation rather than strict, unsustainable rules. When deprivation is no longer a factor, there is less drive to overeat "forbidden" foods. Most people naturally gravitate toward balanced eating when supported by education and personal experience regarding the effects that

different foods have on their body, mood and energy.

4. How do I eat?

It's common to eat quickly when distracted by other activities such as watching TV, driving or working. This sets the stage for overeating because feelings of satiety and satisfaction are missed when one eats too fast or doesn't pay attention to their meal or their body.

Through mindful eating, people learn to devote purposeful attention to eating by minimizing distractions, tuning in to the experience, slowing down and savoring the food. This practice transfers to other areas of their lives as they become more mindful in self-care, relationships and work.

5. How much do I eat?

Most traditional interventions focus heavily on how much people are allowed to eat using external, control-based methods for determining quantity, such as counting calories or measuring food. These behaviors consume an unsustainable amount of time, energy and willpower. They transform eating into a mechanical experience that is disconnected from one's internal signals and may foster problematic thoughts, feelings and behaviors.

With mindful eating, individuals reconnect with their ability to determine how much to eat by paying attention to cues of satiety. When the amount of food they eat aligns with the amount of fuel their body needs, they feel better, more satisfied and able to more effectively meet their wellbeing and quality of life goals.

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On the Menu

Mussels

Did you know that, much like produce, seafood is seasonal? It's true! Fall is not only a time to enjoy root veggies and leafy greens, it's also the perfect time for harvesting mollusks like clams, mussels and oysters. While oysters and clams get most of the attention (we're looking at you, clam chowder), mussels have been cultivated in Europe for over 800 years. When prepared correctly, mussels are usually mild and tender and take on the flavor of whatever they are cooked with. They also contain many valuable nutrients like omega-3 fatty acids, protein and vitamin B12.

Here are some additional benefits to eating mussels:

- They offer iron and protein levels comparable to red meat but are more environmentally friendly and easier to farm.
- They're high in vitamin A, which supports healthy eyes, skin and immune system.
- They're good sources of zinc, which plays a critical role in metabolizing nutrients and growing and repairing body tissue.

Purchasing Tips

When purchasing fresh mussels, it's most important to make sure they are alive. To check, lightly tap on the open mussels with your fingers to make sure they close. The mussels should have a light ocean scent but not a strong fishy smell.

If live mussels are not available, frozen mussels are the next best option. Try to find a variety still in their shells and avoid any that contain strange ingredients or additives, which may indicate they've been dyed. Frozen mussels are usually pre-steamed prior to freezing, so you'll only need to lightly re-steam them for a few minutes; over-steamed mussels will result in a rubbery, tough and unpleasant texture.

Keep It Fresh

Like most seafood, mussels are best when eaten as fresh as possible. Fresh mussels can be refrigerated in their shells in a bowl covered with a clean, damp cloth or paper towel.

Fresh mussels will keep for 2 to 3 days. Do not store in water.

Cleaning Tips

There's no need to soak mussels before cooking. Run them under cold water and scrub the shells with a brush or use fingertips to remove any excess dirt. Mussels may have a fibrous brown string coming out of its side known as the "beard," which is inedible. Remove the beard by pulling it towards the hinge of the shell and then cook immediately. Discard any broken shells.

Steamed Mussels with White Wine & Garlic

Ingredients:

- 1½ lbs. fresh mussels, cleaned with beard removed
- ¾ cup roma tomatoes, ¼-inch dice
- ½ cup shallots, minced
- ½ cup white wine (chardonnay or dry white wine)
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- 2 Tbsp. parsley, chopped
- 2 Tbsp. lemon juice
- Zest of 1 lemon
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Directions:

Heat butter in a large, shallow pot over medium-high heat. Add shallots and garlic when butter starts to foam. Stir and cook until shallots are transparent and garlic is soft, about 2 minutes. Add tomatoes, stir and cook another 2 minutes. Add wine, lemon zest and half of the lemon juice. Quickly add the cleaned mussels to the pot, cover and steam for 3 minutes. Carefully lift the lid and stir mussels. Cover and steam another 2 to 3 minutes until mussels are opened up and cooked. Taste sauce and add the remaining lemon juice. Add salt and pepper and top with parsley.

Nutrition Info

Per Serving (¼ of batch)

Calories	196
Total Fat	12g
Carbohydrates	9g
Sugar	2g
Fiber	0.5g
Protein	9g
Sodium	498mg



Ask the Experts

Get to know the CBIZ Engagement & Wellbeing Solutions team as we ask our experts about their own personal journey to living a vibrant life. This month we sat down with Emily Noll, Amy Howell and Michelle Kruse. Check out what they had to say.



Emily Noll,
National Director

Known on our team as
The Anchor:
Protective, Purposeful, Analytical



Amy Howell,
Wellbeing Consultant

Known on our team as
The Secret Weapon:
Nimble, Unassuming, Independent



Michelle Kruse,
Wellbeing Coordinator

Known on our team as
The Victor:
Respected, Competitive,
Results-Oriented

Q Research suggests we are happy and fulfilled when we are able to apply our strengths to our work to find purpose and meaning. How do you bring your unique strengths to work each day?

Emily: As The Anchor on our team, it's my passion to provide encouragement and opportunities for others to use their strengths and engage in meaningful work. Part of my approach as a leader and consultant is to thoughtfully analyze the impact of programs and practices on people and workplace culture. Protecting, nurturing and celebrating the livelihood of others in my daily work life makes me happy!

Amy: One of my driving forces is curiosity. When I lean in to my curiosity I can think more deeply and rationally about decisions and come up with creative solutions.

Michelle: I value education and knowledge, and I'm curious about

everything! I'm also pretty competitive and determined and tend to go all in when working on projects, setting high expectations for myself and my teammates. In my role I'm constantly challenged with "wouldn't it be great if we could ..." projects. There's nothing I love more than bringing the right people and resources together to bring ideas to fruition – the bigger the challenge, the better!

Q From blogs to podcasts to apps, there's an abundant stream of information and resources related to personal growth and wellbeing. Are there any you have found to be most beneficial?

Emily: When I hit the track or the trail, I enjoy the [Rock My Run](#) app. Listening to upbeat or nostalgic songs while I sweat is a double boost to my state of mind. While I commute, I listen to the [Happier](#) podcast. Host Gretchen Rubin and her guests share a variety of happiness hacks to reduce worry, lighten up, repurpose

and express gratitude. Lastly, I enjoy following therapist and writer [@KNicoleWriting](#) on Instagram for monthly self-care checkups.

Amy: [Rose-minded.com](#) is a blog about mental health and self-care. I like reading it because it gives real-life ideas for simple things I can do to brighten my day. It encourages readers to take time each day to stop and reflect on the little things that make us happy (e.g., a hot cup of coffee on a cold morning). It also provides journaling prompts to manage stress and anxiety.

Michelle: I use the [Nike Training Club](#) app almost every day. I work out at home; without a plan for each workout, I'd never get anything done. My sister, brother and I all use it; we keep tabs on and challenge each other.

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Ask the Experts

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Q When it comes to tending to your own wellbeing, what area proves to be the most difficult for you and why?

Emily: It can be a challenge to disconnect from media, social or otherwise. I'm intensely curious about the world around me, which makes my iPhone golden but also my kryptonite. From wellbeing articles to email to



brain games to politics, the world is virtually at my fingertips. But when one of my kids said, "Mom, put down your phone," I

realized I need to be more mindful about the media and technology. I'm trying to be more present and sometimes even allow myself to be lost in the moment.

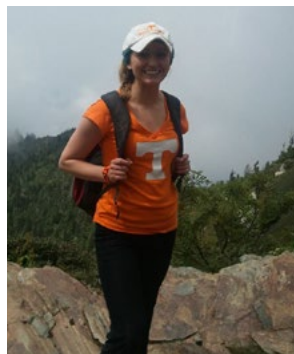
Amy: Making time for exercise is definitely the most difficult. I've accepted the fact that I need a personal trainer to keep me accountable. It's a little expensive, but I consider it an investment in my health.

Michelle: Letting go. I struggle to wind down and turn my mind off, especially at night. I'm a worrier and a bit of a perfectionist – not the most relaxing combination. The 3-minute emergency calm program in the [Calm](#) app is a day-changer!

Q When we're on the go or limited on time, eating nourishing food is often tossed to the bottom of the priority list. What is your favorite go-to healthy snack?

Emily: A green smoothie. I actually find it easier not to snack while I'm traveling. When I'm on the go I make sure to stay hydrated, and I order fish and vegetables for most meals.

Amy: Pumpkin seeds are my favorite! I keep a bag in my car if I need a quick protein boost. I also enjoy roasted



chickpeas and dry-roasted edamame. I don't usually have time to make my own, so I purchase them at the store.

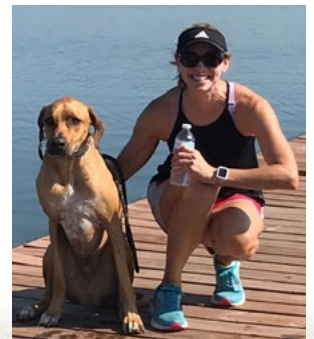
Michelle: I always have a bag of Trader Joe's light salt roasted pumpkin seeds (in the shell) in the console of my car. They're full of magnesium, fiber, good fat and protein, and they taste great! My console snacks have prevented many a fast-food mistake. I'm allergic to certain nuts, so seeds are my go-to. Outside of the car, I really enjoy veggies and dips; I'll sometimes mix a ranch packet into plain Greek yogurt for a higher protein dip or try out a new flavored hummus.

Q What is your #1 tip or piece of advice for optimal wellbeing?

Emily: Human connection. As an Introvert I enjoy retreating and curling up with a good book, but it's through my relationships with others that I experience the most joy. Research would suggest this is a fairly universal truth. We have the opportunity to give and grow in every healthy relationship. Don't pass up the chance to hug, hold hands, explore and laugh with others, or pay someone a compliment.

Amy: Don't sweat the small stuff, and make time for things that bring you joy.

Michelle: Set boundaries and give yourself permission to focus your energy on the causes, people and experiences that are the most important to you. Allow yourself grace to say no to the rest.



Get Out of Autopilot with Mindful Eating

Choosing to eat mindfully – in other words, giving food and eating your full attention – will enable you to experience optimal satisfaction and enjoyment without eating to excess. Mindful eating makes it possible to notice the subtle difference between contentment and fullness. It also provides more pleasure with smaller quantities of food. Practice the following strategies to help you identify your body's signals.

Recognize whether you're hungry before you begin eating. If you aren't hungry, consider what else might be triggering the desire to eat. Boredom? Stress? Consider how you might address those non-hunger triggers in more effective ways than eating. If you decide to eat . . .

Determine how you want to feel when you're finished. When you eat with the intention of feeling better when you're done, you're less likely to eat more than your body needs.

Choose food that will satisfy your body and mind. Instead of using "good food"/"bad food" lists to decide what you "should" eat, aim for balance, variety and moderation.



Eat without distractions. Minimize distractions such as watching TV, driving or talking on the phone so you can give your body's signals your full attention.

Eat sitting down. Choose one or two areas at home and at work to eat. Avoid eating while standing over the sink or peering into the refrigerator.

Take a few breaths and center yourself before eating. This will help you slow down and eat with awareness.

Express gratitude. Appreciate the occasion, the people you're with or

simply the fact that you have food and are giving yourself the opportunity to enjoy a meal.

Appreciate the aromas, appearance and flavors of your food. Notice the colors, textures, tastes and smells of the food. Put your fork down between bites and be conscious of the different sensations you are experiencing.

Pause during your meal. Check in with yourself to assess how much more food it will take to satiate your appetite.

the table as soon as you feel satisfied. The desire to keep eating will pass quickly. Keep in mind, you'll eat again when you're truly hungry again.

This article was contributed by Michelle May, M.D., CEO and Founder of Am I Hungry? Mindful Eating Programs and Rebecca Johnson, COO and Co-founder of ViDL Solutions, Inc.

Mindful Eating

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6. Where do I invest my energy?

A mindful relationship with food is reinforced by investing energy in self-care that meets one's physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs, supporting optimal health. Mindful eating helps individuals explore this connection between mindful living and wellbeing. As they improve their relationship with food, they create space to identify and establish other areas of self-care.

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