



Mindful Eating

"Every moment nature is serving fresh dishes with the items of happiness. It is our choice to recognize and taste it."

– Amit Ray

Purpose/Effects

Eating food is one of the places where people exhibit the greatest degree of unconsciousness, grasping, aversion, and indifference. Yet eating is potentially one of the most important things in our life. It sustains our physical body, brings pleasurable sensations, can fill us with emotional joy and satisfaction, and can be a powerful source of spiritual insight.

Furthermore, eating meditation, like many other "mindfulness" practices reinforce the core skills of concentration, sensory clarity, and emotional equanimity.

Eating meditation can even increase your physical health, by removing a common source of obesity. By eating slowly and bringing awareness to our bodies during the activity of eating, we will probably eat quite a bit less food, and therefore not gain as much weight.

Method

1. Begin with a single piece of food and hold it in front of you.
2. Pay attention to the tactile qualities of the food. Use the senses to notice the food without putting it in your mouth
 - a. How does it feel, the texture? What do you notice about the weight and shape of the food?
 - b. What color and shape is the food?



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- c. What does the food smell like?
- d. Are there any sounds associated with the food?
- 3. Tune in to your emotions around this bite of food. Are you attracted to it? Do you feel in a hurry to get it into your mouth? Are you annoyed at having to slow down and consider the food? Or are you perhaps unattracted to this food? What are you hoping to get out of eating this food?
- 4. Now consider where this food came from. Think of the farms where it was grown, the farmers who worked to grow it. Think of the sun and the rain it required to grow, the air and the soil which supported it, and so on. Then consider what it took for this food to get to you.
- 5. Now slowly and mindfully put the food in your mouth, but do not chew it yet. Simply feel the food on your tongue. Taste how it tastes before being chewed. Using your senses take in the food smell and texture. Notice how your whole body reacts and changes to the food in your mouth. Pay close attention to this entire process. You may wish to close your eyes.
- 6. Next slowly and mindfully chew the food (as applicable). Attempt to chew in an attentive, active manner. Make each chomp a conscious act, done with great care and consideration. Notice how chewing the food changes it in many ways. New flavors and aromas are released.
- 7. Feel the food going down your throat. Feel if you can sense it entering the stomach, and the sensations of the stomach receiving the food and working to digest it.
- 8. Let go and relax, noticing all the sensations that arise from having eaten this bite of food.
- 9. Repeat this process until the meal is ended.

Adapted from MindfulnessExercises.com