Mindful eating script

Notice the first few bites or sips with five senses. Non-judgmental and unhurried.

Sit comfortably with your food or drink in front of you, and feel your feet resting on the floor. Take one ordinary breath and let your shoulders drop. For the next couple of minutes, your only task is to pay attention to a single bite or sip using your senses, without judging your appetite or grading your food choices.

First, look at the item in front of you as if you were noticing its details for the first time. Observe its colors, how light reflects off its surface, its edges, and its texture. You do not need to come up with poetic descriptions; simply notice one or two visual facts.

If you are holding the item or a warm cup, notice how it feels against your fingers: its weight, its temperature, and whether its surface is smooth, rough, firm, or soft.

Next, bring the food or drink toward your nose and notice whether there is a scent—subtle or strong, warm, sweet, savory, or neutral. Notice whether your mouth or body responds before you even take a bite.

Now place a single small bite or sip in your mouth, and pause for a moment before chewing or swallowing right away. Notice the initial temperature and texture against your tongue.

Begin to chew slowly—or let the sip rest briefly—and notice how the flavor and texture change from one moment to the next. Observe whether the taste is stronger at the beginning or middle, and how the mechanical movement of chewing prepares the bite to be swallowed.

When you are ready, swallow naturally and notice the sensation of the bite or sip finishing. Pause for one ordinary breath before reaching for the next forkful or sip.

You do not need to eat the rest of your meal at this slow pace. Taking just two or three attentive bites at the start of a break is enough to mark a clear pause in your day. Look around the room and continue your meal or afternoon at a comfortable rhythm.

BEFORE YOU PRACTICE

Use this script at your own pace

1. Choose one small item you already plan to eat or drink—such as a slice of fruit, a cracker, a square of chocolate, or a warm cup of tea.
2. Sit down and set aside screens or reading material for just two to five minutes. You do not need to eat an entire meal in slow motion.
3. Keep your breathing natural and unforced throughout the exercise.
4. Read one paragraph at a time, taking a few seconds to notice the sensory detail before moving to the next prompt.
5. Stop or skip the exercise if focusing closely on food or swallowing feels uncomfortable, and use an outward sensory exercise instead.

For a broader introduction to everyday sensory practices, see our mindfulness exercises guide, or try the interactive 5-4-3-2-1 grounding tool when you want a five-senses pause without food.

Who should be careful

Focusing closely on chewing, swallowing, or fullness cues is not comfortable for everyone. If you have a history of an eating disorder, disordered eating, food anxiety, or swallowing difficulties (dysphagia), or if sensory focus on mouth sensations triggers distress or misophonia, skip this exercise and choose a non-food sensory anchor such as sound awareness or visual grounding.

Mindful eating is an attention practice, not medical nutrition therapy or treatment for an eating disorder. If your relationship with food causes distress or affects your health, consult a registered dietitian, physician, or mental health professional.

NIH / NCCIH: Evidence and safety overview

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