

BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION

Weight Loss Control

Habits, good or bad, are formed by repetition. Eating habits are no exception. If you are in the habit of snacking when you watch TV, you were reinforcing that habit until finally it became a part of you. Other habits are formed in the same way. Some of these habits are:

- eating while reading,
- eating the minute you come in the house,
- eating when the kids come in from school,
- eating when you come in from a date, or
- eating while cooking dinner.

Researchers have found that certain moods and circumstances cause us to eat even if we are not hungry. For example: anger, boredom, fatigue, happiness, loneliness, the kids are finally in bed, our spouse is out for the evening or out of town, nervousness, anxiety, our spouse brings home candy or ice cream, etc... all may trigger an eating response. The list is endless. Habits are hard to break. We must not only break old habits, but we must make our goal to form new ones in the same manner through repetition. Make some daily commitments. Work to meet these commitments each day whether you feel like it or not. Your daily commitments will help you form good habits. Remember: "It is easier to act your way into a new way of feeling than it is to feel your way into a new way of acting."

Resisting temptation is difficult. However, if you succeed in resisting the first time, it becomes easier to resist the next time. Before long, you will have formed the good habit of resisting temptation every time it confronts you. If you yield to that temptation, you will find it easier to yield the next time.

Because of the human weaknesses mentioned, we must use what has become known among weight control groups as behavior modification. It simply means changing your behavior. These techniques work only if you consistently repeat them, so that they become a part of you.

New Habits

- 1) Eat three meals a day. Have two or three planned snacks daily.
- 2) Prolong your meals by: eating slowly putting down your eating utensil between each bite do not pick up your eating utensil until you have swallowed the bite hesitating between bites, even if you're eating finger foods

- 3) Choose a specific place in your home or office to eat all of your meals. This will become your "designated eating place" and should not be changed. Try not to eat at your desk at work. This would make you prone to eat all day long and not just at meal time.
- 4) Do not do anything except eat when you sit down for a meal. Do not read, watch TV, talk on the phone, work, etc. Make yourself aware of the food you are eating. Focus on the conversation and enjoy your meal.
- 5) Do not keep food in any room in your house except the kitchen. Do not keep food such as cookies out on the counters. Do not store items in "see-through" containers.
- 6) Do not buy junk food. Neither your spouse nor your children needs it.
- 7) If possible, serve individual plates from the stove and do not serve family style on the table. If this is not possible, put the serving dishes on the opposite end of the table.
- 8) Serve yourself on a smaller plate.
- 9) Develop a habit of leaving at least one bite of each item on your plate. If you can master this, it becomes easier to stop eating when you feel full. You will be used to leaving food on your plate.

All of the above are eating techniques that aid in behavior modification. Other behavior modification techniques not related to eating are to substitute activity for eating, which means exactly what it says-- substitute another activity for between meal snacking. If you are in the habit of going straight to the kitchen and eating every time you walk in the house, try to change this habit by going to another room of the house when you come home. Delay going into the kitchen until the desire to eat is gone. When you are tempted to eat, try to use one of the following substitute activities:

- Take a walk
- Take a long bath
- Call a friend
- Get out of the house
- Write a letter
- Read a book

Or busy yourself with a hobby such as:

- Cross-stitch
- Painting
- Floral arranging
- Ceramics
- Wood working
- Gardening
- Genealogical research
- Sports
- Surf the Web
- Catch up on your email!!!

Source: Rob Brinkman, Free Weight Loss