

Getting in Touch with your Hunger

REAL HUNGER



We can learn to eat in response to physical signals of hunger, but we may need to begin by relearning the signs of true physical hunger. Physiological responses to hunger differ among individuals, but often include:

- Growling stomach
- Mild headache
- Hunger pangs
- Irritability
- Decreased energy
- Shaky/jittery

HUNGER BY ASSOCIATION



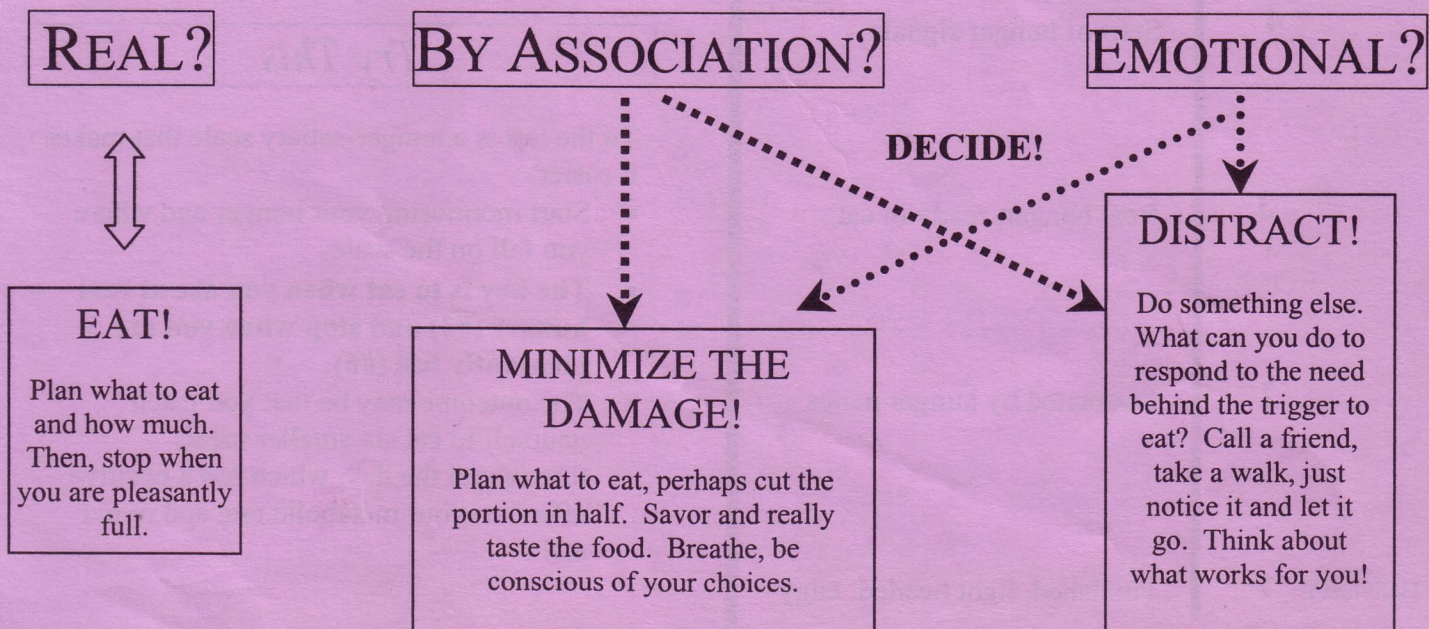
Sometimes our hunger is triggered by an external cue such as the smell of popcorn in a movie theater or associations between a familiar place and food like a family reunion and mom's apple pie. In fact, these cues are numerous and very individual – triggered by television ads, being in the kitchen, or hearing someone describe a dessert for example. What is yours?

EMOTIONAL HUNGER



Emotional hunger is driven by mood states. For example, some individuals find themselves eating out of boredom, sadness, anger, joy or frustration. Often times this begins as an unconscious process and one's awareness of eating is not fully realized. Everyone eats to manage emotional stress sometimes. The key is in how we care for ourselves.

HUNGRY? ASK, IS IT...



RELEARNING HUNGER

THE HUNGER-SATIETY SCALE

SATIETY 10	Stuffed to the point of feeling sick
9	Extremely uncomfortable – need to unbutton pants
8	Miserable full, feel stuffed
7	Really full, feels like you ate just a few too many bites
6	Pleasantly full, satisfied
NEUTRAL 5	Content, not hungry or full
4	Start of hunger signals
3	Real hunger, ready to eat
2	Distracted by hunger pangs
HUNGRY 1	Famished, light headed, edgy

Developing Awareness

- The most important aspect of relearning hunger is developing the awareness of the type of hunger you are experiencing.
- When you are able to identify real hunger, when you reach for the refrigerator because you are in the kitchen, or boredom has you rifling the pantry, you need to pay attention.
- You were born with the innate ability to stop eating when you reached a sense of fullness. It changed by external factors like family rules to “clean your plate”, or by dieting.
- Diets limit serving size or stop you from eating when you are still hungry. In an overeating mode, you eat to some level of overfullness.
- Behavior change occurs over time. As you continue to monitor your hunger, you become more astute at managing your intake.



Try This

To the left is a hunger-satiety scale that makes it easier.

- Start monitoring your hunger and where you fall on the scale.
- **The key is to eat when you are at real hunger (#3) and stop when you are pleasantly full (#6).**
- The outcome may be that you teach yourself to eat six smaller meals throughout the day, which has a positive effect on your metabolic rate and mood set!