

## Eat Sitting Down

*Do you do any of the following?*

- ✓ Nibble on food you see when opening the fridge to get something else out
- ✓ Take free samples in the supermarket
- ✓ Taste food as you prepare meals
- ✓ Sneak bits of food from someone's plate as you clear the table
- ✓ Take a biscuit or sweet off a plate at work
- ✓ Eat some fruit each time you pass the fruit bowl

When you think about it now, I'm sure you recognise that all calories add up. But at the moment you're actually eating, you might rationalize what you're doing with the sabotaging thought. *"It won't matter if I eat this."* **Today you'll make a commitment to sit down every single time you eat something – even if it's just a bite.**

Are you thinking, *Why do I have to do this? What's the big deal about eating while standing up?* Well, here's why you have to adopt a strict rule about sitting down to eat:

**You absolutely need to become conscious of everything you put in your mouth.** You need to pay full attention to what you're eating so you don't say to yourself, *"I'm still hungry....I want more"*, when you've finished your allotted food.

Most of the eating that people do while on their feet is impulse eating, not food that they had planned to eat. When you sit down to eat, especially at your dining table, you've made a conscious decision to eat. You know these calories count, and you can more easily monitor what you eat and avoid overeating.

When you impulsively eat standing up, you're telling yourself that it's okay to give in to this urge to eat, that it doesn't really matter and that there won't be any consequences. But there will be consequences because every bite of food you put in to your mouth has calories.

It is proven that you will feel more satisfied if you eat sitting down and spread your food out on the plate in front of you, even if it's just a snack.

## What are you thinking?

**Sabotaging Thought:** I enjoy spontaneous munching, I don't want to stop eating while I'm standing

**Helpful Response:** I need to sit down to eat. When I eat standing up I just don't notice what I am eating, so I could eat way too much without realizing it. If I want to be slimmer, I have to impose this rule on myself. I might not want to give up this behaviour, but I'll enjoy being slimmer so much more.

**Sabotaging Thought:** It's okay if I eat standing up this one time. I'll eat my next meal sitting down.

**Helpful Response:** "Just this one time" is not okay. I have to face the fact that I probably can't lose weight or keep it off if I refuse to change my habit of eating while standing up.

**Sabotaging Thought:** I don't have time to sit down to eat.

**Helpful Response:** Sitting down isn't optional. I'll have to rearrange my schedule so that I do have time. It's essential for controlling what and how much I eat.

## Eat Slowly and Mindfully

There are two very beneficial reasons that it's important to always eat slowly and to pay particular attention to what you are eating:

- ✓ When you eat slowly, your brain has time to register that you're full
- ✓ When you notice and enjoy every mouthful, you feel more satisfied when the food is gone

There is no question that eating too quickly and mindlessly is common among people who have a weight problem. ***How quickly do you eat? Do you sometimes feel deprived when you're finished eating?*** Have you had the experience of eating a reasonable sized meal and they saying to yourself, ***That wasn't much food at all....I'm still hungry,*** because you hadn't paid enough attention to the food you ate?

Research shows that there is a lag of up to 20 minutes between when your stomach fills up and when your brain gets the message that you're full. The more slowly you eat, the more time you give the "I'm full" alert to reach your brain so that it can signal you to stop eating.

### How to slow down eating:

If you habitually eat quickly, switching to a slower eating pace might feel unnatural at first, but by using some of the following techniques you will have it mastered before you know it:

1. Cut up your food into small pieces and spread it around your plate
2. Sit at your table and do not watch the TV while eating
3. Put small pieces of food in your mouth and chew slowly and thoroughly\* before swallowing

*\*Remember your stomach doesn't have teeth, so you need to break down your food by chewing it thoroughly; otherwise your stomach has to produce more stomach acid to break down the food.*

4. Focus intently on what you are eating, savour the taste, flavour and texture of the food
5. Put down your knife and fork for 10-30 seconds between mouthfuls
6. Wait until the food you just swallowed has worked its way down to your stomach before taking another mouthful
7. Time yourself and note on your food diary how long it took you to eat your meal, each time you take at least 20 minutes you should give yourself credit.

**What are you thinking?** Do you have sabotaging thoughts about this step of the programme? If so, make Response Cards based on the relevant thoughts and responses below:

**Sabotaging Thought:** If I don't eat quickly, I'll inconvenience others.

**Helpful Response:** It isn't reasonable for me to sacrifice my needs. I deserve to enjoy what I'm eating. I deserve to engage in healthy behaviours to reach my goals.

**Sabotaging Thought:** I'm a fast eater. That's just the way I am.

**Helpful Response:** Being a fast eater probably contributed to my weight gain. I can't have it both ways. I can't eat quickly and also lose weight and maintain my weight loss. Even though eating more slowly will take effort and feel unnatural in the beginning. I'll get used to it and then I won't have to think much about it.

**Sabotaging Thought:** I really don't have time to eat slowly

**Helpful Response:** I need to rearrange my schedule to make the time. If I needed to take time for a lifesaving medical procedure three times a day, I'd somehow find the time. I'm not giving eating properly a high enough priority.

## Give Yourself Credit

People who struggle with their weight tend to be hard on themselves. The moment they stray they become self-critical. Instead of viewing slips as mistakes and thinking how they can solve the problem the next time it arises, they tell themselves that they're weak hopeless or even useless.

Do you have the habit of beating yourself up when you have a slip or make a mistake? To counteract this tendency, it's important for you to learn to give yourself credit for everything you do **right**.

***Did you do spontaneous and planned exercise last week?*** If you did then you deserve credit. You should consciously give yourself credit to reinforce your self-confidence and build up awareness that you're strong and in control. You could say one of the following things to yourself to acknowledge when you do something **right**:

- ✓ Well done
- ✓ That was great
- ✓ Great work
- ✓ That deserves credit
- ✓ Yes I did it
- ✓ Good job

When you think about it, you already deserve credit for getting to this stage of the programme without giving up and for adopting new behaviours like responding to your sabotaging thoughts and monitoring your eating in your food diary.

### Other reasons to give yourself credit:

- Refraining from taking second helpings
- Doing exercise even when you don't feel like it
- Refraining from picking/snacking after dinner
- Refraining from eating free samples in supermarket or goodies at work

## Build up credit and reward yourself:

Every time you do something that deserves credit, you should firstly acknowledge it verbally to yourself, then you should add it to your **“Credit/Rewards Chart”** (attached). When you have built up 5 credits, you are entitled to a reward. You will reward yourself with something you would consider a real treat, here are a few examples:

- ✓ Get a facial/massage
- ✓ Get your eyelashes tinted/nails painted
- ✓ Buy a new nail varnish/lipstick
- ✓ Buy some equipment for your hobby or favourite sport
- ✓ Buy a new book/magazine/ DVD/CD
- ✓ Treat yourself to some Jewellery or Accessories like a belt or handbag
- ✓ Take a relaxing bubble bath with good bath essence or salts

Make a list of your rewards on the right hand side of your **“Credit/Rewards Chart”** and each time you build up 5 credits choose a reward for yourself and be sure to acknowledge the reason you are having the treat.

## What are you thinking?

**Sabotaging Thought:** I don't deserve credit for doing things I should already be doing. These things aren't accomplishments. They should be easy for me to do.

**Helpful Response:** If I don't give myself credit for essential behaviours, I'll be less likely to practice these behaviours consistently. If I were naturally slim, had a small appetite and didn't have to work at controlling my weight, perhaps I wouldn't deserve credit. But I'm not naturally slim, I do struggle. I do deserve credit every single time I think about something in a helpful way or engage in helpful behaviour. I am worth this.

**Sabotaging Thought:** I don't deserve credit until I have lost all the weight I want to lose.

**Helpful Response:** It's counterproductive to wait. I need to strengthen the part of my mind that believes I can follow this program. I'm only human and might stray from the plan from time to time. When this happens, a sense of helplessness might kick in. Continually building my confidence by giving myself credit can protect me from feeling helpless and hopeless and from throwing in the towel. And, actually the process of losing weight is the hardest part. Once I've learned the skills I need, maintaining my weight will be easier. So I deserve lots of credit now, while I'm working the hardest.

# Credit/Rewards Chart

## Things I Deserve Credit For:

1
2
3
4
5
Reward:
1
2
3
4
5
Reward:
1
2
3
4
5
Reward:

## My Rewards


