

The Stop Snacking Programme

Develop healthy, life-long habits that will leave you looking, feeling and performing at your best.

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Snacking can reduce our natural hunger cues and ruin our appetites. This can result in irregular eating patterns and lack of eating routine. This 2-week habit coaching programme will help you eat regularly throughout the day while being in tune with your hunger and fullness cues. It will help you ‘re-connect’ with your body.

Day 0 : Introduction Of Habit (Sunday)

Habit Challenge: Eat every 3-4 hours without snacking

For the next two weeks, I challenge you to stop snacking.

One of the most important healthy eating habits you can create, is to ensure you eat regularly throughout the day, while being in tune with your hunger and fullness cues.

By missing meals we tend to under eat, which leads to a lack of energy and performance.

Drastic under eating also causes a reduction in your metabolism, and can actually slow fat-loss.

Snacking can also reduce our natural hunger cues, and ruin our appetites. This can result in irregular eating patterns and lack of eating routine. For some people, this is the key reason as to why they gain weight.

This habit will also help you ‘re-connect’ with your body. The connection you have with your body is the most precious thing you have. It is your past, present and future. Understanding how your body can work for you, and processing the knowledge to make it perform optimally, is the most important information you can ever learn.

How Can I Personalise This Habit?

Choose where your current biggest pitfall, with this habit, may currently lie.

Are you skipping meals throughout the day? If so, which ones in particular? Are you mindlessly snacking between main meals? And are you doing this on a weekday or weekend, or both?

Think about what area needs your focus and attention the most to help you achieve this daily habit, and put some small changes into place to make it a success.

How Can I Make This Habit Easy?

The first step is to scale the habit to something you are 90-100% confident you can do for 6 days of the week. You might want to start with eating breakfast (or lunch or dinner), or focus on specific days Saturdays and Sundays).

Have one day off per week from completing the habit.

This is very important: *whatever you pick, it should only take you one to two minutes to complete each day.*

What Can I Piggyback Off Of?

Look for events you can use as a reminder to eat every 3-4 hours: after your morning coffee, getting to work, after your workout, getting home from work, when an alarm goes off on your phone, whatever you want. Just pick a pre-existing habit to use as your reminder.

TO DO: *Create your personal version of the habit to commit to this challenge!*

Here's a template:

I am 90-100% confident that I will [insert habit] for 6 days a week after I [insert what you're going to piggyback off of].

Here's an example:

I am 90-100% confident that I will eat every 3-4 hours without snacking for 6 days per week after I set reminders on my phone.

P.S. Don't worry about making this perfect. I'll help you adjust.

Day 1 : Start of Habit Review (Monday)

How was Day 1?

Did you complete a personalised version of the habit?

Today, after completing your habit for the first time, I want you to answer these two questions:

1.What did I do well today?

2.What did I learn today?

These questions are so important that I want you to reflect on them every day.

The truth is, the most overlooked factor in building new habits is bridging the gap between what you want to do and the behaviour that you're trying to make automatic.

You've got to close the loop between your intention and your behaviour, and it's as simple as answering these two questions.

Day 2 : Daily Lesson To Reinforce Habit And Accountability (Tuesday)

Understanding how your body can work for you, and processing the knowledge to make it perform optimally, is the most important information you can ever learn.

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To begin, you must understand and accept your current situation. To do this, you must start listening to your body. It will always tell you what it wants and what it needs, but you have to learn to hear it.

You know that feeling when you just have to go to the toilet, or when you just can't keep your eyes open while watching TV? That's your body communicating with you in urgent and powerful ways.

Our bodies send similar messages throughout the day regarding nutrition and wellbeing. Right this second, your body is telling you what it wants and needs. It's your responsibility to hear, learn and translate these signals.

Our current habit is key to kick-starting this.

Spend the next two weeks tuning into the cues that your body is sending you while following this habit.

Here's some key questions to consider daily:

- *Do I feel true hunger at any time between meals?*
- *Was I hungry just before my last meal?*
- *How satisfied am I after each main meal?*

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Day 3 : Daily Lesson To Reinforce Habit And Accountability (Wednesday)

As you eat your meals today, practice shining the spotlight of mindfulness onto the habit.

Turn the spotlight onto how the food looks, how it smells, how it tastes. Then focus on your body, your surroundings and all the other sensations associated with eating a tasty healthy meal.

Day 4 : Weekend Win (Thursday)

It can be difficult to stay consistent with a habit if you have a lot going on in your life, or if you take a break from your normal routine.

The perfect example of this is the weekend. So let's set you up to win this weekend.

How? By doing an easy version of your habit for the weekend.

This should be so easy that it should require as much energy as brushing your teeth.

Today, I want you to plan how you'll eat every 3-4 hours this weekend.

Day 5 : Daily Lesson To Reinforce Habit And Accountability (Friday)

The debate over ‘optimal’ meal frequency rages on and general advice ranges from one large evening feast to the tradition of 6+ meals per day.

Which approach is correct?

Well, it depends. Nutrition must be matched to your physiology and current goals. And of course, for long-term success, it must also fit your lifestyle to be manageable on a day-to-day basis.

We can find ‘success’ stories for almost every nutrition protocol/strategy, whether eating two meals per day or eight. This indicates that overall daily food intake is the key factor in someone’s results, not how many meals they have had.

The results usually come down to the fact that the person has found a nutrition system to suit them, one they can stick to consistently, that helps them adopt a set of healthy lifestyle habits.

What this shows us is that some of the time-honoured myths can now be firmly put to bed.

1. Greater Meal Frequency Increases Metabolism

When we consume food we get what is known as the 'thermic effect of food' (TEF). This is the amount of energy expended by the body during digestion. When we eat food we get a slight rise in our metabolism, however eating more meals per day does not provide any significant increase to metabolism. Eating a greater amount of meals per day doesn't raise the metabolism enough to impact fat loss. It is actually the total amount of daily food consumed that equates to our daily energy expenditure on digestion.

If you consume three meals per day at 1000 kcals each, you get exactly the same daily energy turnover as if you ate six meals per day at 500 kcals each.

2. You Don't Have To Eat Breakfast Upon Waking

However, always do what is right for you!

It's often suggested that eating immediately upon waking helps improve fat loss. This is not the case as it does not kick start the metabolism for the day. In fact, it has been shown that going periods without food (usually skipping breakfast) can actually increase metabolism. We can get additional health benefits from short fasts, such as improved insulin sensitivity, nutrient partitioning, greater fat loss and induced autophagy (the cellular clean-up process).

Experience has shown that eating every 3-4 hours without snacks, is the perfect middle ground for the majority of people. It also provides a great place to quickly add or subtract meals to learn what works for you.

Day 7 : Weekly Group Review (Sunday)

When you're done doing the habit today, take a minute to reflect on the past week or so of doing the habit.

- *What was it actually like, as opposed to the fantasy you had about it before you started?*
- *What have you learned?*
- *What do you appreciate?*
- *What obstacles have come up, and are there ways to overcome them for next week?*

Consider writing a short journal entry or messaging me about these reflections, to solidify your learning.
Treat habit formation as a learning process, as a way to learn about yourself, your mind, mindfulness, resistance and more.

Day 8 : Adjustment Of Habit (Monday)

If all went well last week, and you didn't struggle or skip the habit for more than a day, I recommend that you lengthen the habit this week. If you've struggled, keep it the same as last week or make it even easier.

For example, if you've just been focusing on eating a healthy breakfast that you would have previously skipped on a morning, then extend that to your lunch now too.

Or if you've been focusing on reducing your snacks between meals, try to focus on eating your main meals every 3-4 hours.

Or if you've noticed increased hunger between meals, then try making your meals bigger, or eating more frequently.

Never make too big an adjustment so that it becomes too difficult.

This slow change process of expanding the habit a little at a time helps overcome the resistance of the mind to change and discomfort.

Each step isn't difficult, so your mind doesn't rebel much. Gradually the habit becomes your new normal and you can expand a bit more, pushing your comfort zone a little at a time.

Day 9 : Daily Lesson To Reinforce Habit And Accountability (Tuesday)

You’re now gaining more experience with this habit and yesterday I encouraged you tailor it more, to you, and what your body is asking.

Here's some further suggestions to help with this, and guide you with any problems you might be experiencing from following this habit:

When to eat more frequently

1. When Strength Training

To gain muscle we need to provide the building blocks - based on a high quality and quantity of food. This is when it would be best to eat more frequently - to ensure maximum muscle protein synthesis (MPS). Studies show approx. 3g leucine per meal is required for maximum MPS, hence quantity and quality of protein per meal is the most important factor. There is a reason why physique athletes and bodybuilders eat a lot of lean meat, as it makes for a complete amino acid profile (with >3g leucine) and typically offers the ideal 30-40g protein per serving. MPS has been shown to peak two hours following elevated amino acid levels (to allow for digestion), therefore placing meal timings too close together is unnecessary, as you will see diminishing returns. An optimal eating strategy is around 3-6 meals per day, spaced every 3-4 hours, with a high quality protein source of at least 20g per serving per meal. So a typical eating schedule could be 8am, 12pm, 4pm, 8pm.

2. When Suffering From Metabolic Damage Or Food Issues

If you are suffering from weight gain after 'yo-yo' dieting, or have been using a low calorie diet approach for some time, it would be best to return to a more regular eating pattern with increased food quantities. The aim is to restore homeostasis within the body and to balance hormones.

This is also true for those with previous or current physiological or psychological issues with food, such as cravings or binge eating cycles. A regular eating schedule will ensure blood sugar levels are constantly steady and you never reach a point of hypoglycemia.

A typical four meals per day approach, spaced every 3-4 hours would be ideal with healthy snacks between meals if required.

When to eat less frequently

1. When Focusing On Fat Loss

If you have a good relationship with food and follow a healthy lifestyle and food choices, reducing the amount of meals over the day (but still hitting the required calorie goal of the day) could help you in your quest for lower body fat.

It provides the opportunity to feast on larger meals to provide that feeling of fullness despite a lower overall daily intake of calories.

A typical three meal per day approach could be applied (such as 8am, 12pm, 5pm)

Remember that the goal of your diet in this case is to lose body fat and retain as much lean body mass as possible.

However, this approach may not be for everyone. It's important for you to choose the habit that works for your lifestyle.

2. When Your Lifestyle Says So

Some people have extremely active and busy lifestyles, and eating every few hours may not be an option. Such people often don't particularly want to, either.

Lifestyle doesn't have to hold you back from your goals. The body is well adapted to under-eating at periods of intense activity/workload and feasting afterwards. If you want only two meals per day, and enjoy this way of eating, then there is no problem with doing so, providing your overall nutrient requirements are met.

Match your nutrition to your lifestyle, and not the other way around. Good healthy food should enhance our life, not hold us back.

Day 10 : Daily Lesson To Reinforce Habit And Accountability (Wednesday)

If you've been struggling, resisting, uncomfortable, disappointed, feeling like quitting... these are some forms of dissatisfaction.

If you have felt any of these during this habit change, try to practice with these difficult feelings as you do the habit today.

Put your attention on how your difficultly feels. Explore the feeling and let me know about it instead of avoiding it.

Day 11 : Weekend Win (Thursday)

Today, think about your super easy, almost effortless version of the habit for the weekend.

How and when will you do the habit this weekend?

Day 12 : Daily Lesson To Reinforce Habit And Accountability (Friday)

It's now time to put this habit into 'habit maintenance mode.'

This is a way of continuing it with less of a focus.

By now, the habit should start to become more automatic if you've been at least a little consistent. You don't need reminders to start the habit, and it's feeling a bit easier, more part of your 'normal.'

Just don't forget about this habit. You don't need to keep track of it every day, as long as things are going well.

But every few days, pause and reflect on this habit and check in to see that everything is still going well. Maybe once a week, use your Check-In

to assess whether

you have any obstacles around this habit, need to make adjustments, learned anything new.

After a while, you need to reflect on the habit less often, as it becomes ingrained in your life.

Day 13 :
No Daily Lesson (Saturday)

Day 14 (am): End Of Habit Review (Sunday)

Over the last two weeks you've completed the 'Eat every 3-4 hours without snacking' habit challenge

Today, take a minute after practising your habit to reflect again on the past week of doing the habit.

- *What has the habit been like and how have you done?*
- *What have you learned?*
- *What parts or how much of this habit will you continue to do?*

Consider writing a short journal entry or messaging me about these reflections, to solidify your learning

Day 14 (pm) : End Of Habit Review (Sunday)

You've just completed your 14 day habit challenge!

This challenge was created to help you understand your hunger and fullness cues and to show how easy it is to implement a new habit over a couple of weeks.

It's now time to reflect on your next steps. Ask yourself:

- *What do I want to achieve now on my fitness journey ?*
- *What other habits can I introduce?*
- *Am I ready for a more challenging change?*

I'd love to hear from you about what you're going to do next