

THE HUNGER SCALE

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Use this scale to help you get in touch with your hunger and satiety cues. Remember, it's not important to follow this scale "perfectly", but rather to learn more about your own individual body and how your hunger and fullness signals work. Don't turn this into a diet! Use it for curiosity and awareness to effectively make changes to your meal plan or everyday eating behaviors.

First, decide how you're feeling using the hunger scale.

The Hunger Scale

- 1:** Ravenous, weak and light-headed. Your stomach is growling, and you have a headache. Any food would do at this point, even if it's food you don't like.
- 2:** Over-hungry. You feel irritable and unable to concentrate.
- 3:** Hunger pangs. You may feel uncomfortably hungry and know it's "time to eat".
- 4:** Hunger awakens. You are slightly uncomfortable and just beginning to feel signs of hunger. Your body is giving you the signal that you might want to eat.
- 5:** Neutral and comfortable. You're more or less satisfied, but could eat a little more. Your body has enough fuel to keep it going and is physically and psychologically just starting to feel satisfied.
- 6:** Just satisfied. Perfectly comfortable but could eat a few more bites.
- 7:** Completely satisfied and a little bit uncomfortable. You're past the point of satisfaction, yet you can still "find room" for a little more. Your body says "no" and your mind says "yes" to a few more bites.
- 8:** Full and uncomfortable. You feel bloated and may need to loosen your clothes. Maybe you shouldn't have had more, but it tasted so good.
- 9:** Stuffed and very uncomfortably full. You might feel heavy, tired, and want to erase the way you feel in this moment.
- 10:** Sick and feeling nauseous. This might be a typical Thanksgiving Dinner feeling – you are physically miserable, don't want to or can't move, and feel like you never want to look at food again.

How to use the hunger scale to reach your goals:

1. Mark down a number for each meal in a food journal when you begin eating.
2. Use the same scale to record how full you feel when you finish eating.
3. Monitor this process to see if you can find connections to appetite, cravings, or emotions.
4. As you get comfortable monitoring your appetite, try to figure out how it would feel to eat when you're a 3-4 and stop when you're a 6-7. It's not necessary to follow this perfectly, but rather be aware of how you're feeling when you do.

Tips:

- Try to start eating when you're feeling 3 or 4. If you get to a 1 or 2, you are very likely to overeat!
- Most people enjoy their food and eat comfortably when they are between a 3 and a 6 on the hunger scale.
- Stop eating at 6 or 7 and pause to see how your body responds.
- Instead of relying on external signals (like an empty plate) to stop eating, try to listen to your satiety cues.
- If it helps, pause during the meal to assess where you are at with hunger and fullness.

Remember, it's sometimes hard to recognize the difference between emotional hunger and physical hunger, especially when our "mind" tells us when to eat, what to eat, and how much to eat, rather than our physical body. This hunger scale is a tool that can help you create a healthy relationship with food.

ABOUT US

Eat With Knowledge is a group of Registered Dietitian Nutritionists who are ready to help you change your relationship with food! We help clients who are struggling from dieting or disordered eating find peace and balance with food choices. We work to analyze eating habits together and make changes depending on what you're willing and ready to do. Check out our website for more info!

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