

Mindful Eating Practice

The following exercise is simple and will only take a few minutes. Aim to complete this mindful eating practice during one of your daily meals.

- Set aside a mealtime to be eaten alone, or in silence with others who want to participate in a mindful eating practice.
- Consider beforehand what you want to eat. Since you will pay greater attention to the food, you may wish to choose more healthy, wholesome and flavorful fare.
- Prepare (or even order, if you're out) your food with awareness and attention.
- Sit down, close your eyes and allow your mind to quiet for a few moments. Give thanks for your food if you'd like.
- Engage all of your senses:
 - Look at your food. Notice the shapes, colors, and amount of it.
 - Smell it (don't eat it yet!).
 - Listen to it... is it making any simmering, popping, or other noises?
- Before you take your first bite, notice the feeling of your hunger, the sense of anticipation, and the changes occurring in your mouth as you prepare to receive the food.
- Pay special attention to your first bite. Notice how vividly you taste it and maybe how your tongue and entire mouth come alive.
- Make each bite a deliberate act, one to be savored and enjoyed. Taste each bite, noticing how different the experience of taste is in different areas of the mouth. You can even listen attentively to the sounds of your body enjoying a good meal.
- Chew each bite very slowly, resisting the urge to quickly swallow and move on to the next bite. Perhaps lightly hold the awareness that you often rush through the act of eating and scarcely even notice the food.
- Pay attention to how you eat. Notice the movement of your jaw and tongue, the way your body knows how to handle the food, chewing and moving it back toward the throat. Resist the urge to swallow until the food has been thoroughly chewed and the taste fully extracted. Then pay close attention to the act of swallowing.
- Continue in this way, returning to awareness of eating whenever the mind takes you somewhere else.
- Keep some of your awareness on the belly, noticing especially when you are beginning to feel satisfied, as though you have had enough. See if this happens, and you can stop eating, before you have the sensation of fullness.