

A Mindful Eating Exercise

Find a small piece of food, such as one raisin or nut, or a small cookie. You can use any food that you like. Eating with mindfulness is not about deprivation or rules.

Begin by exploring this little piece of food, using as many of your senses as possible.

First, look at the food. Notice its texture. Notice its color.

Now, close your eyes, and explore the food with your sense of touch. What does this food feel like? Is it hard or soft? Grainy or sticky? Moist or dry?

Notice that you're not being asked to think, but just to notice different aspects of your experience, using one sense at a time. This is what it means to eat mindfully.

Before you eat, explore this food with your sense of smell. What do you notice?

Now, begin eating. No matter how small the bite of food you have, take at least two bites to finish it.

Take your first bite. Please chew *very slowly*, noticing the actual sensory experience of chewing and tasting. Remember, you don't need to think about your food to experience it. You might want to close your eyes for a moment to focus on the sensations of chewing and tasting, before continuing.

Notice the texture of the food; the way it feels in your mouth.

Notice if the intensity of its flavor changes, moment to moment.

Take about 20 more seconds to *very slowly* finish this first bite of food, being aware of the simple sensations of chewing and tasting.

It isn't always necessary to eat slowly in order to eat with mindfulness. But it's helpful at first to slow down, in order to be as mindful as you can.

Now, please take your second and last bite.

As before, chew very slowly, while paying close attention to the *sensory* experience of eating: the sensations and movements of chewing, the flavor of the food as it changes, and the sensations of swallowing.