

A person with short dark hair, wearing a light blue t-shirt, is sitting on a grassy hill with their back to the camera. They are looking out over a vast landscape under a sunset sky. The sky transitions from a deep blue at the top to a warm orange and yellow near the horizon. In the distance, there are silhouettes of hills and a body of water. The person is sitting on a dark blanket or bag. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

IT'S NOT WHAT YOU EAT  
BUT HOW YOU EAT THAT MATTERS

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# *MINDFUL EATING*

THE SECRET TO SUSTAINED WEIGHT  
LOSS AND IMPROVED FERTILITY

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BY  
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# *MINDFUL EATING*

Have you ever finished your meal only to realise you weren't really aware of what you were eating?

You were eating on autopilot whilst your mind was elsewhere.

Our brain has two types of attention, 'top down' attention where we are actively involved in deciding what we are paying attention to and 'bottoms up' attention where we are functioning mechanically, going about the activity almost unconsciously.

These different types of attention are necessary to help filter the masses of information we have thrown at us. It means that activities we do regularly like riding a bike or driving can be done using 'bottoms up' attention. This means we can allow our brain to focus on and think about other things whilst doing these activities almost automatically, on autopilot



When it comes to eating, this is something we are able to do via 'bottoms up' attention. It is such a simple activity that you can literally do it without thinking. Whilst this is a great way to free our brain up to focus our attention on all the other things we have going on in our day, it doesn't help send our body the proper messages it needs.

The problem with this is that you are not truly aware of what you're eating. And neither is your body!



When your brain is actively engaged in other activities, your stomach hasn't been alerted to the fact that you are about to eat.

Your digestive system hasn't had time to prepare the important enzymes and digestive acids that will help break down and metabolise your food and so has to work hard to play catch up in order to digest the food which has been thrown in.

And even then you still aren't focusing on what you are eating! You are busy thinking about that email you're composing or stressing over your upcoming meeting. Or you might just be scrolling your social media or watching the latest YouTube video.

Ultimately whether the activity is stressful or not (although stress will make all this worse) your brain is still diverting energy to other activities, not to your digestive system where it's needed.



# WHAT DOES THIS ALL MEAN?

If your body is not prepared for digestion and even whilst eating, your digestive system is not receiving the energy it needs, you will not be digesting properly.

This means your body is not gaining the maximum nutritional benefit from your food. Precious key nutrients aren't being properly metabolised into your blood stream where they can be utilised.

This is especially important if you are trying to conceive as these key nutrients can greatly impact your fertility.

You may experience bloating or heartburn as food sits in your stomach, ferments and starts to cause acid reflux, wind or general discomfort.

You may also still feel hungry! Because you haven't sent your body the proper signals to say, "I'm eating now", your brain hasn't received the proper signal to say "I'm full now".

# WHAT CAN YOU DO?

So what can you do to help ensure you switch on these signals to maximise the nutritional content of that healthy diet you've embarked on, reduce digestive issues and feel fuller quicker and for longer?

1. Ideally a tsp of apple cider vinegar in some warm water about 20 minutes before a meal is a great way to stimulate all those great digestive juices, however if time or circumstances make this difficult be sure to follow the steps below
2. Be mindful of the food you are choosing to eat. Take note of the colours, the textures the smells of what you are about to consume
3. Focus on enjoying your food! (And no this doesn't mean snapping a picture and posting to Instagram!) Notice the changes occurring in your body. Is your stomach perhaps rumbling in preparation? Can you feel your mouth becoming moister in anticipation of the tasty food in front of you.

4. Don't rush. Ok, yes you may be on a lunch break or in a rush to get to that next meeting so I'm not saying you need to eat like a snail, but be mindful of what you are eating. Chew your food well. Notice the tastes and smells and take time between mouthfuls.

5. Pause. Yes, pause, a rarely used word in our busy vocabulary (unless it's relating to YouTube or Spotify!). Ideally wait about 15 minutes before recommencing your other activities. This time allows your brain to properly digest and receive the signal that it's full. We have a tendency to eat until we're full. This often means you have actually overeaten. It can take your brain up to 20 minutes after a meal to properly register that you have had enough. Allowing your body this 'pause' supports healthy digestion and reduce overeating.

**"Wherever you are, be totally there"**

Eckhart Tolle

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