

Environmental Influences

It is helpful to consider how our relationship with food is influenced by the environment or society in which we live.

As you go about your usual routine this week, try and spot environmental factors that persuade or prompt you to eat. Turn up the awareness level of all of your senses. Be a keen observer and discover what could be influencing you to eat the way you do.

Some examples of environmental influences or prompts are listed below and on the next two pages. Ask yourself the following question and write down your thoughts and observations.

“How do the factors described below affect my food choices and eating?”

We're living in fast-forward

These days we can hardly find the time to sit down and eat, let alone make a healthy meal. Our hectic lifestyle and readily available convenience and fast foods influence our eating choices.

Food is everywhere!

It's tough to control food cravings when you are surrounded by temptation. Food is no longer found only in grocery stores. Food is also available in gas stations, hardware stores, pharmacies, airports and banks.

Food is big business

Psychologists help companies market in such a way that we will be convinced to buy their product. Notice how you are being influenced by advertising in the media.

We think big

Bulk buying has become a common practice in order to save money and trips to the store. The trouble is that the more we buy, the more we consume. We might save money, but we're sure not saving calories.

Too many choices

Studies have shown that it is human nature to eat more if there is a greater variety of food to choose from. Think of buffets. Compare the number of different types of cereals, soft drinks, crackers, pizza toppings and crispy snack flavours that there are now compared to 30 years ago. We definitely like to try new things.

We love a deal

It is very important to us to get value for our hard-earned money, and food is often priced with this in mind. If an item is sold in two sizes, we are more likely to buy the larger one if it's a deal. We may also buy more if there's a volume discount, such as buy 2 get one free. In both cases, we've spent more money in the end!

Food is always within reach

We are more likely to eat food that is in plain view or easily accessible. Take a look in your home and workplace. How easy is it to see or get to food?

XX-large portions

Food portions keep getting bigger. We've become accustomed to the larger servings and packages of food, often not realizing how much we are actually eating. This is especially true of take-out and restaurant food. Did you know that vehicle manufacturers had to make bigger cup holders to fit our much larger beverage containers?

Optical illusions

Our larger-sized dishes and glasses can trick us into thinking we are eating less than we actually are. Compared to our grandparents' dishes, their platters are our dinner plates, their dinner plates are our dessert plates and their serving bowls are the size of our cereal bowls!

What are some other factors that prompted you to eat in a certain way?

Pay close attention to the world in which you live.

Be aware of the powerful invitations to eat that are all around you and learn to resist these eating prompts.

My Learned Eating Behaviours

What are some pairings, or eating responses, that you may have learned? Here are some examples. Add some more of your own.

<i>TRIGGER</i>	<i>RESPONSE</i>
Watching a movie	Eat popcorn
Birthday dinner	Eat cake
Feeling anxious	Eat ice cream
Feeling angry	_____
Wanting to reward myself	_____
Feeling tired	_____

Food for Thought

Here are some questions to think about in the next week or two:

Do I make different food choices when I'm rushed versus when I have more time?

Do I sometimes buy something that I hadn't planned on, just because it's on sale?

Can I ignore hunger pains if I'm busy doing something?

Will I eat more of a food because it tastes good, even if I'm full?

Do I ever tell myself that I "deserve" to eat a food?

What would I do if I saw a child putting mustard on their pancakes for breakfast?

Try this:

1 Compare portions of food in dishes of a different size and shape.

Dish out 1/2 cup (125 ml) of mashed potato, rice or corn onto the middle of one of your luncheon-size plates. Then dish out 1/2 cup of the same food onto your dinner-size plate, and one of your serving plates. Notice how the portion of food looks different depending on the size of the plate it is sitting on.

Pour water, juice or milk into a tall, skinny glass and a wide, short glass until you think you have 1/2 cup (125 ml) of liquid in each glass. Now pour the liquid into a measuring cup to see how much you actually poured into each glass.

Did you pour more into one of the glasses? Which one?

2 Watch for eating prompts.

Count the number of advertisements for food you see in a one-hour program on television.

Count the number of advertisements for food in your favourite magazine.

Count the number of places where you could buy food that you pass on your way home from work or school.

Notice how often you can smell food when you're away from home.

Take a close look at where foods are located in the grocery store.

Types of Hunger

This is a very simple technique to help you become more aware of why you are eating. It suggests that there are different types of hunger. Let's use three categories of hunger:



Stomach Hunger:

This is the physical need for food. It's been five or six hours since you've eaten. Your stomach is growling. Stomach hunger also refers to times when you might eat for a medical reason, for example to prevent a low blood sugar if you're on insulin. You are eating for the well-being of your body.



Mouth Hunger:

Have you ever stood in front of the fridge or cupboard looking for something to eat with a certain taste, texture, or smell? "Where are those salty, crunchy chips? No, that's not it, I want creamy . . . where's the ice cream?" You crave the pleasure of food. This describes mouth hunger.



Heart Hunger:

This type of hunger refers to when you are eating in response to your emotions or how you're feeling mentally, not physically. Heart hunger can also refer to a learned behaviour around food or eating such as having dessert after every meal.

Remember, at this stage you are collecting information about your own personal eating triggers. You don't want to change your eating behaviour yet.

Here's what you do . . .

1. For one full day, continue eating as you usually would with one difference.
2. Each time that you are about to eat something, ask yourself the question, "Is this stomach, mouth or heart hunger?"
3. Just keep a mental note of the answer or write down the types of hunger that you experience using the worksheet on the next page. Make this quick by using "S" for Stomach hunger, "M" for Mouth hunger and "H" for Heart hunger. It can be especially helpful to note the time of day or night that you're eating.
4. Write what you ate at the time – don't include portions or details. **KEEP IT SIMPLE!**
5. See if you can notice any patterns. Do you experience certain types of hunger at a particular time of day? Day of the week? Week of the month? In particular locations? When you're with specific people or doing certain activities? What type of hunger do you have the most often?

Is this stomach, mouth or heart hunger?™

Time	What I ate	Type of Hunger

Consider the Circumstances

As you focus on becoming more aware of your eating triggers, you may notice that it is when you are with certain people, in particular situations, or when specific events occur that you are more likely to eat in a way that is problematic. Sometimes these circumstances can also lead to difficult feelings such as anxiety, anger, or boredom, which in turn can trigger eating.

This worksheet gives you a list of circumstances that people often report as triggers for problematic eating. Put a checkmark in the box for those that may be triggers for you. Feel free to add situations to the list.

I feel I have trouble with my eating when I'm:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> With a certain friend | <input type="checkbox"/> Just getting home |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dealing with a family member | <input type="checkbox"/> Visiting at a relative's home |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being criticized | <input type="checkbox"/> On vacation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling rushed | <input type="checkbox"/> Dealing with money issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working in the kitchen | <input type="checkbox"/> Cleaning up after meals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Doing a task or job I don't like | <input type="checkbox"/> Getting ready for, or in, bed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Celebrating a special occasion | <input type="checkbox"/> Eating away from home |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Driving | <input type="checkbox"/> Anticipating a deadline |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Doing certain work tasks | <input type="checkbox"/> Putting off something I need to do |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dealing with a certain co-worker | <input type="checkbox"/> Saying 'no' in a difficult situation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discussing an issue with my manager | <input type="checkbox"/> By myself |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working on the computer | <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting new people |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Watching TV or a movie | <input type="checkbox"/> Shopping |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dealing with health issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Studying |

Other: _____

Emotions Inventory

Although you may be aware that you are an “emotional” eater, do you know which emotions will trigger your problematic eating behaviours? It is sometimes difficult to pinpoint exactly how you are feeling. All you may be able to identify is that you feel out of control.

The list of feelings on the Emotions Inventory checklist can help you become more aware of particular emotions that are troublesome for you.

For at least a week:

- 1 Focus on those times when you are about to eat in a way that is problematic for you.
- 2 Take a moment to try and identify which emotion you are experiencing at that time. You may be experiencing more than one emotion.
- 3 Find the emotion(s) on the Emotions Inventory checklist and make a checkmark in FRONT of the emotion(s). If how you feel is not described on the inventory checklist, write the emotion down in the extra space provided.
- 4 Go ahead and eat.
- 5 Shortly after eating, around 5 minutes later, think about how you are feeling. This time make a checkmark BEHIND the word for the emotion you are feeling.
- 6 You may also want to identify how you are feeling 20 to 30 minutes later. You would again make a checkmark behind the emotion word.
- 7 At the end of the week, examine your Emotions Inventory checklist to see if you can notice any trends by the number of checkmarks beside the emotions listed. Where do you see most of your checkmarks before you eat? Which emotions are you feeling most often after you eat?

NOTES

Emotions Inventory

Over 100 Ways to Feel

Abandoned	Angry	Anxious	Apathetic
Apprehensive	Awful	Awkward	Betrayed
Bitter	Blank	Blue	Bored
Comforted	Compelled	Conflicted	Confused
Content	Daring	Dazed	Defensive
Deflated	Delighted	Depressed	Deserving
Desperate	Disappointed	Down	Drained
Empty	Excited	Excluded	Frantic
Frazzled	Frustrated	Fulfilled	Grateful
Grouchy	Guilty	Happy	Healthy
Helpless	Hopeless	Horrible	Huge
Humiliated	Hurt	Ignored	Immobilized
Impatient	In pain	Inadequate	Indifferent
Irritable	Isolated	Jealous	Jittery
Lethargic	Lightheaded	Lonely	Lousy
Loved	Mad	Moody	Nervous
Numb	Oppressed	Out of control	Panicky
Pressured	Ravenous	Rebellious	Relaxed
Released	Relieved	Remorseful	Resigned
Resentful	Rushed	Sad	Satisfied
Scared	Self-disgust	Self-pity	Serene
Shaky	Shame	Sick	Sleepy
Spacey	Stressed	Stupid	Supported
Tense	Terrible	Thrilled	Ticked off
Tired	Trapped	Unattractive	Uncomfortable
Undervalued	Unhappy	Unloved	Unmotivated
Unproductive	Unreal	Upset	Uptight
Validated	Vengeful	Worried	Worthless

Eating Log

This worksheet is like the “full meal deal”. It combines a record of the time of day (or night) that problematic eating occurs along with situations and emotions, and the food(s) eaten at those times. The heavy vertical line separates information that is related to before or after eating.

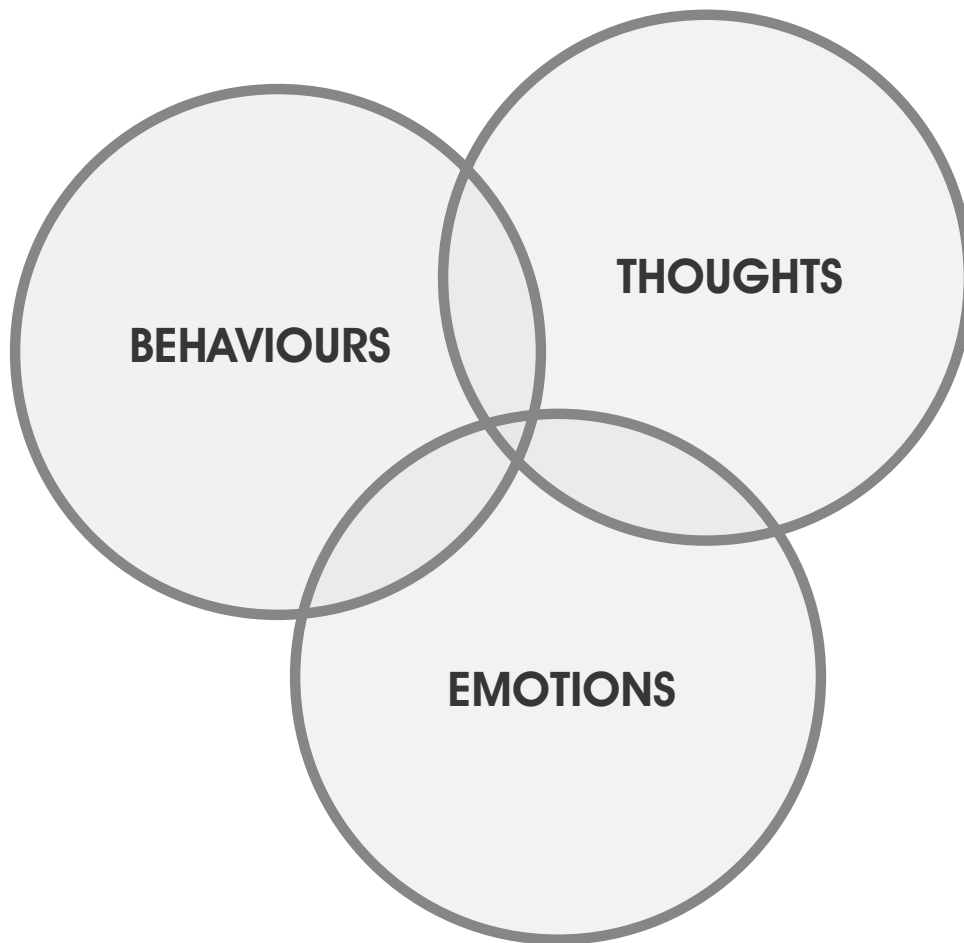
Time of Day	Situations Event, Person, or Place	Emotion(s) experienced before problematic eating	What was eaten?	Emotion(s) after eating	
				Within 5 minutes	20 - 30 minutes later

The Cognitive-Behaviour Circles

Write an eating behaviour that you struggle with inside the Behaviours circle. For example, “Eating too much fast food” or “Eating large portions and second helpings of food at dinner”.

Imagine yourself doing this eating behaviour. Think about how you feel when you are eating this way. Write these feelings in the Emotions circle. What are you thinking when you eat this way? Write the thoughts that could be going through your mind in the Thoughts circle.

Can you imagine changing these thoughts? If you have different thoughts in your mind it may help you change your eating problem. Are there other ways than eating that could help you deal with the emotions that you wrote in the Emotions circle?



Change Buffet Menu

The Change Buffet

Choose from this large selection of techniques and skills to curb your mouth and heart hunger.



Nurture Yourself

Follow the 80/20 Rule

Stop Unwanted Thoughts

Distract Yourself

Manage Your Stress

Journal

Put Your Craving on Hold

Ambush Your Triggers

Assert Yourself

Solve Your Problems Effectively

Renovate Your Environment

Quench Your Thirst

Quit Sabotaging Yourself

Try Positive Self-Talk

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Sampling from the Change Buffet

As you try some of the techniques and skills of The Change Buffet, make notes about your experience. Answer some of the following questions:

- What was the situation?
- How was I feeling?
- What did I do?
- How many times did I try the strategy?
- What worked?
- What didn't work?
- What would I do differently next time?

You may want to learn more about a strategy by reading some books or attending a program. You could record this as a plan under the heading of “My Plan → Results”.

Use the chart below as you try strategies from the Change Buffet. There are a couple of examples to give you an idea of how to fill in the chart.

Change Strategy	My Plan → Results
<i>Put your Craving on Hold</i>	<i>I will put dessert “on hold” after dinner every day this week. → Started by waiting 2 minutes and increased the delay by 2 minutes each day. My craving for dessert feels less strong.</i>
<i>Assert yourself</i>	<i>I will take out a book from the library on assertiveness. → I read the book and tried some of the assertiveness techniques with my demanding co-worker. Feel more confident.</i>

It's best to sample one strategy at a time. Try it several times as learning new behaviours takes practice. **Bon Appétit!**

Ways to Nurture Yourself

Remember - nurturing, comforting, and rewarding yourself without food may feel awkward at first, but with practice it will feel more comfortable.

- Download some new music
- Buy yourself flowers
- Wander through an art gallery
- Snuggle with a warm, cozy blanket
- Massage your feet with scented lotion
- Watch replays of favourite sports
- Google your favourite comedian videos
- Have a tea party with a child
- Put your feet up, close your eyes and relax
- Relax with a good book or magazine
- Have a candlelit dinner at home
- Sing in the shower - loudly
- Give your pet a hug
- Browse in a bookstore
- Do some star gazing
- Send yourself a card
- Phone a good friend
- Set a timer and play games online
- Stretch
- Turn off your phone
- Warm up next to a fire
- Check out some new apps
- Lie on the grass and watch the clouds
- Walk in a park
- Visit a greenhouse
- Blow bubbles
- Colour or sketch
- Hit some golf balls at the driving range
- Go for a drive with your music turned up
- Book a massage
- Go to the store and read greeting cards
- Go fishing
- Catch up on your favourite blogs
- Watch a movie
- Have a pedicure or manicure
- Watch any show that makes you laugh
- Assemble or fix something
- Take photos of nature

Other Ideas

How I will nurture myself in the next week:

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Quick! Distract Me!

Challenge your mind to shift your thinking

- Think of a vegetable for every letter of the alphabet
- Count to 10 in a language you don't know very well
- Visualize your dream vacation in detail - the dates, flight, what to pack, etc.
- Recite a poem or nursery rhyme
- Name all the players on your favourite sports team
- Say the alphabet backwards
- Pray
- Count backwards from 105 by 3's
- See how many words you can make out of the letters in your full name
- Recall all your friends' birth dates
- Whistle a difficult song

Shift your location to get away from food

- Water your plants or garden
- Go to the bathroom and rinse your face with warm water
- Shovel or sweep the walk
- Go for a walk around the block
- Walk to another level of your home or workplace
- Go to your bedroom and lie down for a few minutes

Shift gears to an activity

- Figure out five words in a crossword puzzle
- Play with dice and try for doubles
- Cut and arrange some flowers from your garden
- Shoot some baskets or throw some darts
- Read one chapter of a book
- Put on some music and dance
- Play with a Rubik's cube or other hand puzzle
- Do some deep breathing
- Organize your apps
- Read your favourite magazine
- Phone or e-mail a friend
- Do a few sit-ups, push-ups or stretches
- Edit and organize your digital photos
- Do some needlework or a craft
- De-clutter a small space, drawer or cupboard shelf

More Ideas

Problem Solving Worksheet

Use this worksheet to practise the seven steps for effectively solving a problem in your life.

Step 1 – The problem (be specific and accurate)

Step 2 – Possible solutions (make as long a list as you can)

Step 3 – The one solution I will try

Step 4 – What I did (include how many times you tried the solution)

Step 5 – What happened?

Step 6 – What next? Here are some options:

The solution worked —→ Continue with the same solution

The solution didn't work → Modify the solution, and try again

Go back to Step 2, and pick one other solution to try

Ask others for more solution ideas, and pick one

Step 7 – Go back to Step 1 and re-determine the actual problem or leave the problem for now, and try to solve it again at a later time.

Renovation Ideas for my Environment

Here are some suggestions. Add your own.

Living in fast-forward

I will take the time to focus on eating and not eat while doing something else.

Food is everywhere

I will only eat when I'm physically hungry, and reduce temptations.

Food is big business

I will try and resist marketing and advertising strategies.

We think big

I will divide bulk packages into smaller portions.

Too many choices

I will keep a large variety of healthy snacks on hand and just one "less healthy" snack.

We love a deal

I will question the real value of a deal.

Food is always within reach

I will remember the rule - out of sight, out of mind.

XX-large portions

I will re-size my servings to small or medium.

Optical Illusions

I will trick my eyes by using smaller plates and tall glasses

Craving-proof your surroundings.

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Craving-proof Your Environment

Here's what you do . . . our top eight tips!

1. Take the time to focus and enjoy eating.

We are often unaware of how much food we consume when our eyes and mind are focused on something else, like the TV, computer or phone. When we're distracted, we're not tuned into our body's signals of satiety. We may not stop eating until we've finished everything on our plate or in the package. Nowadays, meals are often rushed. Eating very quickly can also lead to overeating. When we're distracted or rushed we also don't experience the wonderful sensory pleasure of eating. Eat at the table with no distractions. Eat slowly and mindfully.

2. Reduce your exposure to temptations.

Pay for fuel at the pump or go to the full-service fuelling station to avoid going into the station that is filled with the sights and smells of food. Take a different route home to avoid driving past favourite take-out restaurants.

3. Resist marketing and advertising strategies.

Make a grocery list and stick to it. Order groceries on line and have them delivered to your home. Tape TV shows or watch programs and movies online.

4. Buy less, eat less.

If you buy food in bulk, divide the large packages of food into smaller packages when you get home. Buy the 100-calorie snack food packages. Ask for a take-away bag as soon as your food is served to you in a restaurant so you can pack away half of the portion to enjoy the next day.

5. Beware of the effect of variety.

Avoid buffets. At home, keep a very limited variety of less healthy snacks and increase the variety of healthy snacks to choose from. Have more than one type of vegetable, cooked or raw, at your main meal to encourage you to eat more vegetables.

6. Question the real value of a “deal”.

Decide if you really want a particular food or portion size or if you're tempted to buy it only because you are getting a deal. Don't let marketing strategies prompt you to spend more money than you had intended to in the first place.

7. Out of sight, out of mind.

Pay for your groceries at the self-serve counter where there aren't any chocolate bars to tempt you. Don't have food sitting out in plain view. Make it inconvenient to eat snacks. Keep less healthy foods in containers that you can't see through and stored away in the basement, the garage or the back of the fridge or cupboard. At your meals, leave the serving dishes of meats and starchy foods in the kitchen and only bring the vegetables and salad to the table. Just having to walk a few steps for second helpings will decrease how much you eat. Increase the work involved to eat – use chopsticks, buy nuts in the shell that you have to crack and open – you'll eat less!

8. Trick your eyes.

Eat your meals on dessert or luncheon plates instead of dinner plates. Use smaller bowls and serving utensils. Pour beverages into tall, narrow glasses instead of short, wide glasses.

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Improving Your Self-Talk

Teach your brain to:

- Be aware of negative thoughts.
- Be less critical.
- Replace negative thoughts with more positive statements.

Make sure that the positive statements are short and believable.

For example,

you could replace the negative thought - *"I'm so stupid."*

with positive statements such as:

"I'm human and allowed to make mistakes."

"I'm still learning."

"I'll catch on. I need to give myself more time."

Examples of negative thoughts I say to myself:

Positive statements that I could say instead, or use to replace, these negative thoughts:

Visual cues for new, positive statements are important for change. A variety of tools can be used as reminders. For example, sticky notes, the screen saver on your computer, reminders on your phone or using a short, positive phrase as your password. You need to see your cues often so you are reminded to repeat the statements until they become your automatic response to a negative thought.

Goals to Motivate You

A goal for success needs to be . .

- Your Idea
- Achievable
- An Action
- Able to answer the questions:
 - What?
 - How much or how often?
 - When?
 - With whom?

Here is an example of a goal for success

I will write down, in my red notebook, everything that I eat and drink for the whole day this Saturday and Sunday.

For practice, write a goal for yourself that you can successfully accomplish in the next week.

My goal:

Check to make sure that your goal meets all the guidelines for success. Does your goal answer all the questions?

Beware of barriers! Is there anything that could make it difficult for you to accomplish your goal? What are the barriers that could come in your way this week?

Can you think of ways to overcome these barriers? If not, you may need to modify your goal so that you can be sure to succeed.

How will you reward yourself when you complete your goal?

Control Your Food Cravings

Build a healthier, lasting relationship with food

Increase Your Awareness

- Don't do other activities when eating
- Notice environmental eating prompts
- Write down what you eat and drink
- Ask yourself if you are experiencing stomach, mouth, or heart hunger
- Pause to identify how you are feeling when you are eating or buying food
- Consider the eating situation – where are you, who are you with, what's going on

Work With Your Body

- Eat within 2 hours of getting up
- Eat at least every 4 to 6 hours
- Drink plenty of water
- Avoid very restrictive, low-calorie diets
- Be physically active
- Get adequate rest
- Reduce or manage your stress

Try The Change Buffet Strategies

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Nurture Yourself | → | Rather than nourish yourself |
| Follow the 80/20 Rule | → | Avoid all-or-nothing thinking |
| Stop Unwanted Thoughts | → | Get rid of trigger thinking |
| Distract Yourself | → | Take your mind off food |
| Manage Your Stress | → | Learn to relax |
| Journal | → | Heighten your awareness |
| Put Your Craving on Hold | → | Give it a minute |
| Ambush Your Triggers | → | Plan an activity |
| Assert Yourself | → | Use your mouth to speak up |
| Solve Your Problems Effectively | → | Follow the seven steps |
| Renovate Your Environment | → | Make your world less “obesogenic” |
| Quench Your Thirst | → | Keep hydrated and stimulated |
| Quit Sabotaging Yourself | → | Don't be your own worst enemy |
| Try Positive Self-Talk | → | Improve conversations you have with yourself |

Keep Changing

- Slip Towards Success → Learn from your mistakes
- Set Goals for Success → Change one step at a time

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