

The  
Night-Time

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Snacking  
Guide

# You know how it goes...

You do so well with making healthy food choices all day, only to end up sabotaging all your great progress once evening rolls around.

Despite having all the best intentions each morning, by the time the sun sets you feel like your willpower tank is dry and you simply don't care anymore. All you want is to relax with your treats.

Treats are fantastic every now and then, but when it becomes a habit where you're overdoing it every night, we have a problem.

Because now you're sabotaging yourself and making it virtually impossible for you to ever reach your goals or maintain the kind of healthy lifestyle you want.

I want you to know that you are not alone in this!

Night time snacking is a topic I am asked about all the time!

That's why I created this guide - to share with you how to get control over your night time snacking habit.

This is a simple 3-step solution that you can start using tonight!

First:

*Don't restrict calories during the day, this causes you to crave more food at night*

Your body starts increasing its hunger response in an attempt to try and get you to eat more. The more you restrict, the hungrier you get until eventually you crack and overeat.

**Eat more food during your meals!**

Eat until you feel satisfied. I know, this sounds a little bit backward. We're talking about not eating more, right?

But I don't mean eating enough cookies or candy. I'm talking about eating enough real food.

By providing your body with consistent, adequate energy throughout the day, it won't feel the need to go CRAZY at night.

If you feel like tearing through a bag of anything the moment you open it- chips, cookies, or whatever- it's probably more than just the temptation of off-limits treats.

**It's likely genuine hunger!**

Make this a non-issue by nourishing yourself properly every day. Make sure your body is getting the baseline support it needs, protein, fat and fiber with every meal, and you'll be a lot less likely to reach for the quick fix treats.

## Second: *Have a plan*

Instead of waiting until you're at the point of no return, relying on willpower and discipline, what you're going to do is sit down at a time when your willpower is much higher, when your discipline is strong (not in the evening or when we're sitting in front of cookies) and you're going to create a plan.

You're going to anticipate your triggers, what I call your "danger zones."

The evening time, the restaurants, the cookies, whatever it is for you - you're going to anticipate those. You're going to make a plan ahead of time, a very specific plan, for exactly what you'll do when temptations or old patterns come calling. Sound good?

A great and simple formula for this plan is something called an If/Then plan.

It's very simple. You think about what the triggers are for your unhealthy habits and patterns.

For example, IF I'm craving ice cream at night, THEN what will I do instead?

IF I'm craving ice cream at night, THEN I will put on my softest pajama's and I will make myself a cup of herbal tea, get cozy and read my favorite book.

See how this works?

Now there's things to consider when you're making your If/Then plans.

### **Step One:**

Be very specific.

Don't just say, "If I'm craving ice cream at night, then I won't eat it."

We have to be very specific. What will you DO instead?

We're laying out a very specific plan so that you don't have to make a choice when your willpower is low, when you're feeling exhausted or when you're confronted by temptation.

That is not the time to make a choice. The time to make a choice is earlier. We're going to make that choice very clearly, and very specifically, early on.

### **Step Two:**

When you're deciding what your THEN statement will be (what will I do instead of eating ice cream, in our example) don't just pick anything. You're not going to say, "If I crave ice cream, then I will go for a run."

Let me tell you why that doesn't work. There's a reason you want the ice cream. You're probably feeling exhausted - if it's the end of a long day, you've been doing a million things, dealing with everybody's requests, got a lot of balls in the air.

You're exhausted, depleted, and your willpower is low. You probably want to feel comforted and you want some sort of self-care. You want a treat.

That's why you are craving the ice cream. So what you're going to do instead (the THEN statement) needs to address that.

Going for a run isn't going to work. You need to be conscious of the fact that, for example, if I crave ice cream, it's because I am tired and exhausted and feeling like I need some comfort in a treat. What could you do instead that will match that?

It's not ice cream, but getting into those cozy pajama's, making a cup of herbal tea, maybe having a bubble bath, maybe watching a funny movie.

Whatever it is for you that makes you feel comforted and a form of self-care, that's what you could put in the Then statement of your If/Then plan.

Think about your trigger and ask yourself, "What is it that I'm really craving?"

Yes, maybe you want the food or you want to just stay on the couch. But why? What is you're really looking for?

Is it comfort? Is it peace? Is it relaxation? Is it a treat? Is it self-care? Then think about what is a healthier way to achieve that.

That's the Then part of your statement.

Another example:

If I don't want to go for a walk, it's probably because I'm tired and it feels too hard. So "Then" needs to be something that addresses that, the fact that it seems too hard and I'm tired.

The Then statement could be, "I'll just put on my shoes and go for a two minute walk."

So, you're statement is:

IF I feel like I don't want to go for a walk, THEN I will just put on my shoes and go for a two minute walk.

I've created a handy worksheet to help you create an If/Then plan for your top three "danger zones."

Think about three areas where you really tend to make not-so-great choices.

Create an If/Then plan for each of those.

# If / Then Worksheet

It's important to have a plan. Don't wait until your willpower is at its lowest to make a choice. Anticipate the trigger and plan your reaction ahead of time.

Make a plan now for your top three "Danger Zones" (the times when you typically make not-so-great choices).

## **Danger Zone 1**

If this happens (e.g. I'm craving ice cream at night):

.....

Then I'll do this (e.g. put on my coziest outfit and make a cup of herbal tea):

.....

## **Danger Zone 2**

If this happens:

.....

Then I'll do this:

.....

## **Danger Zone 3**

If this happens:

.....

Then I'll do this:

.....

## Third:

# Create Some Space

(Do this 'in the moment' when you feel tempted)

Your brain is always more interested in rewards that are immediate. Psychologists call this, "delay discounting," which means that, rewards that are further away (either in space or time) are less appealing to your brain.

This fact is something that you can use to your advantage when it comes to night-time snacking.

The chips that you see in the pantry, the ice cream in the freezer, those are very attractive to your brain because they are right there, right in front of you.

But, if you create some distance between yourself and that reward, your brain is going to be less interested in it.

**Here's how to do it:**

Set a timer for 5 minutes and tell yourself that you can have your snack, but you're going to have it 5 minutes from now.

Right away that makes the snack a little less desirable for your brain than it would have been if it was something you were anticipating having immediately.

During the 5 minutes that you're waiting you can create even more distance between you and the snack by moving to another room, distracting yourself by doing something else or using the time to journal and get curious about why you really want that "comfort" food.

Ask yourself, "How am I hoping this food will make me feel?"

When the timer goes off, if you still really want the snack, have it, that's fine. And if you don't want it anymore, that's great too.

You just did some important work in reprogramming and rewiring what's going on in your brain and the more you practice this, the greater control you'll start to experience.

I hope this was helpful!  
So, what's next?



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