

The 30 Pound Club

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Slow Down

When you're trying to permanently change your weight, you want everything to be in your favor. That means changing habits that you've had most of your life. One of those habits is how fast you eat. We rarely have time to "savor the flavor" any more. We eat in the car. We eat between meetings. We slam down food, and we never let our bodies tell us we've had enough.

Paula tells a story about why she sometimes eats fast: when she was in grade school, the faster you ate your lunch, the quicker you could go out to play. Eating fast was important, so every kid was a speed-eater! That habit is tough to beat even decades later, but based on recent research, eating more slowly can help us eat less.

Researchers from the University of Rhode Island observed a group of 60 young adults eat lunch in a lab setting. Those who ate slowly ate 2.0 ounces of food per minute while those who ate fast ate 3.1 ounces per minute. How did they eat more food? They took bigger bites and they chewed less before they swallowed. That didn't give their stomachs time to send out the hormones that told their brain, "I've had enough." The result? They kept eating until they had eaten more food than they needed.

How do you slow things down? Try to eat more high-fiber fruits and vegetables such as broccoli, carrots, apples, and popcorn. It takes more time to chew those types of foods, plus they have a much lower caloric density—that means for a given volume of food, they have fewer calories. Ten ounces of a salad with low-fat dressing will have a lot fewer calories than ten ounces of pizza.

Maybe you have the time to eat your meal slowly in a dining setting and maybe you don't, but that doesn't mean you have to slam your food. Even if you're driving between appointments, you can still eat more slowly. Instead of a drive-thru burger, a food bar and apple can take 20 minutes to eat. You'll eat less and because you're giving your body a chance to keep your brain posted on how full you feel, you'll feel full eating a lot less.

Try timing how long it takes to eat a few meals in the next couple of days. Don't try to change anything, but just see how long it takes. If it's less than 15 minutes, time to slow it down. This is one habit you and I need to learn and maintain if we really mean that these 30 pounds are gone for good. Because when we reach our goal, do we really want to revert to the habits that got us into trouble? Unequivocally, no.

One and Done.

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

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