

## Losing Weight: Redefine "Full" in Four Steps

Overeating is about more than reckless epic binges or always ordering the double large portion from your favorite restaurant. In many cases it can actually be a very subtle occurrence, done one small step at a time rather than in a big and noticeable way. For example, do you frequently find yourself eating just a little too much, so you feel lethargic or uncomfortable after most meals? Do you look at your empty plate, decide to have just a bit more, and find yourself regretting it half an hour later?

These are classic signs of overeating, and they are entirely manageable with good habit building. Remember the basic truth about replacing bad habits with good ones: it only takes 30 to 60 days to get a good habit established.

### Just the Right Amount Leaves You Feeling Just Right

We've discussed the difference between cravings and hunger before, and this article touches on a similar subject. Our perception of hunger and satisfaction can lead us astray if we're not used to reading that perception properly. We sometimes eat quickly and think we're still a bit hungry once our plate is cleaned, so we try to have a bit more. The problem is that our body often is a little slow to realize the stomach is full, and thus we outrun our senses and overeat until we feel too full.

There are some signs you can use to recognize if you're overeating. Frequently suffering from post-food coma and lethargy is a sure sign of overeating. You should never feel bloated after a meal. You should feel comfortable, without either aches from too much food or pangs from having too little. Instead, recognize the sense of equilibrium, feel that you've had just enough and feel good from it.

### Four Keys to Feeling Properly Full

As with all good habits, developing a proper sense of satisfied fullness is not one big step that is accomplished overnight, but a series of distinct elements that can be tackled one at a time to make the task easier and more manageable.

**1. Take control of every meal.** Don't eat just because, or haphazardly put a meal together. Measure out your proper portions as per the diet plan you've chosen to follow, and build your meal around those portions. Part of irregular feelings of hunger or fullness can come from unexpected changes in portion size, so try to keep your meals regular and let your body adapt to this pattern.

**2. Ditch second helpings.** Put everything you intend to eat on your plate immediately. Don't build up a large pile of food so you can go back for seconds, but rather put your intended meal on the plate and in front of you. Similar to the trick of closing the kitchen for the evening, this helps you build a habit and personal willpower necessary for controlling your diet. You have your meal in front of you, so you don't need to go back to the kitchen for any other helpings.

**3. Wait for the signs.** Once you have finished eating, it is important to consider that it can take twenty minutes for the stomach to send signals to your brain that you're full. Set a timer for twenty minutes once your meal is done, and let your body have a chance to process these signals. Water is a valuable tool here. If you still want seconds, have a glass of water to provide a sense of fullness without adding unneeded calories.

**4. Know the feeling.** After these twenty minutes, consider how you feel hunger-wise. In most cases you will probably feel satisfied - no too hungry, and not too full. This is what it feels like to be politely full, and is the benchmark you want to reach for. If you still genuinely feel hungry, you may wish to reconsider the portions size you're having at dinner, in the future. You shouldn't have to go back to the kitchen for food after a meal.

Using these four tactics when you eat will build a healthy habit of knowing when you are full to cut down on unhealthy overeating.

### A Thought on Low-Calorie Food

Lower-calorie food can be good for you. However, it is not carte blanche to eat large portions of food. If you train yourself to eat larger portions of low-calorie food, chances are you'll soon overeat on higher calorie food as well. The trick is to train your body to accept reasonable portions, so you can benchmark your degree of hunger and eat appropriately.

Again, this is an easy step that can help you build that 30-60 day healthy habit. Training yourself to feel full once your body has taken in all the food it needs makes dieting in general much easier, and makes you feel better to boot. Take your time, enjoy your meal, and then check yourself after twenty minutes to begin feeling properly full.

## About the Author

Larry Tobin is a co-creator of [HabitChanger.com](http://HabitChanger.com), offering effective and empowering solutions for losing weight. Try our 42-day weight loss program at [Losing Weight](#).

Source: <http://5loavesand2fishesfoodbank.org>