

STRESS OR OVERWHELM



Your answers indicate that the primary drivers of your overeating are
Stress and/or Overwhelm.

By identifying and understanding the central drivers of your overeating you can begin shifting the way you think about food, and begin feeling more empowered to take charge of your choices.

If stress or overwhelm is driving your emotional eating it's likely that you experience one or more of the following:

- ___ Eat mindlessly, without really noticing what you're eating, let alone how much.
- ___ Grab whatever is fast and easy.
- ___ Eat at your desk, in the car or while running from chore to chore, rather than sitting for a real meal.
- ___ Graze throughout the day, perhaps with no real awareness of how much you're eating.
- ___ Put off eating until you're overly hungry.
- ___ Eat whatever seems easy to digest – often simple carbs and sweets, because your stomach is easily upset
- ___ Eat for stimulation, focus, distraction, to take a break or procrastinating “hard” tasks.
- ___ Crave sweets for energy.
- ___ Are a doer and don't realize how tired you are until you finally sit down.
- ___ Have ADHD or anxiety.

After reviewing the list above, take some time to think over ways that you might be using food for stress or overwhelm and jot those down as well.





Here's How Eating Helps You Cope With Feelings of Stress or Overwhelm

[Eating for reasons of stress or overwhelm is completely rational.](#) Eating may be helping you in one or more of the following ways:

- ___ To have something to do with your hands when you're feeling anxious.
- ___ To slow racing, distracted or scattered thoughts.
- ___ As a socially acceptable way to give yourself a break, especially in an overwhelming situation.
- ___ As a means of putting your body into a state of relaxation.

It's normal to feel more relaxed after eating, and to seek food for this reason. In fact, when we are stressed, our sympathetic nervous system is in overdrive, and we're full of the hormones that activate our fight or flight responses. Eating activates our parasympathetic nervous system, which allows us to relax. And, food does provide the calories we need to increase our energy and focus.



Here's The Downside

The relaxation effect from eating lasts only for a short while. Additionally, if you aren't making careful food choices you might not be giving your body the nutrients it needs to sustain balance and energy over the long term. And this will only lead to more fatigue and stress, which then leads to more impulsive eating.

If you are always on the go, it's likely that you are exhausted, on edge and worried about everything that could go wrong if you didn't balance so many plates in the air. Maybe a part of you thinks that if you stop for a full meal, or to rest without food, you'll let someone down.





That part of you might believe that you should be able to push yourself further, and sleep and food are just holding you back. It's even possible that your body has forgotten how to relax, and that food grants you the emotional release and physical relief that you can't find in any other part of your day.

Here's Something To Try

Give full attention to whatever you are eating.

Even if you've only got one minute to eat, give your food your full attention for that minute with no multitasking. Try to experience whatever you are eating fully – the sight, smell, texture, taste, and feel in your body.

Start with one meal or snack a day and practice giving it your full attention, even if just for a few minutes.

This sounds like it's easy to do, but for many this is actually a very challenging skill. If you find that you aren't able to stay fully present when you are eating, that's only a sign that you could benefit from more support.

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You Are Not Alone



Kylie was an energetic extrovert with adult ADHD. She filled every second of her schedule and was always on the go, scrambling to complete way more than could realistically get done in one day. She pushed her body to its limits, pausing only when she felt too fatigued to keep going. Sometimes, she would graze throughout the day, but more often, she would grab a quick meal or snack mindlessly to keep herself focused and alert. Slowing down wasn't natural for her. As she did with everything in her life, she set extremely high goals for confronting her overeating, and when she fell short, she felt hopeless and defeated.

So, Kylie had to start small. She began to train her brain to slow down, just for a few moments before every meal. Gradually, she formed new, healthy habits. She became able to identify when her body was fatigued, and she planned each day to accommodate for that. She incorporated real meal breaks into her schedule, which helped her feel calmer, more capable and more grounded throughout the day.



Another woman, Samantha, was constantly overwhelmed and stressed. At the end of the day, she found herself so depleted that she overate once she got home. Some nights, exhausted, she would fall asleep before eating anything. Then, in the middle of the night, she would wake up starving and eat anything that was available. When Samantha took a closer look at her habits and feelings, she realized that she wasn't eating anything substantial during the day. She was too worried that something bad would happen if she took a break, or that people would judge her for not working hard enough.

Samantha developed new strategies to manage those anxious thoughts. For example, she found that biking to work and spending time outside made her feel more relaxed. And, she began to give herself permission to take a break and eat wholesome meals throughout the day, all of which relieved anxiety and restored the energy she needed to get through her day with greater ease.



Many people find that stress or overwhelm are the primary driver of their unwanted eating. However, all of us at some point experience the other drivers. For this reason, we will be sending you the other reports as well.

And to further help you understand your unwanted eating we will also be sending you a free e-course via email. We hope that this course brings you more clarity on what is driving your overeating.

