

# Bariatric Mental Health Resources

## Mindfulness Practices

Mindfulness practices focus on being centered and present in the moment. There are many resources available.

**Phone app |** 3 Minute Mindfulness

**Websites |** <http://www.stillmind.com.au/mindfulnessworksheets.htm>  
<https://www.thecenterformindfuleating.org/>  
<http://amihungry.com/what-is-mindful-eating/>

The following exercises are from: <http://www.stillmind.com.au/mindfulnessworksheets.htm>.

### **Automatic Pilot | lacking awareness of our daily activities**

In a car, we can sometimes drive for miles "on automatic pilot," without really being aware of what we are doing. In the same way, we may not be really "present" moment-by-moment, for much of our lives: We can often be "miles away" without knowing it.

On automatic pilot, we are more likely to have our "buttons pressed": Events around us and thoughts, feelings, and sensations in the mind (of which we may be only dimly aware) can trigger old habits of thinking that are often unhelpful and may lead to worsening mood.

By becoming more aware of our thoughts, feelings, and body sensations, from moment to moment, we give ourselves the possibility of greater freedom and choice; we do not have to go into the same old "mental ruts" that may have caused problems in the past.

The aim mindfulness is to increase awareness so that we can respond to situations with choice rather than react automatically. We do that by practicing to become more aware of where our attention is, and deliberately changing the focus of attention, over and over again.

### **Step out of Automatic Pilot | bring mindfulness into your everyday life**

**Choose one activity each day that you often do in automatic pilot.** Activities such as brushing your teeth, eating a meal, attending lectures, showering, preparing for bed, walking in the park are suitable. It is probably best to stick with one activity for a week or longer rather than changing the activity regularly.

**When the time comes for that activity, do it in a fully mindful frame of mind.** Pay attention to the activity itself, what is happening right now. With teeth brushing you might feel the touch of the brush on each tooth and the gum, note the noise it is making become aware of the taste of the toothpaste. Just like in the breath awareness, if you find yourself thinking of other things then note it for a second or two and

return to the sensations associated with brushing the teeth.

**If the activity is likely to be longer than a few minutes** such as eating a meal or walking in the park then **practice the first two minutes mindfully**. Pay attention to what you see, the sounds you hear, the feeling of your clothes as you walk. What can you smell?

**As a general aim, stick to the sensations present at the time**, touch, sight, sound, taste, smell. You may also note what emotions and bodily feelings you have such as breathing faster or muscle tension. At the end of the exercise continue the next activity mindfully for as long as that mindfulness lasts.

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### **A Daily Activity | mini mindfulness exercise**

This is a brief exercise of mindfulness of five or six breaths to be practiced five times per day. It can be practiced anywhere at any time.

1. **Step out** of automatic pilot and become aware of what you are doing right now, where you are and what you are thinking
2. **Become aware** of our breathing for about a minute or half a dozen breaths.
3. **Expand your awareness** to your whole body and then to your environment, if you wish.

The first thing we do with this practice, because it's brief and we want to come into the moment quickly, is to take a very definite posture ... relaxed, dignified, back erect, but not stiff, letting our bodies express a sense of being present and awake.

Now, closing your eyes, if that feels comfortable for you, the first step is being aware, really aware, of what is going on with you right now. Becoming aware of what is going through your mind; what thoughts are around? Here, again, as best you can, just noting the thoughts as mental events.... So we note them, and then we note the feelings that are around at the moment ... in particular, turning toward any sense of discomfort or unpleasant feelings. So rather than try to push them away or shut them out, just acknowledge them, perhaps saying, "Ah, there you are, that's how it is right now." And similarly, with sensations in the body... Are there sensations of tension, of holding, or whatever? And again, awareness of them, simply noting them. OK, that's how it is right now.

So, we've got a sense of what is going on right now. We've stepped out of automatic pilot. The second step is to collect our awareness by focusing on a single object—the movements of the breath. So now we really gather ourselves, focusing attention down there in the movements of the abdomen or other breath focus point such as the nostrils or roof of the mouth, the rise and fall of the breath ... spending a minute or so to focus on the movement of the abdominal wall ... moment by moment, breath by breath, as best we can. So that you know when the breath is moving in, and you know when the breath is moving out. Just binding your awareness to the pattern of movement down there ... gathering yourself, using the anchor of the breath to really be present.

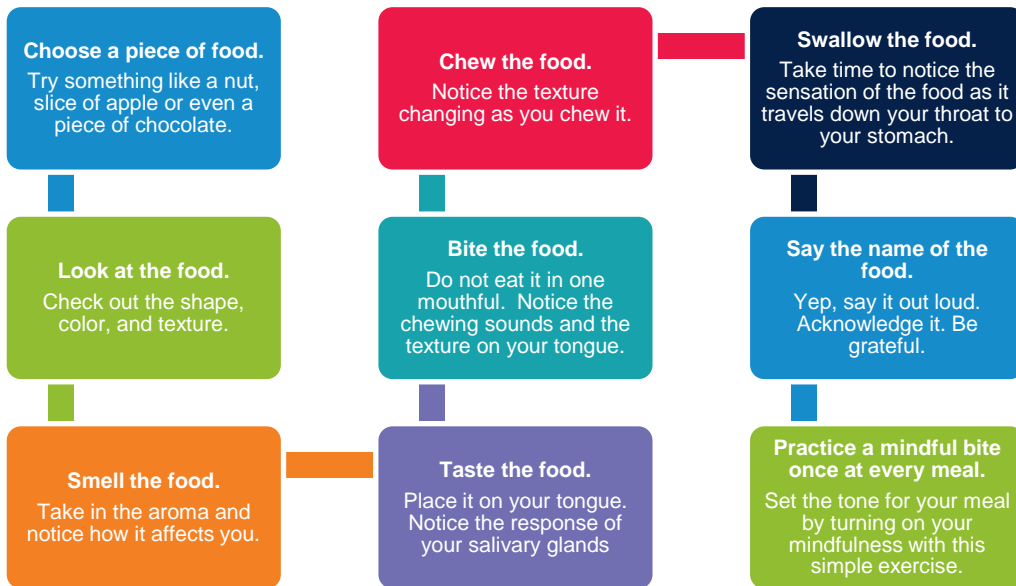
And now as a third step, having gathered ourselves to some extent, we allow our awareness to expand. As well as being aware of the breath, we also include a sense of the body as a whole. So that we get this more spacious awareness.... A sense of the body as a whole, including any tightness or sensations related to holding in the shoulders, neck, back, or face ... following the breath as if your whole body is breathing. Holding it all in this slightly softer ... more spacious awareness. And then, when you are ready, just allowing your eyes to open and mindfully continuing with your daily activity.

## Mindful Eating | A few tips to try at home



Dieting Versus Mindfulness	
Dieting	Mindful Eating
Willpower	Trust
Cultural Conformity	Individual Empowerment
External Cues	Internal Cues
Weight loss	Health Enhancement
Avoidance	Acceptance
Rigid	Integration
Counting Calories	Quality Calories
Restrictive	Flexible
Deprivation	Satisfaction
Denial	Permission
Quick Fix	Lifestyle
Fight Food	Celebrate Food
Trap	Liberate
Enemy	Ally

## Mindful Eating | food exercise



## Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Another resource is cognitive behavioral therapy or CBT. This therapy is based on the idea we get into patterns of thinking and behaving that may need to be changed when they interfere with achieving our goals.

### Books |

The Cognitive Behavioral Workbook for Weight Management  
Michele Laliberte, PhD; Randi E. McCabe, PhD; Valerie Taylor, MD, PhD

For people who want to use this workbook, I suggest that for two weeks read Chapter 1 once daily and practice those skills. For the next two weeks read Chapter 2 once daily and practice those skills as well as the ones from the prior Chapter. Continue to work your way through the book in this way.

## Lifestyle Changes

I suggest beginning to make exercise and dietary changes before surgery.

For eating, I suggest keeping a food journal for a couple weeks and then comparing that to the suggested diet after bariatric surgery. Then start making one change a week toward the goal diet. In addition, you can look online for bariatric surgery recipes or work with a dietician.

For exercise, I suggest keeping an exercise journal for a couple weeks and then comparing that to the suggested exercise level after bariatric surgery. I suggest gradually increasing exercise as your physicians say is safe and as your body allows towards the recommended level of exercise for after bariatric surgery (ie. adding 1 or 2 minutes per week of exercise).

### Notes:

Moderate exercise is enough to cause sweating or to make it a little bit of work to speak in sentences. Any exercise at that intensity or greater lasting at least 10 minutes counts towards your daily total time for exercise.