



# 10 Principles of Intuitive Eating

<https://www.intuitiveeating.org/about-us/10-principles-of-intuitive-eating/>

## Principle 1: Reject Diet Culture

Throw out the diet books, food plans, and articles that offer you false hope that that food restriction or dieting by any name you call it will grant all of your wishes for a better life. Rather than getting angry at yourself, get angry at the lies from diet culture have led you to feel as if you were a failure every time a new diet or food plan stopped working. If you allow even one small hope to linger that a new and better diet might be lurking around the corner, it will prevent you from being free to rediscover Intuitive Eating.

## Principle 2: Honor Your Hunger

Keep your body biologically fed with adequate energy and carbohydrates. Otherwise, you can trigger a primal drive to eat beyond comfortable fullness. Once you reach the moment of excessive hunger, all intentions of moderate, conscious eating are fleeting and irrelevant. Learning to honor the first biological signal of hunger sets the stage for rebuilding trust with yourself and food.

### **Principle 3: Make Peace with Food**

Call a truce—stop the food fight! Give yourself unconditional permission to eat. If you tell yourself that you can't or shouldn't have a particular food, it can lead to intense feelings of deprivation that build into uncontrollable cravings and, often, bingeing. When you finally give in to your forbidden food, eating will be experienced with such intensity that it usually results in Last Supper overeating and overwhelming guilt.

### **Principle 4: Discover the Satisfaction Factor**

The Japanese have the wisdom to promote pleasure as one of their goals of healthy living. In our fury to be thin and healthy, we often overlook one of the most basic gifts of existence—the pleasure and satisfaction that can be found in the eating experience. When you eat what you really want, in an environment that is inviting and conducive, the pleasure you derive will be a powerful force in helping you feel satisfied and content. By providing this experience for yourself, you will find that you'll eat the right amount of food to feel physically and emotionally satisfied.

### **Principle 5: Feel Your Fullness**

Listen for the body signals that tell you that you are no longer hungry. Observe the signs that show that you're comfortably full. Pause in the middle of eating and ask yourself how the food tastes and what your current fullness level is.

## **Principle 6: Challenge the Food Police**

The food police monitor the unreasonable rules that dieting has created. The police station is housed deep in your psyche, and its loudspeaker shouts negative barbs, hopeless phrases, and guilt-provoking indictments. Chasing the food police away is a critical step in returning to Intuitive Eating.

## **Principle 7: Cope with Your Emotions with Kindness**

First, recognize that food restriction, both physically and mentally, can, in and of itself, trigger loss of control, which can feel like emotional eating. Find kind ways to comfort, nurture, distract, and resolve your issues. Anxiety, loneliness, boredom, and anger are emotions we all experience throughout life. Each has its own trigger, and each has its own appeasement. Food won't fix any of these feelings. It may comfort for the short term, distract from the pain, or even numb you. But food won't solve the problem. If anything, eating for an emotional hunger may only make you feel worse in the long run. You'll ultimately have to deal with the source of the emotion, as well as the discomfort of eating beyond comfortable fullness.

## **Principle 8: Respect Your Body**

Accept your genetic blueprint. Just as a person with a shoe size of eight would not expect to realistically squeeze into a size six, it is equally futile (and uncomfortable) to have a similar expectation about body size. But mostly, respect your body so you can feel better about who you are. It's hard to reject the diet mentality if you are unrealistic and overly critical of your body size or shape. All bodies deserve dignity.

## **Principle 9: Movement—Feel the Difference**

Forget militant exercise. Just get *active* and *feel* the difference. Shift your focus to how it feels to move your body, rather than the calorie-burning effect of exercise. If you focus on how you feel from working out, such as energized, it can make the difference between rolling out of bed for a brisk morning walk or hitting the snooze alarm.

## **Principle 10: Honor Your Health—Gentle Nutrition**

Make food choices that honor your well-being, taste buds, and culture; while attuning to how your body feels. Remember that you don't have to eat perfectly to be healthy. You will not suddenly get a nutrient deficiency from one snack, one meal, or one day of eating. It's what you eat consistently over time that matters. It might be surprising for you to learn that what you eat and how you move your body only accounts for ten percent of your health. Progress, not perfection, is what counts.