

THE EMOTIONAL EATING CHEAT SHEETS:

*Food Doesn't Have to be  
An Enemy!*



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Emotional eating is a tricky thing! We all have situations, people, and foods that cause us to feel out of control and weak. Our emotions are there to help us navigate through tough situations in our lives. Emotions are a GOOD thing! But sometimes these feelings can cause us to turn to food as a coping mechanism and before we know it we have over consumed and now not only do you still feel those emotions you can feel even worse. Draining our sorrows in a pint of ice cream is not a healthy way to deal with our emotions.

It's time to recognize and detach our emotions from food! By taking a minute to detach and check our emotional thermostat we can avoid and navigate through those situations that cause us to turn to food. Take the power back and say no to emotional eating.

For the longest time emotional eating WAS my coping device. Sad, Depressed, Stressed – it was all solved by eating. But over time my “coping mechanism” did absolutely nothing to help me cope. In fact it only perpetuated the above mentioned feelings... Making it one evil never ending cycle. It took me looking at my emotions differently to change and break the cycle. Instead of burying my emotions in a pint of Ben & Jerry's I learned to recognize my feelings for what they were and I looked to more positive outlets that would truly help me to feel better and solve the underlying problem.

Next time you feel like dulling your feelings with food... take a break and review the attached thermostat to help you recognize what truly is causing the problem.



How to Cope! Use These tools to help you cope next time you find yourself reaching for food to deal with an emotion.

### **GIVE YOURSELF A MASSAGE**

Do you notice how you automatically start rubbing your temples when tension starts to rise? Place a tennis ball under your foot and rub around. Or place the ball behind your shoulder blades and stand against the wall. It's an instant, cheap massage that can be done right at your desk or in the kitchen.



### **HAVE A CUP OF TEA**

Taking a break with a cup of herbal tea, which has zero calories taking a break to enjoy a quiet moment while you sip your tea can do wonders for you.

### **GET SOME SLEEP**

Sleep is critical to putting an end to emotional eating. When you miss even a few hours of sleep, your appetite hormones are thrown off! Six to nine hours is optimal! Just as you schedule appointments and other events, be sure to schedule adequate sleep.



### **CHEW GUM**

Keep a pack of sugarless gum in your purse and use it often. Not only is it good for your teeth, it can help you halt emotional eating. "A recent study in the journal *Appetite* indicates that chewing gum 15 minutes before you eat can significantly reduce your appetite and curb cravings." "Brain scans show that it moves your brain into a 'relaxed but alert' state. Thus, it's great when you get the urge to boredom-eat."

### **WALK OFF THE CRAVINGS**

Breaking the emotional eating habit can be the hardest part of putting an end to it. Replace your response to eat when stressed with a response to exercise. Instead of reaching for a candy bar, lace up your shoes and go for a walk or do any other physical activity you enjoy. This may be especially helpful if your comfort food of choice is chocolate or other high-calorie snacks. "According to a study in the journal *Appetite*, taking a brisk walk for 20 minutes can help you curb chocolate cravings."



**RELY ON PURPOSEFUL DISTRACTION**

Are you a multitasker who not only emotionally eats but also does it while watching television, texting, talking on the phone or perusing Pinterest? Distracted eating is a recipe for overeating but that distracting yourself from eating can curb your comfort-food cravings. "Engaging your mind in an activity that stimulates your brain but isn't too taxing, like simple word puzzles, knitting and other rhythmic activities, can soothe and calm you.

**RELAX LIKE A RAG DOLL**

Anxiety is at the heart of many of our mindless nibbles. To calm down your body, you can do a very simple relaxation exercise: Drop down your muscles as if you were a rag doll. Tense up your body and then assume the [rag-doll] position again. The contrast between tightening and relaxing can help unlock anxiety.

**BREATHE DEEP**

Calming your physiological responses is key to reducing cortisol naturally. Imagine blowing through a straw as you exhale. Count to 10 on the slow, deep, in-breaths. Slowing down your breathing tricks your body into believing that it is going into sleep mode, thus signaling the rest of your body to just relax.



Ideas and original article found at

<http://www.sheknows.com/health-and-wellness/articles/974151/10-ways-to-soothe-yourself-without-food/page:2>

### Exercises Disclaimer:

The exercises provided by Maybe I Will (and [www.maybeiwill.com](http://www.maybeiwill.com)) are for educational and entertainment purposes only, and is not to be interpreted as a recommendation for a specific treatment plan, product, or course of action. Exercise is not without its risks, and this or any other exercise program may result in injury. They include but are not limited to: risk of injury, aggravation of a pre-existing condition, or adverse effect of over-exertion such as muscle strain, abnormal blood pressure, fainting, disorders of heartbeat, and very rare instances of heart attack. To reduce the risk of injury, before beginning this or any exercise program, please consult a healthcare provider for appropriate exercise prescription and safety precautions. The exercise instruction and advice presented are in no way intended as a substitute for medical consultation. Maybe I Will (and [www.maybeiwill.com](http://www.maybeiwill.com)) disclaims any liability from and in connection with this program. As with any exercise program, if at any point during your workout you begin to feel faint, dizzy, or have physical discomfort, you should stop immediately and consult a physician.

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