

## **What You Can Do If You are Overweight or Overeat**

Many overweight people have no idea that they are actually overeating. Have you seen the television show in which the host keeps track of the food consumed by the subjects during the week and piles that amount of food on a table? The audience is shocked, but the subjects are even more shocked. Why wouldn't they know what they have been eating? In part it is because they are eating unconsciously. They aren't paying any attention to how much or what they're eating - it has become a conditioned response fueled by emotion. How aware of what you are eating are you?

If you are heavier than you would like to be, what can you do to see if you are overeating? The first thing is to begin keeping track of what you eat. Keep a food diary for a few weeks. You don't have to be exacting in your calorie calculations for this step. The most important part of the exercise is to pay attention, to be aware of what and how much you eat. On average, most people need between 1600 to 2000 calories per day. You can find calorie tables on the Internet ([calorieking.com](http://calorieking.com) seems to be a good one). If you find that you are overeating, then look inside yourself for the answer to, "Why?"

Besides being aware of how much food you consume, also be aware of the quality of food. Avoid foods with high levels of fat, sugar, or simple carbohydrates (white bread, white pasta, etc.). Begin eating more fruits and vegetables, and reduce the portion sizes by using smaller plates. Remember that your stomach is approximately the size of your fist. Avoid sugar substitutes as some have been shown to cause weight gain, headaches, and other side effects.

One of the most important things you can do is to eat a healthy breakfast. The word "breakfast" actually means to, "break" the "fast." A body that believes it is fasting (starving) will slow its metabolism, and a healthy breakfast will kick your metabolism into gear. Do your best to eat within an hour of waking, preferably within a half-hour. Just making this one change will make a difference, not only in your weight, but you will also begin to feel better, with more energy.

Another very simple step is to get plenty of sleep. Strive for seven to eight hours of sleep with as much before midnight as possible. Every hour before midnight is as effective as two to four hours after midnight. And who couldn't use a little more rest? Also remember that as busy as we all are, when we are well rested, we are far more productive and effective. You'll actually get more done with more sleep.

Simply by following these few steps, you will begin to feel much better! How cool is that?

**by Karl R. Zimmer III**

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Consult your doctor before starting any exercise program or diet, especially if you have been diagnosed with diabetes or any other medical condition.