

The Hunger/Fullness Scale

Hunger / Fullness Scale	
too hungry {	1 primal hunger / intense / irritable
	2 very hungry/looking forward to eating
	3 hungry / ready to eat
	4 1st sign of hunger
	5 neutral - not hungry not full
	6 starting to feel full
	7 comfortably full
	8 a bit too full, 2-3 bites beyond 7
	9 very full, very uncomfortable
	10 binge fullness/sick
	} too full

First things first, this scale is not intended to be applied through an all-or-nothing lens. Remember, Intuitive Eating is not a hunger/fullness diet. Honoring your hunger and feeling your fullness are only 2 of the 10 principles of Intuitive Eating. It's quite common for frequent dieters to feel out of touch with their hunger and fullness cues. This is because dieting teaches us to rely on external factors to tell us when, what and how much to eat. When we do this for an extended period of time, our hunger and fullness cues go "offline".

You can use this scale as a tool to help you get back touch with these cues. Please keep in mind, there are some things that can interfere with your ability to feel your hunger and fullness cues. For example: stress, mood disorders, certain medications, disordered eating, eating disorders, digestive disorders, and even after a strenuous workout.

If you are waiting to eat until you are a 1-2 on the scale, you will likely eat very quickly, potentially missing out on the satisfaction of the meal and wind up in a place where you feel uncomfortably full. If you (for the most part) start eating around a 3-4, you'll likely be able to eat at a pace at which you are able to enjoy the sensory aspects of the meal, and leave the table feeling physically comfortable and satisfied.

Mindfulness Around Eating

How often do you really check in with your body and ask yourself what it is you truly need? Often times we eat out of boredom, stress, anger, frustration or low energy. When we tune in and identify our **true** needs, we may find that we are using food to cope with something else. For example, perhaps you ate an hour ago, and are pretty full but find yourself turning to food to alleviate boredom, stress or sadness. By bringing awareness to your internal cues, you can learn to eat more intuitively, giving your body what it wants and needs.

Throughout the day, check in with yourself and ask "How am I feeling right now?" "Am I stressed or light headed? Bored or angry? "Is my stomach growling?" "Do I notice any other sensations?" These frequent check-in's create more mindfulness around food and life in general.

Take a deep breath and belly check before you eat, ask yourself: "Am I hungry?" "What's my hunger level?" "What am I hungry for?" While you are eating, investigate your hunger throughout your meal, ask yourself: "Has my body had enough?" "Am I eating just because there's more food?" "Can I stop before I get uncomfortably full?" "How will I feel in 30, 60, 90 minutes after eating this?" "How do I want to feel for the rest of the day?"

The feelings of hunger and satiety may be hard to identify at first. Keep checking and you will learn more about your body and what it wants and needs.