**Day 1**

**Title: Estimating Your Serving Sizes**

Now that you’ve decided to begin your journey to eating a healthier, balanced diet, the first step is understanding where you’re starting from. So what are you eating now? How much are you eating? What types of foods do you eat the most? What types do you eat the least? Don’t know the answer? That’s ok. If a random person came up to us on the street and asked us tell them how much we ate, most (if not all) of us would get it wrong. We’d underestimate how much we eat on any given day. We’d also overestimate the good stuff, like how many servings of vegetables we eat, and underestimate the bad stuff, like how much sugar we eat.

So what if we can’t tell how much food we ate yesterday? Does it really matter? Actually, yes.

**How much food did I just eat?**

Let’s face it, one of the hardest parts of tracking our food is figuring out how much we actually ate. *“Did I have one serving, or one and a half?”* Or, sometimes it’s more difficult than that. *“How am I supposed to know what 42 grams looks like?!?”* If you’re used to using imperial measures (cups and teaspoons and such) vs. metric (grams and liters and such), picturing how much food you ate or beverage you drank using weight measurements can be pretty difficult. Sometimes even picturing ounces and cups is difficult, too! To make matters even more difficult, many serving sizes on food labels are listed in grams. So what’s a conscientious food-tracker like you to do? Learn how to estimate how big your portions are, that’s what you do.

**How to estimate the size of your serving**

The most accurate way to measure how much you ate is by using a kitchen scale. But outside of your kitchen, that’s not really practical. Who’s going to carry around a kitchen scale all day? But you do carry around a really helpful way to estimate the size of your servings: your hand. That’s right, your hand is a visual representation of different measurements, such as a teaspoon, tablespoon, cup, and ounce. Learn these simple estimations and you’re on your way to knowing how much food is on your plate.

[IMAGE of hand diagram]

Keep in mind, not everyone’s hand is the same size. These estimations work best using an average woman’s hand. If your hand is larger or smaller, you need to make mental adjustments.

* Pointer fingertip: The shape of your fingertip, from the nail down to the first joint, is roughly the same size as one teaspoon. Use this as a guide for measuring butter, oils, and other foods that you eat in very small amounts.
* Thumb tip: Your thumb tip, from the nail down to the knuckle, is about the size of a tablespoon. This is a good estimation for dressings and nut butters. Two thumb tips equals two tablespoons, which is one serving of peanut butter.
* Your fist: Clench your hand into a fist and look at how big it is. This works out to roughly one cup. Use this to estimate servings of amount of pasta, vegetables, and fruit.
* Your palm: The size and thickness of your palm is roughly 3 ounces, or the recommended serving size for any type of meat.

Another way to estimate serving sizes is by comparing them to common items. How does the food on your plate compare to these? [CAROUSEL]

* Ping pong ball: roughly 1 ounce or 2 teaspoons
* Deck of playing cards or a hockey puck: 3 ounces
* Egg: ¼ cup
* Computer mouse or a light bulb: ½ cup
* Tennis ball: ¾ cup
* Baseball: 1 cup

[/CAROUSEL]

**Practice, practice, practice**

Now that you have these guidelines to help you out, it’s time to put your knowledge to use. Next time you fix yourself a meal, stop for a moment and think about how much food you’re putting on your plate. Does your chicken breast look like one palm or two? Is your salad teeny-tiny, or does it look like about the size of both of your fists? When the waiter brings you your food at a restaurant, does that serving of mashed potatoes look like a light bulb, or is it closer to a baseball? Even if you’re not ready to adjust the size of your portions, knowing how much you get is the first step on this journey to eating a healthier, balanced diet.