

# WEEK 2

## Fuel: **Sustenance** or Indulgence?

There's no denying it... whether you like sweet, salty, savory, or spicy... food is GOOD! The problem is, sometimes instead of eating to fuel our body we eat to soothe anxiety, sadness, or irritation. We inadvertently switch to auto pilot without paying attention to what is driving our desire for food—whether it be physical or emotional.

Being aware of *how* and *why* we are eating is just as important as *what* we are eating. In fact, Cornell University found that dieters who focused on changing their surroundings were more successful at adhering to their diet and losing weight.



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## Set Your **Environment** Up For Success

By becoming more aware of our environment and by understanding how our surroundings play a role in our food choices, we can begin to identify ways to positively change our home, workplace, school, and social environments.

### At Home

Believe it or not, the visual appeal of how our food is displayed and contained such as the color of plate we eat off of and the location of the food during a meal play a role in how many calories we consume. A recent study found that 18% less calories were consumed when the plate color contrasted with the color of the food; and when prepared food was left on the stove rather than bringing it to the dining table, 19% less food was eaten per meal.

### Out & About

The American Institute for Cancer Research found that 72% of us determine the amount we eat not by recommended serving size, but by what we are used to eating or the amount we are served—regardless of hunger, taste, or any other factor. In addition, 67% of Americans eat their entire restaurant entree all or most of the time (which typically averages 1,200 calories).

#### TIP:

- At a restaurant, split a meal with a buddy or have the server box up half the meal before it's even served.
- Instead of a starch and vegetable, order two veggies.
- Ask for dressings and condiments on the side.

### Convenience

For many of us, our schedule and lack of time dictates what we will eat for breakfast, lunch and dinner. With that in consideration, our need for speed doesn't necessarily have to throw healthy options out the window. The trick is to be prepared for when time is short and hunger strikes.

**TIP:** Avoid fast-food by stocking your freezer with healthy veggie-filled options and your car glove box with healthy snacks such as nuts, peanut butter crackers and plantain chips. If the environment around you is stocked with quick and easy healthy foods, you are less likely to succumb to temptations.

### Trigger Foods

Do you have a favorite food that is nearly impossible for you to stop eating once you've started? These are known as trigger foods—beware— they lead down a slippery slope! Know what your weaknesses are and decrease exposure.

**TIP:** Make a list of your trigger foods. This will help to keep these foods on your radar. It's important to be aware of what your triggers are, you can be more successful in avoiding them.