

*Train your
taste buds*

TO LIKE HEALTHIER FOODS..
ONE STEP AT A TIME



Mindful Health

If you're reading this, you're likely hoping to find a way to eat more healthy foods. Perhaps you've been eating an abundance of processed foods for so long you aren't sure how you're going to suddenly skip to a refrigerator filled with colorful produce. It's little wonder that it's hard to stop munching chips and sugary snacks when that's what your taste buds have learned to love, and the solution lies in retraining your taste buds. The good news is that you can give them a taste of healthy foods and start getting them to crave those rather than the sweet, sugary things you may be used to instead.

Just like building up stamina at the gym, it takes time to get your taste buds to recognize how delicious healthy foods can be. Soon, a better mood and better health will follow in its wake.

Here's how to go about shifting your perception and craving those good-for-you foods instead!



Take it one step at a time

Start slow. Go step-by-step. Most of us will be setting ourselves up for overwhelm if we try to go from a daily trip through the McDonalds drive-thru to steamed, raw, and healthy overnight. Start working in healthier foods while phasing out the unhealthy stuff so that the shift is more gradual. This gives your taste buds time to adjust accordingly.

You can make a list of the most unhealthy items in your regular diet, and start replacing one each week with a healthier option. You can also choose to incorporate one healthy item into your diet each week, and the compound effort will show rewards very soon.



Add in more non-starchy veggies

You likely have no problem eating all your potatoes, but how about that broccoli or spinach? You don't have to kick potatoes to the curb (I know, I know -- you're welcome!), but you can focus on putting more greens on your plate. Aim to take a little less of the starchy stuff and more of the leafy green varieties.

For example, aim to fill half of your plate with leafy greens or non-starchy vegetables, and leave a 1/4 sized portion of your plate for your potatoes.



Choose protein & good fats to start your day

Now here's where it really counts. In the morning, start eating foods that have lean protein and good fats rather than that sugary donut. When you eat sugar in the morning, you send your blood sugar out of whack and set the tone for your day.

Make avocado toast on sprouted whole-grain gluten-free bread for breakfast. Or if you make chia seed pudding, you can trick yourself into eating something that tastes sweet without the sugar spike. Even a green smoothie made with spinach, kale, and a handful of berries will start you off on the right foot.




Look for ways to eat umami

I find it interesting to take a look at other cultures and how they pair their flavors. There's a lot we can learn from this, especially when the population as a whole is generally a healthy bunch of people. The five basic tastes are bitter, sour, salty, sweet, astringent, pungent & umami.

Thai food notoriously hits all the right notes with a balance of several of these flavors. Simply combining your protein, fat, and complex carbs together with these tastes will help get your taste buds (and you!) on the right path!





Choose smaller meals more often

It can be challenging to stay on track when you're bored and hungry at work. A trip to the vending machine gives you something to do when you need a break from the computer, but you can also achieve this break with healthy foods you brought with you.

You can prevent these snacky cravings by keeping your energy high and blood sugar stabilized with small meals throughout the day. Bring one or two small, healthy meals for mid-morning and mid-afternoon, so when you're feeling hungry, you have something nutritious available. You don't even need to eat these if you aren't actually hungry, but having them with you will be setting yourself up for success daily.

Eat more raw foods

Even just munching on crisp, raw veggies as a snack will help you get the nutrients, probiotics, and enzymes to help balance your gut. This simple trick helps your body adjust to healthier foods. Luckily, these foods are the easiest to prepare and package to take along with you as a snack option.

For example, a \$1.99 bag of organic baby carrots can last you several days as a snack. Pick up some guacamole or hummus to go along with them, and you've got an easy, affordable, and healthy snack for when you feel you can't quite make it all the way to lunch.





Focus on your food

Mindfulness is something so many of us forget when eating. Other cultures take their time to enjoy their meals while we shovel it all on the go. Break that cycle by taking the time to appreciate every bite and find love in every flavor you eat.

Try for one week to put down your device and fully be present with your meals. Put down your fork between each bite, chew your food well, and simply focus on slowing down and being present at meal times.

Practice these tips as you work in more healthy foods, and you'll find your tastes for overly sweet and indulgent foods to fade away in favor of fresh and delicious!



Lori Kampa

CERTIFIED INTEGRATIVE HEALTH COACH +
WELLNESS EDUCATOR
MINDFUL HEALTH

Get in touch with me



Email

info@mindfulhealthwithLORI.com

Website

www.mindfulhealthwithLORI.com

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