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Opening Extract from...

HOW TO RETRAIN YOUR APPETITE

Written by **Helen McCarthy**
Published By **Pavillion Books**

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CONTENTS

Introduction 11

CHAPTER 1

A New Approach to Weight Loss 21

CHAPTER 2

The Appetite System 41

CHAPTER 3

The Psychology of Eating and Appetite 63

CHAPTER 4

Stop Eating When You're Full 85

CHAPTER 5

Establish a New Routine 113

CHAPTER 6

Tackle Your Saboteurs 129

CHAPTER 7

Wait Until You're Definitely Hungry 185

CHAPTER 8

Stop Emotional Eating 205

CHAPTER 9

Know What to Eat 231

CHAPTER 10

Maintain Your New Weight 263

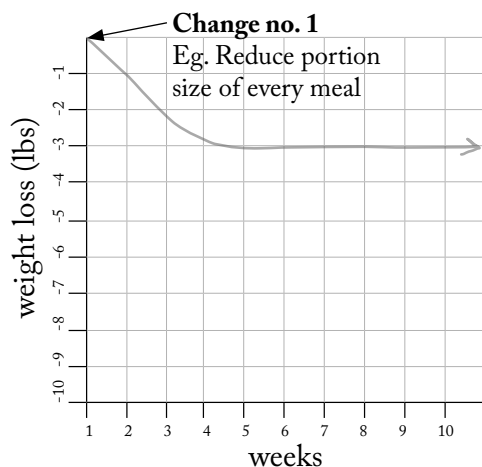
Resources 275

Acknowledgements 284

Index 286

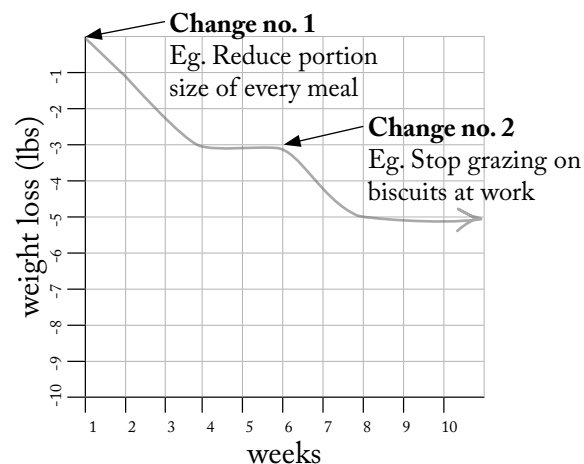
What is Appetite Retraining?

Over the years you've accumulated Unhelpful Eating Habits (UEHs) that involve eating more than your body needs. With Appetite Retraining you identify what your specific UEHs are and then you change them one at a time. Step by step you learn to eat in tune with your body. When you change one UEH, such as reducing the size of your evening meal, you see something like this:



Your weight falls as you establish the new habit. And then it plateaus. Your body has let go of the additional weight it was carrying because of this particular eating habit. The size of the drop in weight is something you discover, not something you can predict. If you then reduce the size of your meals further, you'd see an additional drop. The time to get to a plateau depends on how big a habit change you've made and on your metabolism. If you just make this one change and stick to it, your weight is likely to stay around this level. To lose more,

you choose another UEH and work on making that particular change. Here's what that might look like, using the example of changing a habit of grazing on biscuits at work.



You decide how many habit changes to make, and you'll find the right balance between making changes to how you eat and what weight loss you're comfortable with.

The role of exercise

Exercise does, of course, have a role to play in weight loss, but I probably wrote a book about changing eating habits rather than increasing your activity levels because I'm not one of life's great exercisers. However, I found that when I lost weight, I wanted to move more. I joined a gym and started walking more. Not because I thought I should, but because I wanted to. When you feel better in your body you may find the same thing – that your body wants to do more.

Which habits do you need to change?

The habits you need to change are personal to you – they are the ones that are keeping you heavier than you want to be: eating beyond the point of being just full and eating when you're not hungry. It's important to remember that you should only change what you need to change. If it's not broke, don't fix it. We're going to look at making changes one step at a time, leaving everything that's OK as it is and changing what's not. To start with, we'll identify the particular things you need to change. Here's a list of the most common unhelpful eating habits – tick those that apply to you.

Hannah worked in an office with people who regularly brought in tempting home-made bakes. Her sweet tooth led to a pattern of grazing on cake and biscuits during the morning, then not needing lunch. By the time she got home she was very hungry and had a large meal with dessert and wine, which she really enjoyed with her husband. She didn't tend to snack after dinner, unless she was feeling upset or stressed, and then found herself eating sweet foods. On the Unhelpful Eating Habits checklist Hannah ticked: My portion sizes are too big/I eat dessert even if I'm already full/I eat something just because it's there (grazing on cake and biscuits at work)/I eat when I'm bored/stressed/agitated/ anxious although I'm not hungry/I eat too much unhealthy food. (See page 83 for the habits Hannah worked on.)

Unhelpful Eating Habits Checklist

- 1. Eating too much at any one time**
 - My portion sizes are too big
 - I eat dessert even if I'm already full
 - I have times when I binge on unhealthy foods and can't stop

- 2. Problems with your eating routine**
 - My eating routine is erratic or non-existent
 - I skip meals quite often to save calories

- 3. Eating when you're not hungry**
 - I eat out of habit (e.g. I have biscuits with tea)
 - I eat something just because it's there
 - I eat extra food now in case I'm hungry later
 - I get cravings for particular foods and tend to give in to them whether I'm hungry or not
 - I eat when I feel bored/stressed/angry/agitated/ anxious, even though I'm not hungry

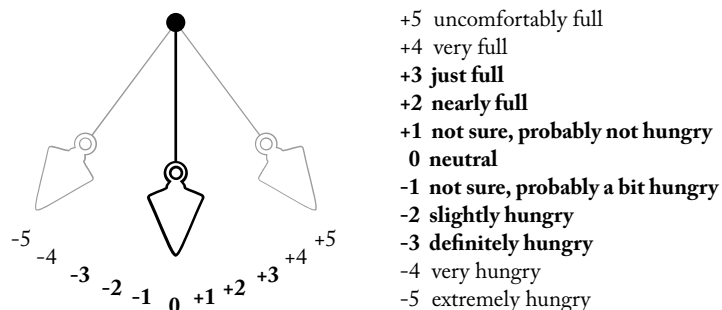
- 4. Problems with what you're eating**
 - I find that food I expect to enjoy isn't satisfying so I keep trying other foods
 - I have an unbalanced diet
 - I eat too much unhealthy food

Each of these types of habits is dealt with in this book.

Know when to stop eating: The Appetite Pendulum™

Using my Appetite Pendulum™ is the key to appetite retraining. With practice, you will learn to stop eating a meal when you get to +3 (just full).

The plus numbers on the Appetite Pendulum™ are the ones you tune in to *as you are eating*.



- » +1 feels less like fullness and more like no longer feeling hungry – you’ve taken the edge off your hunger.
- » +2 is when you are starting to feel slightly satisfied by your food.
- » +3 is a feeling of definite satisfaction, but not what you’re probably used to thinking of as ‘full’, even though you now need to mentally re-label this state as ‘just full’.
- » +4 tends to feel slightly uncomfortable in your belly while you are eating, but it can be easily overlooked and only

registered after a short while – 10–20 minutes later you think ‘I didn’t need that pudding/second helping.’

- » +5 is a feeling of being stuffed, where you are having to think about undoing your trousers. The immediate feeling from your stomach is uncomfortable, but the unpleasant feelings of nausea or of feeling drugged only hit you later. Once you are using Appetite Retraining correctly, you’ll never hit +5 because you’ll be in tune with your appetite.

The more mindfully you eat, the easier it is to notice what’s happening. With each mouthful, you monitor the subtle changing sensations in your stomach. The Japanese principle of eating only until you’re 80 per cent full is similar to stopping at +3 on the Appetite Pendulum™. According to the Japanese proverb: ‘Eight parts of a full stomach sustain the man; the other two sustain the doctor.’

If you haven’t been taking much notice of fullness sensations, this will take a bit of practice. Eating slowly will help you to keep tuned in to your fullness signals. Don’t expect to get this right immediately if you’ve been out of practice for years. If you think you’re at +3 but you’re not sure, you might want to put your knife and fork down and wait a minute then continue for a few more mouthfuls if you’re not quite full. If you overshoot and realize you’re at +4 before you’ve stopped eating, use the opportunity to learn what was too much. Notice the size of what you just ate, and make a mental note that this amount was a bit too much. This can help you adjust better to stopping at +3 at your next meal.

Why can't you succeed in losing weight?

The four types of saboteurs can crop up in relation to eating even if you are super-successful in other areas of your life. So if you're usually able to achieve goals you set yourself and succeed with flying colours, why can't you stick to your eating plan? Trouble changing your eating habits isn't to do with ability or intelligence. Oprah Winfrey is one of the most successful people on TV and she openly talks about her struggles with losing weight and gaining it again. You, me, Oprah – we all encounter hurdles when we try and change something as fundamental as how we eat. Hurdles put there by the subconscious part of our mind. Each of us can overcome our hurdles when we understand what they are and what specifically we need to do to get over them.

It's often because losing weight is more complicated psychologically speaking than you may think, and that complexity is to do with the parts of our unconscious mind. That's what saboteurs are – the psychological processes influencing how we eat that aren't conscious. But being able to anticipate what natural blocks or saboteurs are likely to crop up means that you can bring them into your conscious mind and deal with them directly. Forewarned is fore-armed.

The first step is to understand what is getting in your way. The second is to learn how to overcome it.

Understand your own self-sabotage

To understand your own hurdles to losing weight and being able to keep it off easily, take a look at the following Saboteurs statements and tick all those that apply to you.

The four sections refer to the four different types of saboteur that I identified as I developed Appetite Retraining. The more items you ticked in each section, the more of an issue that type of saboteur is likely to be for you. I'll explain what each of the saboteur types is, and then how you can deal with any that apply to you, so that you don't find yourself undoing the progress you make.

All the statements on the next 29 pages are examples of why weight loss failed previously for clients I've worked with. Decide which pages apply to you. Then on page 163, you'll summarize which saboteur statements apply to you.

D



There's
someone important
to me in my life
who wants me to
lose weight

Reading your results

Check and note down how many statements you chose from the pages marked:

A

B

C

D

Now read about each section and turn to the pages that are most relevant to you for specific advice on addressing your potential hurdles head-on.

Section A is about Ambivalence

Ambivalence is about holding two conflicting but true thoughts or feelings at the same time, such as wanting to lose weight but at the same time not really being that bothered. It produces wavering commitment to achieving your goal. Ambivalence about losing weight can produce fluctuating motivation, so that sometimes you are determined to succeed and other times it doesn't seem to matter. If this applies to you, read pages 166–168.