



BOK Ten Essential Eating Tips for Weight Management

Keeping within your personal total caloric intake, planning five-to-seven meals a day, and eating quality fuels are all keys to making either of these meal plans work. You already have all of the information and tools for your own plan, but here are my top ten tips to help you on your journey.

1. Eat when you start to feel hungry.

Note the word hungry. It implies a physiological signal to eat. It has nothing to do with watching television, traditional mealtimes, or feeling bored. As you know by now, once your blood sugar rises and falls, you will physically begin to feel hungry—note the word physically. So, respond. If your machine is working the way it is intended to, you will feel a need to eat about every two or three hours. We are designed to stay on the edge of hunger, eating when our bodies tell us that we need food. We are not designed to eat every meal until we feel full. The new “target feeling” you should be shooting for after a meal is simply the absence of hunger.

2. Drink water before and after meals.

Drinking water at every meal will reduce your caloric intake. Filling the stomach with water will bring you to that “absence of hunger” feeling much quicker. Also, water is absorbed more quickly than food, so you won’t get that stuffed uncomfortable feeling after eating. Drink water after your meals, too. Remember that your hunger may be thirst in disguise. How much water should you drink? There are two easy ways to find out: Divide your weight (in pounds) in half and that’s how many ounces per day you should drink on average or make sure that your urine is always on the clear side and not too dark yellow.

3. Make sure you snack at least twice a day.

If you want results that last, snack twice a day. Like any important meeting or errand, set a timer, put it in your day planner, set a reoccurring reminder on Microsoft Outlook or recruit someone for support until snacking becomes second nature. The choice is simple. You can either try to fool Mother Nature by taking diet pills or skipping meals or work with her by eating five to seven times a day.

4. Minimize your salt intake.

Salt + sugar + any simple carbohydrate adds up to the infamous Fat Cocktail. This fat-friendly combination will result in a higher insulin response and more potential fat storage from each meal. Danger zones are processed foods and when eating out. Read your food labels and choose restaurant items without salt, cream sauces, butter, syrups, etc. Before long you will be fully satisfied with low- and no-salt foods. Remember salt also makes you thirsty, which can stimulate your appetite. It’s no accident that bars serve free salted peanuts, chips, and pretzels.

5. Select complex carbohydrates as frequently as possible.

Whenever possible choose complex carbohydrates and avoid simple carbs—especially in combination with fats. Simple carbs rush into the bloodstream causing a large release of insulin. Higher levels of insulin pack on the pounds faster and will temporarily shut down the body’s capability to burn fat as fuel. Choosing complex carbs is a much smarter choice because they usually contain fiber which slows their entry into the bloodstream, which can also prevent some of the fat in your meal from being absorbed and lower the release of the storage hormone insulin.

6. Eat more carbohydrates early in the day and fewer later in the day.

Try to eat most of your carbs during your first three to four meals on the BOK Fat Loss / Weight Maintenance Meal Plan or your first two to three meals on the BOK Accelerated Fat Loss Meal Plan. An old rule for body builders when “leaning up” before competitions is no carbs after 3:00 p.m. The no-carb rule will maximize fat burning and minimize fat storage as you sleep. If you must, indulge in sugary carbohydrates only during the daytime when you are active. They are not only burned easier, but the unburned, stored carbs will be available in the evening hours if you exercise.

7. At mealtime, eat some of your carbohydrates before your protein and fat.

If you are feeling famished, your blood sugar is low and begging to be elevated, so give it what it wants first. Start your meal by selecting a small portion of the available carbohydrates (vegetables, fruit, rice, pasta, etc.), wait a few minutes, and then move on to the protein. It takes time for the satiety center in the brain to get the signal that you have eaten (about twenty minutes). And since our brains primarily burn carbohydrates for fuel, this area is more sensitive to carbs than any fat or protein. Even if it takes you only five minutes to eat that small portion of carbs on your plate, it will reach your brain about ten to fifteen minutes later and still slow your attack on the rest of the meal.

8. Eat slowly, chew your food completely, and take short breaks.

Remember the uncomfortable feeling after holiday meals? Not only were your “eyes bigger than your stomach,” but your mouth was faster than your twenty minute satiety response time. A simple technique to avoid overeating is to pause at certain points in your meal. Spark up a conversation, or if you are alone, read the paper, check your email, or make a quick phone call. A two to five minute pause a few times during your meal can be the difference between eating normal portions and overeating. Just as important is to chew slowly and completely before swallowing. This too will extend your mealtime, and will also help you avoid problems such as indigestion and acid reflux.

9. Make healthy food available.

Take the time to make sure that you have healthy snack items available at home, in the car, at school, and at work. Fruit is the best and easiest choice because most come in their own natural wrapping and are fortified with vitamins and minerals. Protein sources are more of a challenge. A few low-fat, high-quality protein fuels that travel easily include whey or soy protein shakes, hard boiled eggs, canned tuna in water, fat-free/low-fat cottage cheese or yogurt. Of course, meal replacement bars and other prepared items are an easier choice, but remember that they are processed so check their labels first to make sure that you make the best choice. You should always try to make the “natural” choice first and cooking at home is the most efficient way to monitor your food intake. You control the ingredients and the leftovers are great for lunch or snacks the next day.

10. Reward yourself once a week.

We are all human and sometimes we just want to celebrate life or enjoy other foods outside of our normal everyday healthy diet. Pizza and beer during football season or a good movie with your favorite ice cream may be hard to give up. So reward yourself once a week with something you particularly enjoy, but don't use it as an excuse to “pig out.” Keep your rewards in the 300 to 500 calorie range if possible. Then get back on the program at your very next meal. A little extra exercise can help correct a part of a caloric imbalance, but don't use exercise as a down payment for your next indulgence. Your new healthy you will become your greatest indulgence