

LPGA Women's Network (June 2020)

How to Get Your Nutrition Game Back in Shape

Siobhan Donofrio

Whether you have gained weight or turn to food to relieve stress, anxiety, and boredom, here are some suggestions to help you get your nutrition game back on track. If you have gained a few pounds over the past couple of months or have noticed your regular eating patterns have changed, you are not alone. Many of us have been turning to food for comfort and are eating more than usual during this time. Maybe you have been stuck to your desk at home all day and have diminished physical activity. Maybe you are working long stressful hours on the front lines of the COVID-19 crisis. Maybe you are lonely because you are separated from friends and family. Or, maybe you have lost your job. Whether you have gained weight from lack of regular activity or turn to food to relieve stress, anxiety, and boredom, here are some suggestions to help you get your nutrition game back on track and your mind and body ready for the golf course.

Give yourself a break

It is important to be self-compassionate. Feelings of shame or guilt around food and eating are counterproductive. These past few months have been extraordinary times and turning to food for comfort and nourishment feels good. For most people, coming out of self-quarantine safe and healthy should be the goal, rather than emerging at a specific weight, size, or fitness level.

Manage your stress, anxiety, and boredom in other ways

Find new ways to address these underlying factors instead of focusing on what and how much you are eating. Meditation, deep breathing, yoga, exercise, journaling, distance socializing, and Facetime or Zooming with family and friends can help relieve stress and anxiety. While the country is starting to open its business doors again, we may still find ourselves at home a lot more than usual. Creating a plan to fill the idle hours at home with activities you enjoy can take the place of mindless eating in front of a screen.

Practice mindfulness while eating

Listen to your body and feed it when it is hungry. Pay attention to fullness and satiety cues. Eliminating distractions such as email, television, and scrolling through social media feeds can help you notice when you are full and satisfied. Eat nutritious foods that you enjoy and savor the taste. There is no need to eat unsatisfying foods that you think you “should” eat because they are “healthy” but don’t like. If you find yourself continually returning to the kitchen in search of “something,” ask yourself what you are looking for. If you are hungry, then eat. If you are not and are just bored or looking for a distraction, find an alternative such as walking outside, calling a friend, or playing with a pet.

Eat how you would if you were playing golf today

If you aren't yet able to exercise and play golf regularly, start getting into that mindset. Thinking about how you would eat when you are going to play a round of golf or compete in a tournament can help set the stage for making positive daily nutrition choices now.

Purposefully plan your meals and snacks

A satisfying meal that incorporates adequate lean protein, whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and healthy fats can help keep you feeling full for longer and lessen cravings. When you grocery shop, plan to stock up on nutritious, appetizing snacks so you always have them available. Golfers should plan what they will eat before, during, and after a round to help them attain their best performance. It is important to plan what you will eat for your physical and mental health.

There is room for all your favorite comfort foods

Having a healthy diet doesn't mean you have to eliminate your favorite foods. Think about how you eat overall throughout a week, without focusing on one meal or day. Assess where you can fit in your comfort foods. If you deprive yourself of them for too long, you could be setting yourself up to overeat when you eventually give in.

Make sure you are eating enough

Don't skimp on food or deprive yourself of nourishment. Our diet culture has many of us believing that being thin and losing weight equates to beauty and health. Your worth is not determined by your size and shape. Active women need adequate amounts of food to fuel their days of work and play, so honor the nourishing and comforting needs of your body and mind.