

WELLNESS MINUTE

May 2019



**THE BENEFITS
OF MINDFUL
EATING**

**MOVE
MORE AND
SIT LESS**

**SWEET POTATO
BRUSSEL SPROUTS
QUINOA BOWL**

The Benefits of Mindful Eating



We tend to hear the term mindfulness a lot these days, which means bringing your awareness into the present moment. Mindfulness is a practice that has been shown to improve both mental and physical health and well-being. Eating mindfully—with conscious intention and attention—can also be beneficial in various ways.

There are several aspects to mindful eating, including:

- Noticing your body's signs of hunger and fullness.
- Being present to your food and your surroundings as you eat.
- Making conscious choices about what, when, where, why and how much to eat.
- Paying attention to the taste and texture of your food as you are enjoying it.



Why is mindful eating important?

Eating while you are distracted or stressed out can inhibit digestion and nutrient absorption. We've all heard the saying, "You are what you eat." A more accurate saying could be, "You are what you absorb."

If you're eating at your desk while rushing to meet a deadline, or eating your breakfast in your car as you're stuck in traffic, your body is likely in fight-or-flight response. This means that your blood and energy are going to your extremities rather than your digestive system, and you may not benefit fully from the nutrients in the food you eat because they may not be digested and absorbed as well.

Additionally, if you're eating too quickly, you may finish your food before your brain and body have caught up with each other. It takes about 20 minutes for the brain to get the signal of fullness. People who eat very fast have the tendency to overeat, which can contribute to weight gain.

So, taking the time to savor and enjoy your food without stress or distractions can go a long way toward fully nourishing your body and managing your weight!

MOVE MORE AND STRESS

Exercise is one of the most important things you can do for your health! The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends that adults engage in physical activity that elevates their heart rate for 150-300 minutes per week, as well as engage in strength training twice a week.

For some people, this may sound like a tall order since hectic work schedules, long commutes, and a lack of energy can get in the way. However, it's important to recognize that any amount of activity is good. Don't allow black or white thinking to discourage you from getting whatever amount of exercise you can.

In fact, the newer guidelines released late in 2018 allow for more flexibility. In the past, they recommended activity in bouts of at least 20-30 minutes. This was modified to bouts of at least 10 minutes. Now, the official recommendation is that anything counts! The important thing is simply to do less sitting and more moving.

If you're someone who isn't currently getting much activity, setting small goals makes it easier to get started. Try squeezing in short bouts of activity throughout the day. This can make it easier than scheduling a 60-minute workout at the gym.

Setting high expectations too quickly can be counterproductive and discouraging. When you start gaining confidence by meeting small goals, you will more easily be able to build from there.



Sweet Potato Brussels Sprouts Quinoa Bowl

Bowls are a great option for lunch or dinner! The sweet potatoes in this delicious recipe are a rich source of fiber, iron, Vitamin B and Vitamin C. Enjoy a bowl for dinner, and take the leftovers for lunch the next day.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup quinoa, rinsed
- 1 ½ cups vegetable or chicken broth
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ onion, minced
- 1 tablespoon fresh ginger root, minced
- 2 cups sweet potatoes, peeled and diced
- 1 cup sliced Brussels sprouts
- 2 tablespoons dried cranberries
- ¼ cup sliced almonds

Directions

Place quinoa and broth into a pot and bring to a boil over medium heat. Once it's boiling, reduce heat to low and cover. Simmer for 15-20 minutes, until all liquid is absorbed.

While quinoa is cooking, place olive oil, garlic, onion, and ginger into a large skillet. Cook over medium heat for 3-4 minutes, until onions are translucent. Add sweet potatoes and Brussels sprouts and cook for another 10 minutes, or until they soften.

Add cooked quinoa to skillet and thoroughly combine.

Remove from heat.

Add cranberries and almonds and mix again.

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THE ABC'S OF MINDFUL EATING

The main article highlighted the reason mindful eating is important. Here, we will focus on exactly how to put it into practice. Remember, like any practice, it can take time to change this habit, so be gentle with yourself as you work on making the shift.

A = AWARENESS

- Notice whether or not you're truly hungry. Sometimes we eat out of stress or boredom, so it's important to pay attention to your body and ask yourself, "Am I truly hungry, or eating to meet another need?"
- Tune into your body and stop eating when you notice signs of fullness.

B = BEING PRESENT

- Sit down to eat at a table and eat without distractions (this includes your cell phone).

C = CHEWING

- Chew your food thoroughly (20-30 times before swallowing) to allow the enzymes in your saliva to begin the digestive process.
- Eat slowly to avoid overeating.
- Pause between bites (it can help to put your fork down between each bite).

Making healthy food choices is also important. But whatever you're choosing to eat, be sure to take the time to savor and fully enjoy your food!

