

Overwhelmed by diet tips? Change your environment first, study advises

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Professor Brian Wansink measures portion sizes with a student assisting with research for the Food and Brand Lab. Credit: Cornell Food and Brand Lab

Overwhelmed by tons of daily diet advice? If only we knew which diet tips to follow.

According to a new finding by a team of Cornell University researchers, dieters who focus on changing their surroundings find it easier to adhere to their diet. Understandably, they also report losing the most weight.

The researchers, led by Brian Wansink, Director of the Cornell Food and Brand Lab, presented their findings at this week's Experimental Biology conference in Anaheim, Calif.

For the study, 200 participants from the National [Mindless Eating Challenge](#) (predecessor of the [MindlessMethod.com](#)) were given diet tips from three distinct categories: 1) change your environment, 2) change your eating behavior, and 3) change your [food choices](#).

"We found that dieters who were given stylized environmental tips — such as use a 10-inch plate, move the candy dish, or rearrange their cupboards — stuck to their diets an average of two more days per month," said Wansink, author of the book, *Mindless Eating: Why We Eat More Than We Think*.

In this three-month study, people reported losing 1 to 2 pounds per month per tip. What made the biggest difference? "Consistency," Wansink said, "If a person was able to follow a tip for at least 20 days each month, changes really started to happen."

What are some examples of environmental changes? Wansink advises using smaller dinner plates, keeping high calorie foods out of sight, and turning off the television, computer and cell phones during mealtime.

"These types of changes are much easier to follow than saying you will eat smaller meals, substitute fruit for sweets, or give up chocolate and [French fries](#)," he added.

Provided by Cornell University

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