

Mind-over-matter to curtail calories

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(HealthDay)—Your surroundings can play a big role when it comes to overeating. Learning how you respond in various circumstances can help you curb the calories.

One study showed that people eat and drink less when their dinnerware is red—and more when it's blue—because red acts like a [stop sign](#). But another study found that using your favorite color—whatever that is—can prompt you to eat more.

Consider your lighting, too. Soft light is relaxing, and that means you may eat more slowly, giving your stomach time to send your brain the message that you're full. Bright fast-[food](#) restaurant lighting may encourage fast eating, and in the rush, you may lose track of calories.

In general, the fewer distractions, the better. That means no TV during meals. Study after study show that viewing time correlates to more eating, snacking and body fat among adults and kids alike.

Being with many other people is another form of distraction, especially when eating out—the larger the group, the more food and drinks consumed. This isn't to say you should abandon plans to be social, but rather that you organize get-togethers that aren't always centered on food.

Research also confirms why you should never go food shopping while hungry: The sights and aromas increase hunger and will tempt you to veer off your calorie list.

Surprisingly, one way to eat less is to allow yourself limited indulgences, because completely depriving yourself could backfire into a binge. If you love [ice cream](#), buy one single-serve portion each week, or completely change the environment in which you eat the ice [cream](#) by walking to your favorite ice cream store for the treat.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, it helps to take a big-picture view of your eating patterns with this three-step approach:

- Reflect on all your current eating habits and food triggers.
- Replace the ones that lead to overeating.
- Reinforce these changes constantly until they're permanent.

More information: To get more in touch with [lifestyle and environmental habits that can influence your eating habits](#), the CDC has a detailed action plan you can follow.

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