

# Taming those high-calorie temptations

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(HealthDay)—It's the dieter's tug-of-war: the need to lose weight versus the urge to eat high-calorie foods.

Scientists say the easy availability of sweets and other treats has made the desire for them stronger over time. Couple that with a [sedentary lifestyle](#) that burns fewer and fewer calories, and battling the bulge is that much harder.

To win the war, your dieting strategy has to include a way to manage food urges, especially when eating for reasons other than hunger.

At the top of that list is stress, a particularly difficult hurdle to overcome because persistent [stress](#) may alter the brain's response to food in ways that lead to poor eating habits and, in turn, overweight. Just telling yourself to resist food urges is rarely effective if you're in the habit of reaching for unhealthy treats. In this case, "just say no" is more of a *non-strategy*.

A helpful tool for dieters is a mental health technique called Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, or ACT. Through ACT, you learn not to ignore triggers, but to accept and counter them by developing a stronger set of life goals and making a commitment to behaviors that lead to reaching these goals. ACT also stresses mindfulness and helps you recognize when you're tempted to eat because of emotional and [environmental cues](#).

ACT teaches:

- That urges don't need to be acted on even though denying yourself a treat is an unpleasant feeling.
- How to cope with thoughts and feelings related to weight control.
- To be more aware of how and why you eat.

Learning ACT with a trained psychologist can be beneficial in many areas of personal growth. Consider this option if you feel that your [food](#) urges are too hard to tame on your own.

**More information:** You can learn more about [Acceptance and Commitment Therapy](#) at GoodTherapy.org.

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