

Quick fixes: 3 ways to combat food cravings

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(HealthDay)—If you think your inability to control food cravings is all in your head, you're right. Losing weight is about more than cutting calories—you also have to resist food urges.

And while behavior modification is a successful long-term tool, sometimes you need a quick fix.

If everyone craved broccoli, there wouldn't be a problem. But the most common cravings are for foods high in fat, sugar and salt, like cookies, chips, pizza and pastries. Cravings usually involve vivid images and thoughts of how delicious the [food](#) looks, and how good it tastes and smells.

One way to counter these cravings in a snap is with mental imagery, a technique that curbs the urge "here and now." Simply focus on a non-food image you find appealing. It can be a rainbow or a beach, or your favorite golf course if golf is your passion. You can even carry photos in your wallet or load them into your cellphone so they're always handy.

Another way to re-direct your attention is with an activity that requires hand-eye coordination, like doing a puzzle or playing a game on your smartphone or computer.

Finally, counter real-time aromas of food with another scent you like. Take a whiff of your favorite perfume or rub a drop of scented oil on your wrist. You can even carry a purse-sized vial with you.

While these techniques can't stop [food cravings](#) from happening, they can diffuse them as they pop up, and you can use them anytime and anywhere.

More information: The Uniformed Services University has suggestions for using [imagery](#) to improve all aspects of well-being.

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