

# 6 TIPS TO Snacking

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Snacks can make or break your diet. Snack smart, and you'll keep hunger at bay and fuel your body. Snack wrong, and you can blow hundreds of calories without realizing it. Constant snacking is one of the easiest ways to blow your calorie count for the entire day. Even when you plan out your meals, giving in to those little snacks during the day can take a toll – especially if you aren't tracking them. Are you guilty of mindlessly grabbing a handful of M&M's, reaching into a bag of almonds several times a day, and so on...? If the answer is yes, this type of mindless eating can really slow down your progress.

**It really doesn't matter if it's a lick, taste, or a "small bite," all of those items add up – and when you begin to account for them every day, you'll see just how much.**

That said, a snack between lunch and dinner is an important part of your lifestyle. The key is to learn how to snack responsibly on good quality food and to plan your snacks into your day – not just eat them randomly on-the-fly.

## **Time your meals out.**

Studies show that, from a biochemical perspective, when we are trying to maintain our weight or lose weight, stabilizing blood

sugar by eating every three to four hours is key. Skipping meals can cause you to become overly hungry and eat too much at your next meal, and when you snack throughout the day you can lose track of your calories and are constantly releasing insulin – which is no good.

## **Treat Your Snack Like a Meal**

When we're in snack mode, we typically ignore standard eating practices, like sitting at a table – instead we're standing in the kitchen or talking while we dig into that bag of chips or whatever. Admit it, you've done it, too. By not consciously acknowledging what you're consuming, it can ultimately lead to OVEReating. If you actually take the time to put your snack on a plate, sit down, and enjoy it like a meal, you're going to savor what you're eating that much more. You'll also be more likely to feel satisfied.

## **Know the Calories**

In general, tracking your snack calories will be important. For those of us in maintenance mode, we will be allotting roughly 300 to 400 calories for a snack. For those of us who are in weight-





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loss mode, we will be allotting roughly 200 calories for a snack. Make sure that you have a bunch of snacks at the ready that meet your desired calorie requirements.

### Get All Your Macros

The point of a snack is to curb hunger, keep you from bonking from low blood sugar, and to make sure you don't hit dinner hungry. One of the best ways to ensure your snack does what it's supposed to is to make sure it has healthy fats, carbs, and proteins. Here are few grab-and-go ones to consider: plain Greek yogurt; you can add your own berries, beef jerky, hard-boiled eggs, almond butter with apple slices, or a protein shake on the run.

### When You Can't Stop...

My fool-proof trick for those nights when I literally can't stop snacking: gum. Who wants to eat another sweet with the taste of mint on his or her tongue? Not me. Other tricks? Facebook (I hate to say this, but it does distract you), take a bath or shower, sit outside, anything that distracts you will stop you from going back into the kitchen. ■



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