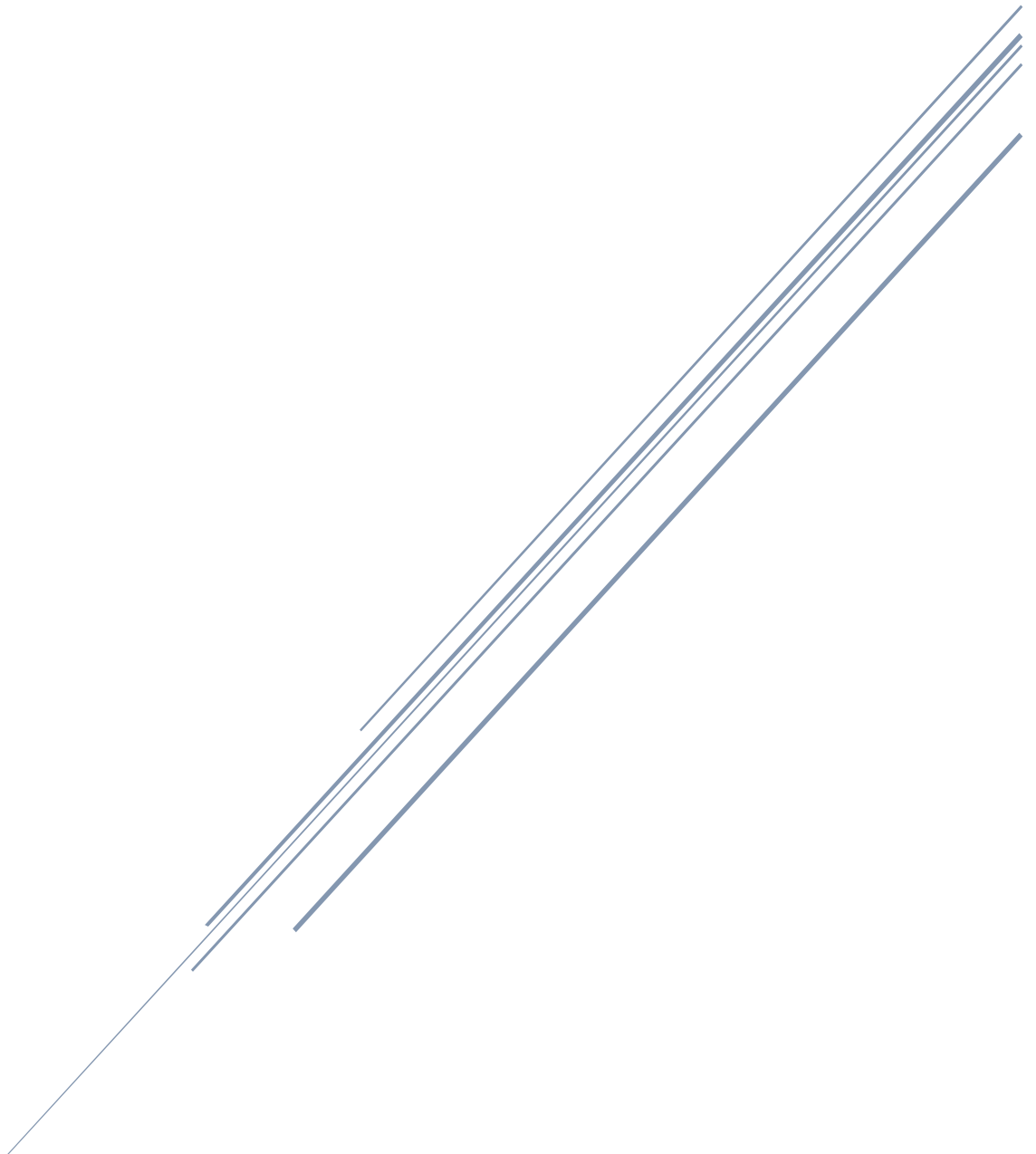


# FOOD, EATING AND OVEREATING

The basics you need to know to lose weight permanently



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You want to lose weight.

You've tried many 'diets'.

You have plenty of knowledge of what healthy eating looks like. Isn't that frustrating? You know it is not the knowledge what's missing.

Ideally, you want to be guided by research and follow good practice for healthy eating. You don't like crazy diets although you may have tried some. Mainly because you do not know what else to try.

It just doesn't work.

**Losing weight permanently feels impossible.**

I used to think that. Specially as I became older. I thought weigh gain was a fact of life. And, as a doctor and health researcher I knew there's plenty of studies that demonstrate that this is true.

You've probably been successful in the past. You have lost some weight but haven't been able to keep it off. You are tired and frustrated with the yo-yo dieting and weight cycling.

There is very good research that shows that any 'diet' leads to weight loss but equally it shows that this weight is unsustainable and not long term.

That's when I came in. **I am only intersted in weight loss that is permanent and that is easy to do.** I also thought this was not possible. Actually, it is the only way. If you want to make it permanent it has to be easy. Keeping your goal weight is not your job. You want to lose weight so that you can move on and do other things in life.

It is possible and doable.

You don't need to believe it just yet. You will.

**For now, as long as you are intrigued, I can help you get there.**

## Reframing the problem

The problem is not the weight. **Weight is a symptom**, the manifestation of the problem.

What causes weight to go up is overeating. Overeating is a behaviour and solving for overeating is a behavioural change question.

Most 'diets' tackle weight as if weight is the problem. They offer 'how to', a to do list to solve the problem, lists of foods and recipes of what you can or cannot eat. It is valuable information (probably knowledge you already have) but it does not address the cause of the weight gain.

**To eliminate overeating we need to understand the cause of the behaviour, why are you overeating.**

## Food and eating

First, we need to understand food and eating.

This will be simple and basic information. If you are following the blog post series '[Stop overeating to lose weight in 30 days](#)' (August 2021) you already know this one of the principles I use in my 'Stop overeating' programme.

**I aim for the simplest process so that you achieve the result you want and to ensure changes are permanent.**

There is no good reason to overcomplicate it and many good reasons why simple is best.

Complicated processes and tons of information may sound more scientific but they can be counterproductive. The more complicated the system, the more knowledge you need, the more likely is that the change will not be sustainable because it will not fit in your daily life. It also makes you dependant of someone else's guidance. I am warning the scientists and doctors among you. The latest 'diet', 'superfood', or the latest trial (i.e. calories counting, precise food composition, etc.) are not the answers.

## Why do we eat?

There are four reasons.

### 1. To provide our body with the energy it needs to function

**This is the only biological reason we have to eat food.** Our body needs energy to function. This energy comes from food.

The more balanced the type of food we eat is the more likely we cover all our body's needs.

### 2. To enjoy ourselves: eating for pleasure

We get pleasure from food because **there is a biological reward associated with eating.** Our brain gets a dopamine hit when we eat. The brain is in charge of our survival and it loves dopamine. This mechanism is there to make sure we seek food by creating a desire for food.

Strictly speaking there is no need to obtain pleasure from food.

**When the desire for food drives us to eat more than what we need, we've created an overdesire. This will lead us to eat beyond our biological need.**

Some foods are very efficient at creating an overdesire. Typically, these foods contain sugar and flour.

When we choose to reward ourselves with food we are simply exploiting this mechanism. We intentionally seek the pleasurable rather than the nutritional purpose of food.

There is a second aspect to eating. Eating behaviour has an important societal component. Most if not all cultures incorporate food and eating as a mechanism for connection and communication with others. We use food to celebrate and to mark special occasions. This satisfies another of our basic human needs, belonging and being accepted in a group.

**The societal and cultural component of eating behaviour is very powerful and shapes our thinking about food and our behaviours around it.**

### 3. To avoid feeling uncomfortable emotions: emotional eating

Unfortunately, we don't know how to deal with the negative emotions we experience in our daily lives. We've never been taught what to do and how to solve for negative emotions. We instinctively avoid them. That's normal, the brain is geared to avoid what makes us feel uncomfortable.

Because of the association with pleasure and the reward mechanism it provides, **we've learnt to use food as a compensating mechanism.** This and the over-abundance of food around us, specially of foods that create an exaggerated reward response, means that we use food as a mechanism to mask uncomfortable emotions. It's a learned behaviour and we learn it very early on.

We eat when we feel stressed, anxious, upset, overwhelmed or simply bored just to name a few of the most common negative feelings and emotions we don't like experiencing. Food gives us a quick, albeit short lived, relief.

**Unfortunately, because food only masks rather than solve these negative emotions, we unconsciously create a vicious circle.** The reward is strong but it extinguishes very quickly. The negative emotion returns and on top now we feel bad for having eaten food we didn't want to eat. We pile up a second negative emotion and loathing self-talk. We eat again.

### 4. Eating against your own will: compulsive eating

This is eating out of control, binge eating. It feels as if you can't stop eating, as if you are eating against your will. It may be the result of a restrictive diet. It's similar to emotional eating and the solution is similar: understand and solve for the negative emotions.

## What is overeating?

When does eating become overeating?

It's very simple.

### **Overeating is eating more than what our body needs to function**

Our body only needs food to function. Any additional food we eat is unnecessary and it means we are overeating.

The symptom of overeating is weight gain. You know you are overeating if you are an adult and you are putting on unwanted weight.

When we consume more than what our body needs to function, the body stores the excess food by converting into fat. Our bodies are incredibly efficient in storing food. Nothing goes wasted.

The only reason to eat food is for fuel (1).

All other reasons lead to overeating (2, 3 and 4). Most of the time this includes eating for pleasure.

I always get a strong pushback from many of you. I know. Please, continue reading.

Many of you who think you eat for pleasure. You eat to enjoy the taste of food.

Could be. I can tell you, that most of the time you are kidding yourself. I know you are very intelligent. It's a clever disguise of emotional eating.

Here is how I know it.

## Answer these questions to know if your 'eating for pleasure' is 'emotional eating'

1. Do you want to lose weight?
2. Do you feel you have control over how much 'food for pleasure' you eat?

If your answer is Yes to the first and No to the second questions, I'm afraid you are using your eating for pleasure is emotional eating.

**If you had control of how much food you eat for pleasure you would not need to lose weight.**

## Can I 'eat to enjoy the taste' and have the weight I want?

Yes, you can.

To be honest, it's easier if you decide that you will only eat for fuel and dissociate pleasure from food.

It is actually possible to not have 'desire' for foods.

Do you want that?

Many of my clients answer a categorical 'No'.

Do you smoke? Do you even want to smoke?

Wouldn't it be amazing to not even want foods that lead us to overeat?

I cover all this in my coaching programme. It's advanced stuff.

I also want you to know that the alternative is possible.

You can enjoy food and not overeat.

It requires being intentional about it.

## What's next?

Are you intrigued?

Do you want to know more?

Do you want to stop over eating?

## Three things you can do to stop overeating

1. Follow my blog series in August-September 2021 '[Stop overeating to lose weight in 30 days](#)' to learn and achieve your weight goal in 4 weeks.
2. [Get in touch](#), you might be one free session away from success and I'm happy to help if that is all you need
3. Register in my 1 to 1 [coaching programme](#)

## The coaching programme is for you if you:

- need additional help
- want to ensure you reach your goal
- want to reach your goal in 30 days (although we will first understand whether you are 'in a hurry')
- want to make sure maintaining your weight goal is easy and permanent
- want to learn how to apply the same skills to other behaviours (you totally can)
- want to move on from losing weight to the much more wonderful achievements you want to have in your life

If any of these resonate with you, I can help you.

Get in touch to [schedule a free 1:1 session](#) and you can decide for yourself.

By the end of my coaching programme my clients don't even remember that losing weight used to be impossible

I look forward working with you



## About me



**Certified Life Coach** - Life Coach School, US

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