



Lesson 4: Managing Hunger

Hi, everybody. Welcome to Day Four of the Healthy Mindset Masterclass. Today we're going to be focusing on managing hunger. Yes, we're going to talk about hunger. I wanted to talk a little bit about why we get hunger signals and then talk about some strategies to manage it. The actual definition of hunger is it is a true physical need to eat. As most of us are learning with fasting, this is far less frequent than what we once thought and believed to be true. So recognizing that when your body actually needs food, this is hunger, but we get a lot of confusing messages from our body particularly if we have insulin resistance. Insulin resistance means that we're going to have more confusing messaging about hunger. If we have insulin on board too often and too much insulin, we're going to feel hungrier, so you hear that theme commonly in the fasting method.

We talk about it a lot that if you want to feel it easier to fast and you want to manage your food more effectively, one of the first things you can do is eat in a way that lowers your insulin levels, causes less of an insulin reaction after you eat and to eat less frequently, hence intermittent fasting. True hunger is activated when your body physically needs food. But what most of us think of when we think of feeling hungry is we think of appetite. We have an appetite or a desire to eat. This can be caused by hormones as I just mentioned with insulin. Other hormones can affect this. We can be activated in our appetite due to our senses. We can smell food or certain smells that make us think of food. Certain sounds may trigger a hunger response or an appetite. And sights, looking at food. Even looking at food on social media can get our hunger signaling going. You may want to watch this while you're fasting.

Also, our appetite can be sparked through emotions, feeling boredom or stress. These are definitely two feelings that can activate an appetite but some of us feel hungry when we're angry. We get hungry when we're sad, when we're lonely, when we're frustrated so this can be tied to our appetite. I am going to talk about emotional eating so that will be coming soon. What I want you to first think about is how do you recognize whether it's true hunger or is it appetite? Many of us actually almost never need food because we've had food fairly recently unless you're doing an extended multiple day fast. When someone says, "Are you hungry?" The answer is probably "No." We probably do not have a physical need for food, but would you like to eat? Many of us might answer "Yes" to that question quite often. Two very different questions.

Where does your sense of this appetite or hunger come from? What are you using as your indicator that you're actually hungry? I think I first learned this from Coach John. He may have learned it somewhere else. But to identify your hunger, is it head hunger, meaning are

you thinking about food? Does food sound good? Are you craving something that tastes good or that sensation? That's head hunger not actually a need to eat. Is it heart hunger? Are you feeling sad? Are you emotionally stressed? Are you feeling lonely, maybe frustrated or angry? That would be heart hunger. Again, not actually a need for food, but your heart, your emotions are looking for something to kind of soothe them and we've learned to use food for that.

Or hands hunger. Are you bored? Do you need something to do especially around times when you might want to snack? If you're watching television at night or sitting down socializing with friends, we have a temptation to want to be doing the hand-to-mouth motion. So our hands are idle, we're actually probably bored or just looking for something else to do. Again, not actual hunger. Another test that I like to use when I'm debating whether I'm actually hungry or just wanting food is I will ask myself about two foods that I don't really love. I would say, "Okay, Terri, if you're hungry right now, you can have salmon and steamed broccoli." If my answer or reply is "No, thanks", that means I'm not truly hungry. It means that I'm craving some food or wanting the sensation of eating but I'm not actually at a place where I need to have food.

If you're actually feeling some physical sensation that tells you you're hungry, like you hear your stomach rumbling, sounds like you have a dinosaur living inside your belly. What I would encourage you to think about is to reframe it and recognize what is going to happen. I think of it this way. If you have a child living in your home, let's say a 9 or a 10 year old, old enough to kind of get their own food and they come to you and they say, "Mom or Dad" or whoever you are to them. If they say, "Hey, I'm hungry. What are you going to make for me?" And your answer might be, "I'm not going to make anything but there are leftovers in the fridge." So rather than making more food, you're going to have them use up the leftovers.

Well, technically that's what we want our body to be doing. We have stored leftovers here. We are like a walking refrigerator. If we think that we're hungry or that we need food, we can pause and rather than feeding our body more food, we can let our body go get the leftovers. We have leftovers to eat. Your stomach starts to grumble, gives you that signal that it wants more food, I encourage you to think, "Aha, this is perfect timing. If I don't feed it right now, it will go in and get the energy that I need. I will be okay. I will have plenty of energy. I will feel fine but my body's going to get that energy from my stored body fat." Just reframing that messaging that you're getting can be very powerful.

When it comes to hunger, many of us have a kind of aversive reaction to the feeling of hunger. We've gotten so used to the idea that we need to address it quickly. We're concerned about getting hangry, where we're hungry and angry. The more you are addressing eating your food in a way that supports your metabolism, whether that's moderate protein, lower carbohydrate, moderate to high fat, whatever that looks like for you. The more you're doing that, the less you're actually going to be needing food in

between meals and you'll be able to go for longer periods of time without food. So you can go for these 18-, 24-, 36-hour periods of time while using the stored energy that you have in your body. If we change our mindset, adjust that paradigm, that when I get a signal I must act on it. I have to repair that signal right away and provide new food, new energy. If we can get out of that mindset, we can allow our body to do the work that it needs to do and that we want it to do for health and our weight management.

Generally a hunger wave will pass within 20 minutes. Now that might seem like a long time if you're feeling quite hungry, but it's actually a short period of time. If we can get ourselves doing something else and stop focusing on it, that 20 minutes will pass and our body will kick in and do what it needs to do. However, what a lot of us do when something like that happens, we start talking about it, we start thinking about it, almost obsessing about it and the hunger can't go away then because we're so focused on it. Also want to describe related to this, that hunger can be a conditioned response.

If you think of Pavlov's dogs who would salivate to a certain stimulus because they had learned that once that bell rang or whatever the stimulus was, they were going to get food. We have that response also. Ghrelin, which is the hunger hormone, actually rises at our normal mealtime. So if you are used to eating at noon and you're used to eating at six, don't be surprised you're going to get a hunger signal at that time. That's a conditioned response but if you don't respond to it, over time that will diminish as well.

Now I want to talk about some strategies, some actual things you can do to help you manage your hunger, get through your hunger and respond less negatively to it. The first is looking at what you're eating. I'm not going to go into a lot of detail about this. There's plenty of information in our community about good nutrition to help with fasting and hunger, help with managing your insulin resistance and your insulin response in your body. But in general we tend to have people focusing somewhat on a lower carbohydrate way of eating whatever that looks like for you, whatever level is the best for you. But the more you're able to do that, the fewer hunger responses you're going to get because your body's going to be accessing fuel all of the time rather than getting fuel and then feeling like it's depleted and that you have to give it more fuel. What we eat is a big way to manage our hunger.

Again, you hear often in our community, when we eat foods that require a lot of insulin and keep insulin going and eat frequently to keep insulin going, we're going to be hungrier. If you don't feed that insulin beast, that insulin beast quiets down. The next thing as far as managing your hunger, get good sleep, reduce your stress, avoid alcohol especially before you fast because it's going to be activating insulin and your blood sugar and this is going to make hunger more of an issue for you. Getting good sleep and reducing stress, both of these things affect our metabolism and our stress hormones. That will activate more hunger when our stress hormones are up. Another thing to think about related to hunger is

hydration. Now, some people think that hydration only involves water. As long as you drink a lot of water, you're fine. We encourage people to drink two to three liters of water a day.

You don't have to be drinking gallons and gallons of water and know that when you drink a good amount of fluid and your insulin level comes down, your electrolytes will also be washed out a little more. So supplementing electrolytes is another way to help. Oftentimes thirst is confused as a sign of hunger. We mistake it for hunger so first addressing if we need some hydration. Using the electrolytes, having some bone broth which contains electrolytes, having some salt throughout the day, keeping our electrolytes balanced, possibly supplementing with magnesium. This will help manage your hunger as well. When our electrolytes are low, we tend to feel hungrier. You could put a few pinches of salt on your tongue a few times throughout the day and you might notice that right away it takes away the hunger signaling or the craving for food, so this is a great technique.

Drinking tea or coffee. Dr. Fung has done some videos on this, that there are actual things in the tea especially that helps manage our hunger and helps to suppress ghrelin so that's useful. But also tea and coffee and even just drinking water, it helps create a feeling of fullness which can kind of quiet down our appetite or our desire to eat. It feels kind of comforting, drinking tea or coffee. It's the hand-to-mouth motion again so that can be useful in managing hunger as well. And then lastly, I want to talk about distracting yourself. If you start to get some signs that you think you need to eat, get busy. Do something to occupy yourself because the more you start thinking about it, the more you're going to be convinced that eating is the only way to stop those responses and then it becomes a really tough battle.

So instead get busy. This is a great time. Clean out your junk drawer in your kitchen. Go to your office and empty drawers and go through your filing cabinet, organize old papers, old bills, things like that. Cleaning in the house is something good to do during this time. I like to do jigsaw puzzles online. I don't really have the space for it in my apartment but I do them online. I can easily lose track of time by doing jigsaw puzzles, listening to podcasts, watching some videos in our community. That's going to help you take care of that hunger temptation, that appetite that you're having. You just pass right through it and get through those 20 minutes of hunger and you've moved on and you've done something else.

Exercise is a great thing to do. Great to go outside if the weather permits even just to change the scenery. Go sit out on your patio or your porch for a little bit. Take some tea with you. Take a glass of water with you. Do some walking. Do some stretches, anything that takes your mind away from the fact that you think it's time to eat. Distract yourself. Think about if you've ever watched someone's dog or if you own a dog, they know when it's time to eat. They never mistake meal time. You might have a cat wakes you up at 5:30 in the morning, scratching at your door, prying your eyes open when they climb on you because they know their body is signaling it's time to eat. They don't know how to tell time but they're getting these signals. We get these signals and if we want to fast successfully, we're

going to have to learn to pass through these times of hunger or appetite and learn to tolerate that slightly uncomfortable feeling as long as we feel well.

If it's strong, if it's intense or if you feel unwell at all, we do not want you to continue fasting. If you feel unwell, please break your fast and make sure that you're being healthy about it. But if it's, no, I'm a little antsy because I want food right now, you can ride that out. You can use any of these strategies that I've gone over and teach your body how to tolerate that because over time it's going to become easier and easier. As you fast more and if you change your dietary intake some, you're going to become more fat adapted. Your body's always going to be accessing energy. So it's not going to be knocking and saying, "Hey, hello, we need some more energy in here." So lots of things you can do to help yourself manage hunger. The first step though, is to really check out with yourself, is this truly hunger that I need to respond to or is it just a sign that I'm wanting food for multiple reasons or would enjoy food?

If that's the case, those feelings are going to interfere with me reaching my goal. If my goal is to lose weight or reverse my diabetes or resolve my non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, I'm not going to achieve those goals if I respond every time I get a signal that my body would like it if I ate some food or my mind says, "Hmm, that food really does sound good." Another thing I mentioned earlier but I would encourage it, especially if you're newer to fasting, you might need to take a little bit of a break from some of the places where you tend to see a lot of food. For example, I remember at the time when I first started fasting, I would watch TV and evening, late at night TV, a lot of commercials for food. So I started watching recorded television shows that I could fast forward through the food commercials so I didn't have to see it. I didn't have to watch them cooking the food or talk about the tantalizing tastes and smells and things like that.

I also stopped following a lot of places in social media while I was fasting. I would just kind of mute them so that I wouldn't see all of the recipes popping up, all of the pictures of desserts and snack foods and things. Even though I was looking at sites that were sharing information about low carb and other ways of eating, just being bombarded with pictures and recipes 15, 20, 30, 40 times a day, it was really tough then to not be paying attention to hunger. You might want to take a small break from even people if you're in social media groups and things where people post a lot of pictures of their food. Regardless of how they're eating, just seeing those pictures and reading about food can be triggering for us.

I hope that today's discussion has helped you some with your ways of managing hunger. There are some tips in here that you can start practicing right away. Again, think about what messages do I tell myself about food, about hunger, about how I can tolerate feeling hungry because this is an area of growth for most of us. I look forward to seeing you again tomorrow. I hope that you were able to watch the question and answer video or attend the question and answer session and there will be another one tomorrow. Also there will be

another video tomorrow. I look forward to seeing you then. I hope everyone's doing great. Take good care everybody. Bye-bye.