



Faster, Pussycat! Eat! Eat!

Many people's reaction to stress is to tear open a bag of chips and inhale. While preventing such nervous eating requires a certain amount of self-awareness, that's exactly what a person who's chewing on autopilot doesn't have. Psychologist Denise Lamothe, author of *The Taming of the Chew: A Holistic Guide to Stopping Compulsive Eating*, suggests that those prone to bingeing keep their blood sugar at a constant level and avoid true hunger by eating several small, protein-rich meals throughout the day. Stress-reducing approaches like yogic breathing, exercise, and aromatherapy (try a whiff of a soothing oil like sage or lavender, or some sips of chamomile tea) can also help fight the urge to reach into the fridge. For those who have already started robotically snacking, Lamothe says, don't cross the "what-the-hell line" ("I've eaten half this bag of candy—why not the whole thing?"). As soon as you're aware of nervous eating, she suggests, get up and brush your teeth to get the taste of the food out of your mouth. Then drink a glass of cool water to fill your stomach—if you've eaten something sweet, this will also move the addictive sugars through your system quickly. Even if you've already finished an entire bag of chips, she says, don't beat yourself up; instead make a list of things you love to do (like listening to a favorite CD or playing with the dog), so that next time you have the urge to devour a snack aisle, you'll have a list of healthier alternatives ready. —K.W.

