

A smiling woman with blonde hair is sitting at a wooden table outdoors. She is holding a small red raspberry in her right hand. On the table in front of her is a bowl of fruit, including a banana, a red apple, and some green grapes. To her left is a bowl of watermelon cubes. To her right is a bowl of dark food, possibly chocolate. The background is a blurred brick wall.

40 WAYS TO OVERCOME JUNK FOOD CRAVINGS

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The Junk Food Maze

Many individuals have problems with eating excessive amounts of food that is bad for them. These days, it's getting pretty hard to eat healthy when we're surrounded with so many fast food restaurants, and when we're constantly seeing commercials for new delicious-looking snacks on TV.

Most of the time, people tend to overeat not when they're starving, but when they're bored. After all, most people think that there's nothing more satisfying than grabbing a snack you can munch on while watching your new favorite show on Netflix. However, once you get a chance to experience how your life will improve after you find a way to overcome your junk food cravings, you will see that you were wrong all along.

People crave these types of foods because when you consume them; certain chemicals like dopamine get released, which in turn make you feel really good. Since junk foods create a rush of euphoria, your brain starts signaling that it constantly wants to experience that same feeling over and over.

Most people know why junk food is bad for them (it causes obesity, depression, diabetes, nutrient deficiencies, dementia, and can lead to a number of other health problems), which is why we're going to get right into how you can overcome your cravings for these types of foods.

40 Ways To Overcome Junk Food Cravings

1. **Establish Your Health Goals:** The first step that you need to take in order to fight off your junk food cravings is establishing some health goals. It doesn't matter if you want to whip yourself into shape, increase your energy levels, or just feel great and healthy - you just need to find a motivating reason to convince yourself to stop eating junk food.
2. **Drink More Water:** Staying hydrated is not only important if you want to improve your overall health and achieve maximal fat loss. Drinking more water will also prevent your food cravings. This is because your body often has trouble telling the difference between hunger and dehydration. There are times when you feel like you could go for a snack, but what you really need is just a glass of water.
3. **Know What Your Body Needs:** To make sure that you don't suffer from certain nutrient deficiencies, your brain will often send you signs about what your body needs. For example, if you have a strong taste for red meat, this could mean that your body is low on iron. Pay attention to the signals your body and mind send you, and don't just eat the first thing that's close to you.
4. **Stock Up On Healthy Foods:** Junk food is always going to be at the supermarket, so you're the one that needs to stay away from it and surround yourself with foods that will help you live a healthier life. Also, make sure you keep all of your healthy snacks at a close distance all the time, just so you can munch on something that's good for you if you start craving junk food.
5. **Eat When You're Hungry:** Before you start eating something, take a few minutes to ask yourself if you're truly hungry. If you identify that you're not actually experiencing hunger, you will help yourself not give in to every craving you have. However, if you are really hungry, try eating a healthy snack/meal.
6. **The Three Color Rule:** The three color rule is based around a study conducted by Cornell University back in 2012, which states that people prefer to have three different food items as well as three different colors on their plates. If you follow this rule, you'll be able to curb your cravings by, for example, snacking on a mixture of fruit slices, nuts, and a small amount of dark chocolate.

7. **Snack On Healthy Food:** Sure, a bag of chips is a tasty snack that you can enjoy while watching your favorite TV show, but it will have a negative effect on your health. Instead, try making a fruit salad or spreading a little peanut butter on a few slices of an apple. You can also try spreading a little peanut butter over a stick of celery and sprinkle some raisins on top of it.
8. **Know Your Trigger Foods:** Everyone has specific trigger foods that cause them consume too much junk food. In order to help yourself overcome these cravings, you need to first identify your trigger foods (for some people it's chocolate, for others it can be donuts or ice cream), and then make sure you keep a safe distance from those foods.
9. **The Five Ingredient Rule:** This rule states that if you find more than five ingredients on a food label of a product you're looking to buy at the supermarket, then you shouldn't purchase it. The five ingredient rule is a great way to stop yourself from buying a lot of unhealthy processed foods when you're out shopping for groceries.
10. **Start Chewing More:** If you chew more, you'll eat less. It's as simple as that. Also, remember to wait until you finish one bite before you take the next one. This way, you'll enjoy your meals/snacks for a longer period of time.
11. **Limit Sugar:** It's a bad idea to consume foods that are rich in sugar because they can leave you with unstable blood sugar, which can in turn leave for craving for sweets.
12. **Gross Yourself Out:** A great way to overcome your cravings and eat less processed food is to learn more about the food that you're eating. As soon as most people figure out that a coleslaw salad from KFC contains 26 grams of saturated fat or that milkshake from McDonald's contains 50 different artificial flavors, they generally become more nutrition-conscious.
13. **Cut Yourself A Break (Occasionally):** It's pretty hard trying to overcome junk food cravings. There are chances that you'll fantasize about eating these foods every day, until one day you give in to your cravings. This is why you need to cut yourself a break occasionally and eat what you want. However, try not to eat huge portions of junk food. Instead, consume only a fourth of what you used to eat.

- 14. Stop Eating Around Your Food Cravings:** A study conducted by the Monell Chemical Senses Center in Philadelphia notes that just by replacing what you crave with a low calorie imitation of that food won't satisfy your brain's memory center. In other words, eating yoghurt instead of a milkshake won't make you stop craving milkshakes.
- 15. Search For A Distraction:** When you feel like eating a chocolate bar, do a few pushups, or go out for a walk. If you don't feel like exercising, try drinking a hot beverage (ideally, a cup of herbal tea). A hot beverage helps in managing digestion and will also curb your cravings for sugary foods.
- 16. Limit Alcohol Intake:** Remember the last time you got really drunk. Chances are that you ate a lot of junk food after leaving the bar. Alcohol makes it harder for you to overcome your cravings because it has the ability to make you say yes to anything that's edible.
- 17. Sleep More:** A recent study conducted by the University of Chicago suggests that sleep loss boosts hunger and unhealthy food choices. If you don't sleep enough, the presence of a hormone known as ghrelin (this hormone is a known appetite trigger) will rise by 30%. At the same time, the hormone leptin (that signals satiety) will drop by 18%.
- 18. Stimulate Happiness:** When a person is under pressure, their body releases a hormone known as cortisol that makes their brain want to seek out rewards. Comfort food weakens the effect of this hormone due to its large content of fat and sugar. In other words, if you don't want to crave junk food, you should find a way to stimulate happiness and avoid stressful situations.
- 19. Drink Some Caffeine:** Drinking caffeine is great because it will help you make it through the day without any high-calorie snacks. According to a study conducted by Duke University, caffeine is able to successfully mask hunger. However, remember not to consume excessive amounts of caffeine!
- 20. Limit Refined Salt:** The American Heart Association notes that even though the recommended daily intake of salt is 1,500 milligrams, most Americans consume 3,400 milligrams a day. Fast food restaurants are mostly responsible for including so much salt in their dishes, which makes their food tastier, thus making you crave it more often.

- 21. Picture A Healthy Version Of Yourself:** Imagine going on a summer vacation. Now picture how you could look like on the beach if you were to eliminate junk food from your every day eating habits and maybe start exercising a bit. Just visualizing the healthy version of yourself can be enough for you to overcome your junk food cravings.
- 22. Start Over If You Slip And Fall:** It's not that easy to make your junk food cravings a thing of the past on your first try. Be prepared to slip and fall more than once. However, you should also be prepared to acknowledge that you messed up, learn from your mistakes, and then start over.
- 23. Don't Feel Ashamed:** Certain people are ashamed of their junk food addiction. However, what you need to remember is that nobody's perfect. Release the shame and find self-acceptance. As soon as you do that, you'll be able to focus on overcoming your junk food cravings.
- 24. Don't Cut Back On Carbs:** You often have junk food cravings due to carb restriction. For example, people who consume more starch on a daily basis don't have as many cravings for unhealthy food.
- 25. Learn To Deal With It:** Sometimes, the best thing that you can do when you really want to eat some unhealthy snacks is to just sit quietly and feel the craving without any shame or judgment. This way, you'll see that a craving is just a passing emotion that you're only experiencing at the moment. Just acknowledge it, and then let it go.
- 26. Work Out:** First of all, going to the gym or running outside is a great distraction. When you're exercising, you'll be thinking about the workout, not thinking about food. On top of that, you'll also be releasing feel-good chemicals known as endorphins, which essentially give you the same mental buzz as junk food. Therefore, if you're already feeling great, you won't have the need to indulge in unhealthy food.
- 27. Control Your Blood Sugar:** Finding a way to balance your blood sugar will help you stay away from foods that contain a lot of sugar. You can do this by consuming nutrient rich foods. Otherwise, you may experience low blood sugar levels that will trigger your brain to consume a lot of sugar, because it depends on it for energy, which will in turn cause

you a lot of stress. If you have stable blood sugar, you'll have more stable stress hormones and smoother emotions.

28. Find Other Ways To Feel Full: Sometimes, we're not really hungry when we want to grab some snacks. We crave comfort food when we're feeling emotionally empty.

Nevertheless, you need to find a few other ways to feel full to make sure you can overcome any craving you have. This can include grabbing a hot beverage, going for a walk, hitting the gym, or even meditating.

29. Limit Processed Foods: Processed foods contain many additives that are able to create drug-like addictions to these foods. That's why if you avoid them, you want feel the need to ever buy them again. Try eating only natural foods.

30. Grab A Multivitamin: Many of the cravings you have can be a sign of nutrient deficiency. An easy way to make sure you consume all the basic nutrients throughout the day is to start taking a multivitamin and mineral supplement. This way, your body will be less likely to trigger cravings.

31. Change Some Bad Habits: Instead of grabbing morning coffee and a donut on the way to work, wake up earlier and make yourself a healthy breakfast and home-brewed coffee. Also, instead of eating a bowl of ice cream, consider eating a fruit salad while watching TV at night. It will take a while for these new habits to take over, but in the end, it will be worth it because you will overcome your junk food cravings.

32. Make Overcoming Cravings A Daily Challenge: It's a known fact that most people react positively to challenges. We all want to prove that we can achieve something. This is why it can be a good idea to make overcoming your junk food cravings a daily challenge. That way, you won't have to burden your brain with a long-term goal. Not to mention that it will definitely be easier for you to overcome your cravings in the long run if you take a day-by-day approach.

33. Make A Smoothie: Smoothies are a great snack replacement. They are also quite delicious when you prepare them using organic fruit and vegetables. Smoothies are also known for providing you with a lot of energy.

- 34. Try Eating A Smoothie From A Bowl:** If you're in the habit of drinking smoothies relatively fast, then considering eating them from a bowl, using a spoon. This will make you indulge in the drink for a longer period of time. This innovative way of eating a smoothie can be a great snack to indulge in while watching some late-night TV.
- 35. Get Creative With The Food:** One of the main reasons why eating snacks is so tempting is because all you have to do is open a bag, and a delicious treat will be waiting for you inside. That's why you need to form the habit of preparing your snacks. Let your brain know that you have to work in order to 'deserve' a treat. When you do that, start getting creative with the food, as it will provide you with a way to learn new things and will also provide you with the perfect distraction (which you also need in order to overcome your cravings).
- 36. Stop Buying Snacks:** One of the best ways to avoid eating unhealthy snacks is to stop buying them. Tighten your belt a little, and it will definitely motivate you to avoid eating unhealthy food. You can't really eat junk food if there's no junk food around, right?
- 37. Don't Skip Meals:** When your stomach is not growling, it will be easier for you to ignore your cravings. This is why you shouldn't skip your regular meals. Make sure that you start the day off with a healthy breakfast, and then eat both a nutritious lunch and dinner after. You can also include some snacks (preferably healthy), just as long as you keep your calorie intake under control.
- 38. Brush Your Teeth:** We've previously mentioned how searching for a distraction is a great way to overcome your cravings. Well, brushing your teeth might just be the perfect distraction. Having fresh breath and a clean mouth will stop you from indulging in greasy or sugary food. A great trick is also to have breath mints with you whenever you go, and take one whenever you start craving junk food.
- 39. Start Your Day Off With A Treat:** This may sound counterproductive, but it actually works. If you really crave an unhealthy snack, then the perfect time to consume it is definitely in the morning. Keep in mind that your metabolism is more efficient in the morning and that by eating what you crave at the beginning of the day you will eliminate any other cravings throughout the rest of the day.

40. Don't Let Your Social Circle Influence You: Social networks are able to promote obesity, according to a study that was conducted by the New England Journal of Medicine. When you're close to someone, you tend to share many of the same interests together. With that said, if most of your friends enjoy indulging in junk food, you'll most likely be influenced by them to do the same thing.