

# Mindful Self-Awareness Techniques to Decrease Bingeing Episodes

## Objective

To identify and practice self-awareness techniques to decrease and eventually eliminate overeating and bingeing.

## You Should Know

Mindful self-awareness refers to a clear recognition of your strengths and weaknesses, your thoughts and beliefs, your emotions and your motivations. You are aware of yourself and others, and you are focusing on the present moment. The practice of mindful self-awareness is particularly important as you recover, because it is easy to fall back into the distorted thinking that supports your eating disorder. To help you avoid setbacks or relapse, you will have the skills to stop and consciously redirect your thoughts and behaviors.

There are several ways to practice mindful self-awareness:

- 1. Using Your Five Senses.** Focusing on your senses is a present-moment activity that increases mindfulness. Practice using your senses during everyday activities (sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch). Start with alternating your attention to different senses and notice the sensations you are experiencing.
- 2. Thought Observation.** Sit with your eyes closed and notice each thought or feeling that comes up. Watch your thoughts as they are carried away with the breeze. Notice and experience your breathing.
- 3. Object Focus.** Focus on a single object for several minutes. Notice the details of the object and pay attention to when your mind wanders.
- 4. Diaphragmatic Breathing.** Breathe deeply to initiate a calming response. Place one hand on your chest and one hand on your stomach. Breathe in slowly through your nose. Hold for four seconds, then slowly breathe out through your mouth. Repeat seven times.
- 5. Progressive Muscle Relaxation.** Lie down and close your eyes. Tighten and release the various muscle groups in your body for five seconds, starting with your forehead and moving down to your toes. Notice the tension as it leaves your body.
- 6. Guided Imagery.** Identify a guided imagery recording that you can use (there are many available on YouTube), close your eyes, and imagine the relaxing environment in detail. Engage all of your senses.

By practicing mindful self-awareness using the above exercises, you can shift negative or distorted thoughts, relax your mind and your body, and take responsibility for your emotions. This worksheet will help you identify which activities work best for you and allow you to practice mindful self-awareness.

**What to Do**

Practice each technique and reflect on what you notice. Mindful self-awareness takes time and practice, and some techniques may work better for you than others. Rate the technique from 1 = This didn't work for me at all, to 10 = I love this technique and plan to practice at least once per day. Then, answer the questions that follow.

<b>Technique</b>	<b>When and Where?</b>	<b>Length of Practice</b>	<b>Sensations You Noticed</b>	<b>Rate the Technique (1-10)</b>
<b>Using Your Five Senses</b>				
<b>Thought Observation</b>				
<b>Object Focus</b>				

<b>Diaphragmatic Breathing</b>				
<b>Progressive Muscle Relaxation</b>				
<b>Guided Imagery</b>				

### **Reflections on This Exercise**

Which techniques did you enjoy the most? Explain.

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What thoughts or feelings did you experience while practicing the techniques?

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Did you find any of the techniques challenging? Discuss the reasons why.

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Describe other mindful self-awareness techniques to support your recovery.

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How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

Describe what you learned from this exercise.

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