



Lesson 5

What's in a Snack?

Chances are you have probably heard someone warning about the pitfalls of snacking at one time or another.

“Don’t eat anything after 8:00 at night.” “You should only eat three square meals a day.” “Snacking leads to weight gain.”

Do these statements ring a bell? They probably do, but snacking can be a good thing and part of a healthy, balanced diet.

Healthy snacks that I enjoy

The trick is to reach for one of these healthier snack choices when you are hungry. It is common to mindlessly munch on a bag of pretzels in front of the TV or to pull out last night’s leftovers simply because you are bored. But are you hungry? You may be mistaking your body’s internal hunger cues for certain situations that you have come to associate with the desire of food. Stress, boredom, and happiness can all be triggers. These triggers can be dealt with by indulging in another source of happiness, relaxation, or stress relief, such as reading a book, calling a friend, walking in the park, or doing some other activity.



My triggers

My alternative solutions

Whatever you do, do not deprive yourself! Ignoring hunger can have an adverse effect on your metabolism. If your stomach is telling you it needs food, by all means listen to it. Be an active listener and learn your body’s own signals so you understand when your mind is trying to play tricks on you. Practice flexibility in meal and snack times. That way, you will eat based on hunger rather than habit.

Simple Snack Ideas

- Almonds and walnuts. Be sure to purchase the unsalted varieties.
- Fresh fruits such as bananas, apples, oranges, grapes, strawberries, etc. The point is, the closer you can get to the real thing, the better. For example, a whole apple is a better choice than applesauce.
- Whole-grain crackers or mini bagels with hummus or peanut butter. Read the Nutrition Label carefully. The first ingredient should read “whole wheat” instead of “enriched.”
- String cheese or low-fat yogurt.
- Plain popcorn with dried fruit. Again, some brands of dried fruit are higher in sugar than others. As a rule, try to avoid the sugary “tropical” mixes.
- Carrot sticks or cut-up veggies. Ranch is a popular dip, but creamy dressings are a lot higher in fat than vinaigrettes. Italian or balsamic are good substitutes if you aren’t used to eating your vegetables plain.
- Cottage cheese with fresh fruit.
- Half a whole wheat pita with some sliced turkey.
- Low-fat chocolate milk has actually proven to be one of the best choices for recovering post-workout. It has the perfect combination of carbohydrates and protein, even more so than regular milk. That should be good news for chocolate lovers!

Make each stretch count

There’s another kind of flexibility to consider — the kind that comes from stretching. Stretching not only prevents injuries, it can also provide a nice break from the fast pace of everyday life. Taking a few minutes to relax and unwind in a nice, deep stretch can help you to de-stress and prepare you to tackle life’s challenges.

Health benefits

- Increased flexibility
- Improved range of motion
- Improved circulation
- Better posture
- Stress relief
- Injury prevention

Stretching how-to

Stretching should not be a painful experience. Know your limits, especially if you have a chronic condition or injury present. Tension is normal during stretching, but pain is not. To prevent injury, warm up your muscles by gently walking in place. However you choose, just get moving. Once your muscles are ready, you can begin stretching. Make sure to hold each stretch for at least 30 seconds, allowing your muscle fibers to elongate. If you are new to stretching, slowly work up to holding a stretch for 30 seconds. Be sure not to bounce up and down in order to stretch farther. Bouncing can lead to muscle tears, which in turn decrease flexibility and increase muscle tightness in the long run. Finally, **relax!** Breathe in and out slowly. Enjoy the stretch and avoid holding your breath.

Gentle stretching exercises

Remember to check with your physician before doing this or any other exercise routine. These stretches are designed to increase your flexibility and release tension in the body. Start slow and gradually work up to the number of repetitions or seconds recommended for each exercise.

Neck

1. Sit or stand with arms hanging loosely at sides.
2. Tilt head sideways, first one side then the other.
3. Hold for 5 to 10 seconds.
4. Repeat 1 to 3 times.



Back of neck

1. Sit or stand with arms hanging loosely at sides.
2. Gently tilt head forward to stretch back of neck.
3. Hold 5 to 10 seconds.
4. Repeat 1 to 3 times.



Trail Mix

Trail mix is one of those snacks that you can never be too sure about. The portions are generally large and although nuts contain healthy fat, you don't want to overdo it. Here is a recipe that is both delicious and nutritious!

Healthy Trail Mix Recipe

Serves 8

Serving size: ½ cup

2 cups unsweetened cereal, such as toasted oat circles, wheat squares, bran flakes, or others

1 cup unsalted nuts and seeds, such as almonds, walnuts, sunflower seeds, or others

1 cup dried fruit, such as raisins, cranberries, apricots, or others

1. In a bowl, mix together all ingredients.
2. Place in a container with a lid to keep fresh or store in the freezer.



Shoulder and back of upper arm

1. Stand or sit and place right hand on left shoulder.
2. With left hand, pull right elbow across chest toward left shoulder and hold 15 to 30 seconds.
3. Repeat on other side.



Triceps, top of shoulders, waist

1. Stand or sit with arms overhead.
2. Keep knees slightly flexed.
3. Hold elbow with hand of opposite arm.
4. Gently pull elbow behind the head as you slowly lean to side until mild stretch is felt.
5. Hold 10 to 15 seconds.
6. Repeat on other side.



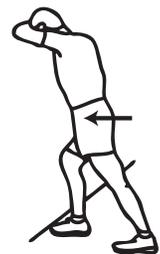
Mid back

1. Stand with hands on hips.
2. Gently twist torso at waist until stretch is felt.
3. Hold 15 to 30 seconds.
4. Repeat on other side.
5. Keep knees slightly bent.



Calf

1. Stand slightly away from wall and lean on it with forearms, head resting on hands.
2. Place right foot in front of you, leg bent, left leg straight behind you.
3. Slowly move hips forward until you feel stretch in calf of left leg.
4. Keep left heel flat and toes pointed straight ahead.
5. Hold easy stretch 15 to 30 seconds.
6. Do not bounce.
7. Repeat on other side.



Front of thigh (quadriceps)

1. Stand slightly away from wall and place left hand on wall for support.
2. Standing straight, grasp top of left foot with right hand.
3. Pull heel toward buttock.
4. Hold 15 to 30 seconds.
5. Repeat on other side.



Relieves tension in legs

For hamstrings, calves, Achilles tendon, and ankles:

1. Stand with feet shoulder-width apart.
2. Keep heels flat, toes pointed straight ahead.
3. Assume bent knee position (quarter squat).
4. Hold 30 seconds.



For more information on this and other programs offered through K-State Research and Extension, contact your local office. Local contact information is available at www.ksre.ksu.edu/Map.aspx

Inner thigh (groin)

1. Stand with feet pointed straight ahead, a little more than shoulder-width apart.
2. Bend right knee slightly and move left hip downward toward right knee.
3. Hold 15 to 30 seconds.
4. Repeat on other side.
5. If necessary, hold on to something (chair, etc.) for balance.



Back of leg and lower back

1. Sit on floor, legs straight out at sides.
2. Bend left leg in at knee.
3. Slowly bend forward from hips toward the right foot until you feel a slight stretch.
4. Do not dip head forward at start of stretch.
5. Hold this stretch 15 to 30 seconds.
6. Repeat on other side.
7. Keep ankles and toes of the straight leg relaxed.
8. Use a towel if you cannot easily reach your feet.



This week's Move Into Health action plan



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