

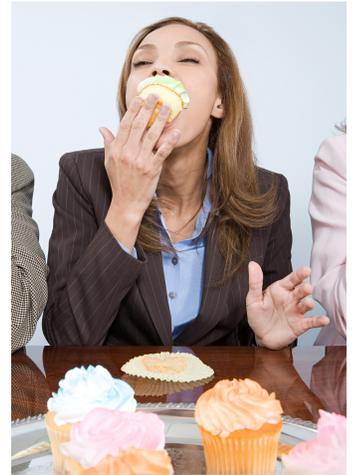
6 Ways to Stop Stress Eating

So many of us turn to **food for comfort** when the world goes sideways. Reaching for a bag of chips, a carton of ice cream, or a box of cookies when you are feeling spread too thin feels like an easy solution.

The problem is that the quick fix of **sugar and carbs** is momentary and literally leaves you feeling worse once that food high settles, which it inevitably does.

The reason we reach for junk food to mend a broken heart, ease a high-demand job, or quell our fears is physiological and evolutionary. Those are pretty serious motivators so let's start by getting educated and then get a game plan for what to do instead of loading up on carbs and calories.

No matter how loudly your body screams, **"FEED ME CRAP!"** you know that a stress binge will leave you feeling sluggish, defeated, and chubby.



?? ? ? ? ? So why do we do it? ? ? ? ? ?

Stress causes our bodies to automatically increase respiration, blood pressure, heart rate, metabolism, and the blood flow to our muscles. Your whole body goes into **"fight-or-flight response."** And that triggers your body to release a hormone called **cortisol** which increases your appetite.

Your body knows you need energy to deal with all the B.S. causing you to stress out and it's "helping" by keeping you fueled for your fight. Worse, all that stress you feel suppresses your production of **ghrelin** which helps keep your appetite in check. So now you are starving, stressed, and pretty much off the leash when it comes to food. Our **brains** crave energy-dense foods high in calories, carbs, fat, and sugar because they provide the quickest boost. Thanks nature.



So what do we do about it?

Legitimately, **EVERYONE** has their own basket of crap to deal with on the daily, finances, jobs, relationships, health issues; life is brimming with a never-ending series of **triggers**. But we are powerful beings, smart enough to know what's happening in our heads and in our bodies, and capable of making better choices. If we want to be our **healthiest and happiest**, we have to make active **decisions** to take care of ourselves.

Here are six ways to keep a bad day from driving you to the kitchen:

1. Get outside. One of the quickest and best ways I know to circumvent a binge eating disaster is to get outside. Go for a walk, a run, a swim. Heck, sit on your balcony or porch with a good book and a cold glass of water. Breathe in the air, soak up some sun, and let nature relieve your stress instead of pushing you to eat. There are no calories in the grass or the sand. Getting away from the kitchen is the key.



2. Attack a clutter project. Close your eyes and pick one annoying pile of clutter that irritates you every time you see it. Grab a trash bag and a box and go after it. It could be as small as a drawer or as big as a whole closet in the basement. It could be a week's worth of unfolded laundry or messy shelves in the garage. Time is precious and we are often too overwhelmed to keep up with little stuff. Then the little stuff starts feeling insurmountable. So clean it. Toss it. Give it away. The satisfaction you get from attacking that one eyesore will keep your mind and hands too busy for snacks.



3. Visit a friend. Stress can keep you isolated. Think of the friends you haven't seen in a bit and make a quick date for a short walk or a cup of coffee. Getting together with people you love automatically changes your attitude and your perspective. My friends are funny because laughter is really important to me. So when I get together with a friend I can be assured of some great stories and lots of laughs. I can't tell you how much better that makes me feel than eating. Love trumps food, every time.



Don't feel like you have the right friends to talk to about your weight loss goals? We got ya covered. Click here to join our ladies-only Facebook group. [Fit and Fabulous After 50](#)

4. Run some errands. Make a list of three tasks that you've been putting off. Now get your keys and hit the road. Once you are out of your house, you won't have access to the junk food that was calling your name. Plus, you'll end the de-stressing session with your dry cleaning in hand, library books returned, and a full tank of gas. That's a win!



5. Take a class. Peruse your gym schedule, pick a class, and go. Surrounding yourself with other people who are taking care of themselves will put you in a better state to do the same. Plus the benefits of exercise include a mood boost and a caloric burn that lasts. That's way more than I can say about that pint of Haggen Daaz.



6. Change your sheets. Okay, here's one that might seem a little crazy but hear me out. Fresh sheets feel like a new beginning. They smell good. They feel good. I don't know about you, but I sleep better on fresh sheets. I wake up renewed and feeling clean. The simple act of stripping the bed and putting clean sheets on it says, "That's over and I'm ready to start fresh!" Plus, if you flip the mattress you get a little strength training in. Clever yes? I call that "stealth exercise."



For more ideas, check out: healthcoachjanice.com