

4.6 Remove Temptations

Set up an environment that supports your diet.

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If you love sweets, and you open your refrigerator only to be faced with a piece of cake, at some point, you're going to eat it—especially if you're on a diet that restricts carbs. Similarly, if you go out to eat and a dessert arrives at the table, along with several spoons and plates so everyone can share, you will most likely indulge.

The human brain responds to immediate stimuli—what you see, you will want. To increase your sense of agency around food rather than succumb to instinctively eating whatever you crave, remove temptations from your environment.

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- Creating barriers against tempting foods fosters a greater sense of control and agency over your eating habits.
- Increases your chances of sticking to your diet and achieving your health goals.

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- This tactic isn't foolproof. You can always get around it by simply picking up the phone and ordering pizza.
- In some circumstances, you will need the cooperation of others.

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A good way to reduce access to tempting foods is to stock your kitchen mindfully—for example, by choosing not to buy certain foods and bring them into your home. This can keep foods you don't wish to eat out of your reach. If you live with other people, however, this may not always be easy or feasible. In this case, you may ask them to keep their sweets and snacks in the laundry room or in a secret drawer, off-limits to you, to keep them out of your sight and mind. Alternatively, ask whether they can keep them at the back of the refrigerator, behind the freshly washed, ready-to-eat fruits.

When you eat out and find that your appetite doesn't match what you've ordered, you may keep eating anyway. To combat this tendency, push your plate a little farther away from you to give yourself a signal that you're done, or simply ask the waiter to box up what's left and take it to go.

If you're in a group of people who are sharing dessert, let the waiter know you don't want to participate and that they should not bring an extra plate and utensils for you to use. (Be prepared to fight off persistent waiters!) Another option is excusing yourself to go for a quick walk while others are eating dessert.

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1. <https://dccevv.com/2016/03/creating-healthy-eating-environment/>
2. <https://vitalitynutrition.ca/blog/how-to-build-an-environment-that-supports-your-goals-get-in-cont>

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