

MIND • BODY • FOOD

Eat Before You're Running on Empty

A gentle experiment in noticing hunger earlier

Explore whether eating a little earlier affects your energy, concentration, mood and later hunger. This is about curiosity and supportive nourishment - not creating another rigid rule.

Space to Breathe Therapy

Why hunger can be noticed late

Some people notice hunger only when it has become intense. The early signals may be quiet, inconsistent or difficult to interpret. Busy routines, stress, low mood, trauma, medication, neurodivergence, sensory differences, interoceptive differences and a history of dieting or restricted eating can all affect how clearly hunger is recognised.

Early signs may not feel like hunger

- A dip in energy or sudden tiredness
- Difficulty concentrating, thinking or making decisions
- Irritability, anxiety, shakiness or feeling overwhelmed
- A headache, nausea, dizziness or feeling cold
- Thinking repeatedly about food or becoming very particular about it

This is an experiment, not a rule

Eating earlier once or twice can help you discover whether nourishment changes how you feel. You do not have to eat by the clock forever, ignore your body, or force foods that are unsafe or intolerable.

Try eating a little earlier

Choose one or two occasions when you can try a familiar, manageable food or drink slightly earlier than you normally would. Pick something accessible and appropriate for your needs. If a full meal feels too much, a snack, drink or small portion may still give useful information.

Before eating

Time _____

What I noticed in my body _____

Energy 0 to 10 _____

Concentration 0 to 10 _____

Mood in a few words _____

After eating

About 30 to 60 minutes later _____

Energy 0 to 10 _____

Concentration 0 to 10 _____

Mood in a few words _____

Hunger later _____

What did I learn?

Respond with flexibility and care

Use foods that are possible

Familiar, safe and easy-to-prepare foods count. The most helpful option is one you can actually access and eat.

Make reminders supportive

A phone reminder, visible snack, routine pause or check-in from someone you trust can prompt awareness without becoming a demand.

Expect differences from day to day

Hunger, appetite and sensory tolerance can change with stress, sleep, illness, hormones, medication and environment. One result does not define what will always happen.

Avoid turning the experiment into judgement

There is no pass or fail. If eating earlier does not help, or feels difficult, that is still useful information. Adjust the timing, food, setting or amount.

Seek individual support when needed

If eating is regularly difficult, intake is very limited, or you experience fainting, dehydration, rapid weight change or other concerning symptoms, seek advice from an appropriate healthcare professional.

A gentle reminder

Earlier nourishment is an option to explore, not a standard you must meet. Your needs and your safety come first.