

The Hunger Fullness Scale

- 0 Starving and beyond. Hard to climb flight of stairs.
- 1 Thoughts of food intrusive. Hard to concentrate. All food looks good/no food looks good. Irritable, weak, tired, lightheaded, drained. *Backdoor Hunger** is loud.
- 2 Distracted by thoughts of food. Food calls to you. Preoccupied with food. Gnawing emptiness. May feel irritable, tired or weak. *The Head Ratchet*** starts.
- 3 Notice thoughts of food. Urge to eat is present but not overwhelming. If don't eat in 30-60 min, will be at a 2.
- 4 Early warning signal. Passing thoughts of food. Easy to ignore. If don't eat in 1 to 1 ½ hours, will be at a 3.
- 5 Neutral. Not hungry. Not full.
- 6 Sense food in belly, but could definitely eat more. If stop here, will need to eat again in 1 ½ to 2 hours.
- 7 Good and full. Drive to eat strongly diminished or may be gone. (May still feel some drive to eat if body needs to get to an 8.) Not hungry again for 3 to 4 hours.
- 8 Definitely a belly full, but not physically uncomfortable (though may be emotionally uncomfortable). Not hungry again for 5 to 6 hours.
- 9 Physically uncomfortable, though not painful. Stuffed. Pulling energy out of you. Drained. Could be numb. Not hungry again for 7 to 8 hours.
- 10 Thanksgiving full. Lie-on-the-couch-unbuckle-your-belt full. Extremely uncomfortable, painful. Hurting. Probably numb or checked out.

*** Backdoor Hunger** often happens when you “don’t feel hungry.” It’s your body’s way of letting you know it needs fuel when you’ve numbed out or are ignoring hunger. You will be thinking about, and feel drawn to things related to food, such as recipes, food media, cookbooks, what others are eating, etc.

**** The Head Ratchet** is the strong and often unexpected pull that can happen around high calorie foods (it feels emotional, but is actually biological).

For more information on these and other concepts, such as **Hunger Waves**, check out the eCourses at EatingWisdom.com.

To use this scale, rate hunger before you eat and your fullness level when done. Use these descriptions loosely. Hunger, satiety and fullness are in part subjective experiences.

To help interpret eating patterns, use the **Hunger Scale Journal**, with an easy to use graph to keep track of hunger/ fullness like this:

