

Eating, Weight and Health: Comparing Traditional and Eating Wisdom Approaches

	Traditional Approach	Eating Wisdom Approach
Food	Avoid "bad," "illegal," and "unhealthy" foods most of the time. Monitor portion sizes. Do not eat too much. Follow a diet or meal plan if cannot control self. People need more education to know how to eat right.	All foods fit. <i>Restricting</i> food makes that food more <i>special</i> . Removing judgment from food makes "bad" food less special, and, ironically, easier to not eat. Body provides constant feedback and eating guidance which facilitates "healthy" eating. Temper choices with nutrition knowledge.
Hunger	Hunger needs to be controlled/suppressed/ignored. Hunger and satiety cues are irrelevant and/or cannot be trusted. Must rely on experts' advice. Must use cognitive restraint to manage food.	Restricting / ignoring hunger causes food preoccupation and food cravings, making it harder to stop eating, causing out-of-control eating. Only reliable way to manage food intake is eating in response to personal hunger and satiety cues.
Exercise	Exercise is necessary to control weight. All people must exercise. Fat people need to exercise even more. People who do not exercise are lazy and need to get on a program and stick with it.	Activity associated with burning calories can be tedious. Exercise/play/movement is fun and results in feeling good, it is our birthright.. Reconnect with the fun of activity. All activity counts. (Run laps if it you like it; otherwise, go outside and play!)
Trust	The body cannot be trusted and must be scrutinized. Food and activity must be monitored closely to ensure extra pounds to not creep on. Must exercise even if don't enjoy it. Must maintain vigilance around weight.	People can trust themselves and their bodies. The body provides reliable cues to successfully guide eating and weight. People can find enjoyable exercise/play/ movement. Life is delicious. Allow the body to reach/maintain a natural, healthy weight naturally. Enjoy.
Self-Esteem	Weight loss and maintenance of the predefined weight will increase self-esteem, and will create happiness and personal fulfillment. Ideal body weight must be achieved for self-fulfillment and health.	Weight does not define happiness. People can have high self-esteem, happiness and personal fulfillment at any weight. Appreciation of all shapes and sizes reduces prejudice and enhances self-esteem. Cultural norms can be dangerous and pursuit of them can interfere with quality of life.
Weight	A certain weight must be achieved and maintained to be healthy (and happy), even if this requires permanent food restriction and/or extra exercise.	Health (and happiness) can be gained at weights other than 'experts' advocate. Enjoy intuitive eating and joyful movement and allow body to seek its own individual natural, healthy weight.
Ideology	Excessive fatness, as defined by standardized tables, is unhealthy. Eliminate excess fatness and achieve a specific weight to be healthy and ameliorate medical problems.	Fatness is not an independent measure of health. Weight is highly individualized; goals cannot be determined by a standardized table. Many medical problems can be ameliorated without weight loss. Health can be enhanced without focus on weight.