

Temptation Therapy –

# 10 Quick Steps to Beat Food Cravings\*

By Penny Kendall-Reed

**F**ood cravings can be beaten. By reducing your tendency to snack and cheat, you will enhance the effectiveness of your diet and eradicate the bad eating habits so often responsible for you reaching a weight-loss plateau or regaining lost weight. Here are 10 quick steps to help you get started.

## 1. INCREASE YOUR PROTEIN

If you must have something to snack on, have a small amount of protein. Five to 10 grams is the equivalent of a third of most protein bars, or two tablespoons of cottage cheese. Unlike snacks high in sugar, starch or fat, protein will not induce further cravings or cause highs and lows in blood sugar which would promote more snacking. As an added bonus, protein can increase your overall metabolic rate so you burn more calories!

## 2. WRITE IT DOWN

Try to express how you are feeling and understand what is driving you toward that unhealthy snack. Evaluate what you have eaten so far today and plan your next meal. Remember that when you snacked in the past it made you feel unhealthy, relieved your hunger for only a very short period of time and encouraged you to repeat the snack again. Recognizing your craving patterns and the reasons behind them is key.



## 3.

**L-GLUTAMINE**

When you are hit with a food craving, particularly a sweet one, this simple amino acid can help eradicate it within 30 seconds. If you feel unable to resist the cookie or brownie you desire, open up a 500 mg capsule of L-glutamine and put it directly on the tongue with a sip of water. Hold it in your mouth for about 30 seconds, and then swallow. You will be surprised how quickly the craving subsides. L-glutamine is also great for muscle and bowel repair, so you will be doing your body a favour as well!

## 4.

**EAT SOME FIBRE**

Inulin and flax are zero-glycemic index fibres that stabilize blood sugar levels and increase feelings of fullness without adding extra calories. They have other benefits such as stabilizing bacterial flora in the bowel, improving motility and softening your stool. (For this reason, if you are prone to loose bowel movements this supplement should be avoided). One teaspoon of inulin or defatted flax fibre in a glass of water is usually enough. Limit yourself, however, to one or two teaspoons per day.

## 5.

**TAKE A BREATH**

Cravings are often a result of stress. A simple stress-relieving exercise is to sit back and take three to six long, slow breaths. Close your eyes (if safe to do so). Take five deep breaths. On your first inhalation, slowly count to three. Then start to exhale on a count of three. On the next breath, again inhale to three, and exhale to five. On the third and subsequent breaths, inhale to a count of three, and exhale to seven. (If you feel that you can comfortably increase the counts on either inhalation or exhalation, do so.)

## 6.

**GET MOVING**

Most food cravings will dissipate within 10 minutes of their onset, particularly if you can get your endorphins and happy hormone levels up. Exercise is ideal for this and does not have to involve a swift change into gym clothes and 10 laps around the office!



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Simply getting up from your desk and walking around, stepping outside for a moment, or even working on some core exercises in your chair, will help get your mind off the food craving – and stop the physical desire (chemical messengers) that are leading you toward the donut box.

## 7.

**DRINK SOME WATER**

Food cravings and hunger pangs are often the result of dehydration so take a drink of water, herbal tea, decaffeinated coffee or your favourite low-calorie beverage. You will also stimulate stretch receptors in your stomach that will then send a message of satisfaction to the brain and stop the craving. Having a bottle or jug of water available at all times is key. Add a few slices of citrus to create a slight taste and enhance the effect. In the case of grapefruit, this may actually directly inhibit cravings.

## 8.

**PHONE A FRIEND**

Being on a diet is always easier with two! Calling a friend to tell them about your craving is half the battle toward overcoming it. Knowing that someone else is feeling the same way, along with hearing their words of encouragement, is a very valu-

able weapon in your armoury against cravings! I call it “the buddy system.”


## 9.

**READ ONE OF YOUR DIET COMMANDMENTS**

At the beginning of your diet, make a list of reasons why you are embarking on such a program. This list of “commandments” may include anything from looking good in a swimsuit on holiday, to increasing your energy levels to reducing your blood-pressure. Having your commandments handy and reading one or two at craving times is very motivating.

## 10.

**CHECK YOUR TREAT JAR**

Your treat jar is part of your diet incentive plan! Adding a few dollars to the jar for each day you adhere to your diet allows you to save for a special treat at the end of the week, a new item of clothing or a massage, for instance. Giving in to a craving means taking money out, making that big reward harder to achieve. 

\* Excerpted from *The No-Crave Diet*.

Penny Kendall-Reed, BSc, ND, is a Naturopathic Doctor, bestselling author and the director of natural therapies at the Urban Wellness Clinic in Toronto. Dr. Kendall-Reed is also the co-author of *The No-Crave Diet*. For more information on *The No-Crave Diet* log onto [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) or visit Chapters and Indigo book stores.