

HOW TO SIDE STEP STRESS-RELATED EATING

Tanya Lee

You come home from a hard day at work, drop your keys on the table and walk into the kitchen. you 'need' something, but what? You open the cupboard and stare at the shelves - you see the box of Oreos (for the kid's lunches), so you grab it, lean against the counter and zone out. One after the other, they continue to go into your mouth as your eyes glaze over and you reflect on the day. The box is done and you're still not satisfied, you're not hungry, but you 'need' something more. You open the fridge door, stand and stare...

Stress takes us off center and we lose our balance - physically, mentally and emotionally. Stress is tension which needs to be counterbalanced with release - ideally a release that can match the quality and quantity of our stress.

Food is nourishment and often the easiest thing to grab in order to calm a chaotic mind and heart. Everyone has stress and everyone copes with it somehow. Some people drink whiskey from noon until bed, some people can't stay away from the computer, others can't get enough sex and many can't get enough food. Stress is unavoidable so the equation may not be so much about reducing the amount of stress in your life, but rather about how you can counterbalance the stress in your life.

Balance is not a static state, but rather a dynamic on-going flow of rebalancing. Ashtanga and Power Yoga use a phrase, "balance the hard and soft" - this refers mostly to the counterbalance of muscles that happens in every pose. In a forward bend, your thighs need to create tension in order for your hamstrings to relax safely. During a 60 minute group class, ideally bending forward is counterbalanced with bending backward and your left side is approached with equal care to your right side.

If you eat mindlessly to cope with stress, chances are that the short-term numbing effect of the food will never match the long-term stress to your body, mind and emotions. What that means is this type of eating adds tension, so it's actually not a release after all. You're on automatic pilot and you're fooling yourself. It's time to retrain the brain.

Right now make a list of 5 things that relax you:

(rule: things that can easily be put into action - little preparation needed)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Cut out this list and paste it on your fridge or the inside of your cupboard. If you have brain freeze and can't think of anything right now, here's some ideas: warm salt bath, curling up with a good book, closing your eyes to breath deep, walking outside, meditation, exercise, watching TV, doing your nails, playing with an animal, writing, singing, dancing, massage, etc.

So, the next time you feel the urge to go glassy-eyed with a bowl of nachos, use it as a trigger to reconnect with the reason you are eating. Remember that mindless eating is tension, not release. Close the kitchen cupboard and do something that relaxes you. And if you can't seem to find enough release, then perhaps it's time for a reevaluation of the type of stress you allow into your personal space.



Tanya Lee mentors teachers and trainers and has coached thousands of everyday people in the BodyArt Method since 1998. She is the founder of Power Alignment 8-phase system and author of BodyArt Cookbook and Alignment Secrets. Tanya specializes in behavioral and performance nutrition, posture alignment, deep-core strength, and self-empowerment.

Instructors certified in her method have gone on to coach professional sports teams, mentor fitness models, lead performance troupes and open successful studios. Tanya stays busy studying and translating core fundamentals of movement, nutrition and well-being into easy-to-understand books, articles, workshops, certification and consulting.

BODYART MOTION

BodyArt has friends in many places from fitness models on magazine covers to yoga scholars in ashrams. Whether in fight cages or belly dancing under the moon, one common thread we all share is a desire to be strong healthy and free using our body as medium to know and express ourselves.

BodyArt goes past temporary results that wear you down and extreme diets that starve the soul. BodyArt is what you sculpt for yourself emotionally and physically. It is a mind body soul journey that starts with how you relate with yourself – how you feel – with the aim to shift suboptimal behaviors/patterns to better serve you.

See how Olympians, extreme athletes, yoga teachers, fitness trainers, body models, pro fighters, dancers and busy everyday people – young and old – have worked with Tanya to optimize their own outlook and regime to enjoy greater success, personal discovery and self-worth.