

# Three ways to tame food temptations

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(HealthDay)—Losing weight often comes down to changing the patterns and habits that led to overeating. And that usually takes self-control, or the ability to resist temptation.

Think of [self-control](#) as the [inner voice](#) that keeps you from indulging in high-calorie food and prompts you to stick to your diet.

But having to constantly resist temptation can be exhausting and quickly use up the limited store of willpower you wake up with each day—and which is at its lowest point at night when people typically need it most.

These steps can help you boost the self-control you need to lose weight.

Cravings are the enemy. They're usually a conditioned response. For instance, you smell the aroma of [apple pie](#), the smell makes you want to eat it, and you grab a fork to act on that impulse. This is where the old saying, out of sight, out of mind, can help.

Scientists looked at people with high self-control and found that this ability was linked to avoiding—rather than resisting—[temptation](#). This means making small but significant changes, such as altering the route you take to work to avoid passing a tempting bakery.

It's also important to avoid any activities that trigger your urge to eat. If watching TV goes hand-in-hand with snacking, limit TV time. Ditto if you usually munch while you surf the internet. Whenever you're facing a screen with free hands, replace eating with a non-food activity, like walking in place or knitting.

The third step is to reinforce self-control by writing out—and constantly reminding yourself of—the exact behaviors you're trying to change, noting the new behaviors needed to get there, and continually tracking your progress.

**More information:** The American Heart Association has additional ideas to help you [conquer your cravings](#) in moments of weakness.

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