

Food Equals Mood

A 7 Day Gentle Nourishment Workbook

A flexible, judgment free practice for noticing how eating, fluids, stress, and daily routines may relate to how you feel.

Begin where you are

Use foods that are available, affordable, safe, culturally familiar, and realistic for you. A meal can be simple. A snack counts. Convenience foods count.

Name _____ Dates _____



Before you begin

This is a short reflection practice, not a diet, cleanse, weight loss plan, or test. Complete only the parts that help you. You can skip numbers and write words instead.

How to use each day

Read the focus. Choose a meal idea if useful. Try one small step. Write as much or as little as you wish. Your day may start after a night shift rather than in the morning.

Pause when tracking feels harmful

If these pages increase shame, anxiety, or urges to restrict, binge, purge, or compensate for eating, stop and seek support from a qualified clinician. Food can support well being, but it does not replace medical care, therapy, or medication. Follow any individualized nutrition advice you have received.

My starting point

One thing I hope to notice this week:

One way I can make this practice gentler for myself:



Day 1 Start With Enough

Notice what happens when you give your body reliable fuel.

A small aim

Eat one meal or snack within a realistic part of your morning or after waking.

Ideas to try

- Oatmeal or cereal + milk or yogurt + fruit
- Toast or tortilla + eggs, cheese, nut butter, or beans
- Yogurt + fruit + granola, cereal, or nuts
- Rice, pasta, potato, bread, or tortilla + protein + vegetable or fruit

If today is hard

Choose one: cereal with milk, toast with peanut butter, yogurt, a nutrition shake, soup, a frozen meal, or a snack plate.

Notice and write

My mood before eating was:

My mood after eating was:

What made eating easier today?

My next small step

Complete this sentence:



Day 2 Build Steadier Energy

Pair foods that provide energy with foods that help a meal or snack feel more satisfying.

A small aim

Add a protein source to one meal or snack.

Ideas to try

- Toast + peanut butter + banana
- Eggs or tofu + toast or potatoes + fruit
- Yogurt + cereal or oats + berries
- Pasta + chicken, beans, lentils, tofu, tuna, or cheese + vegetables

If today is hard

Add one protein item to something you already planned to eat: milk with cereal, cheese with crackers, yogurt with fruit, peanut butter on toast, or beans in soup.

Notice and write

Which protein foods do I enjoy, tolerate, or have access to?

Did adding protein change my fullness, energy, or focus?

What meal or snack felt easiest to prepare today?

My next small step

Circle one food to keep available this week:



Day 3 Add Color and Fiber

Add—not restrict. Today is about including one fruit, vegetable, bean, lentil, or whole-grain food.

A small aim

Add one colorful or fiber-containing food to something you already eat.

Ideas to try

- Oatmeal + fruit + nuts or seeds
- Bean and cheese burrito + salsa
- Pasta + jarred sauce + frozen vegetables + protein
- Rice bowl + beans + vegetables + sauce

If today is hard

Keep it simple: fruit cup, applesauce, banana, baby carrots, frozen vegetables, canned beans, or a handful of nuts.

Notice and write

What color did I add today?

What food felt realistic, affordable, and enjoyable?

How did my digestion feel today?



Day 4 Hydration and Caffeine Check-In

Notice how fluids and caffeine affect your energy, mood, sleep, appetite, and anxiety.

A small aim

Have a drink of water or another hydrating beverage with one meal or snack.

Ideas to try

- Yogurt + fruit + water or tea
- Sandwich + soup + water
- Rice bowl + water or sparkling water
- Crackers + cheese + fruit + beverage

If today is hard

Place a drink where you can see it. Take a few sips now. Refill it when convenient.

Notice and write

My next small step

Choose one:



Day 5 Nourishment for Stressful Days

Stress can change appetite, digestion, cravings, and energy. Today is about responding with kindness rather than judgment.

A small aim

Create one “stress-day” meal or snack plan.

Ideas to try

- Instant oatmeal + peanut butter
- Yogurt + granola or cereal
- Toast + egg, cheese, or nut butter
- Smoothie or nutrition shake + crackers or toast

If today is hard

Pick the easiest available food and eat it without needing to earn it or improve it.

Notice and write

What was stressful today?

Did stress increase, decrease, or change my appetite?

What food felt comforting, grounding, or easy to tolerate?

My next small step

Write a compassionate reminder:



Day 6 Food That Fits Real Life

Build meals around your actual time, budget, energy, culture, work schedule, and available foods.

A small aim

Choose one meal that is realistic for your life—not an idealized version of life.

Ideas to try

- Beans or lentils + rice, pasta, or tortillas + canned or frozen vegetables
- Peanut butter + toast + fruit
- Tuna, salmon, chickpeas, or egg salad + crackers or bread
- Cereal + milk + fruit

If today is hard

Use the “three-item meal” formula:

Notice and write

What barriers affected my food choices today?

Other:

What worked despite those barriers?

My next small step

Complete one practical action:



Day 7 Keep What Helps

Reflect on the week. Keep what worked. Release what did not.

A small aim

Choose one food-and-mood habit to continue for the next seven days.

Ideas to try

- Breakfast or first meal I would repeat
- Lunch or dinner I would repeat
- Low-energy meal I would repeat
- Portable or workday option I would repeat

Notice and write

What did I notice about my mood, energy, or focus?

What did I notice about meal timing or skipped meals?

What foods helped me feel nourished, satisfied, or steady?



Make a meal your way

Combine what you have. These are options, not rules. One or two components can be enough for now.

Energy

Bread, rice, oats, pasta, potato, tortilla, fruit, cereal

Protein

Eggs, beans, lentils, tofu, yogurt, cheese, fish, nuts

Satisfaction and flavor

Olive oil, avocado, sauce, spices, cheese, nut butter

Color or fiber

Fruit, vegetables, beans, whole grains, nuts, seeds

A combination I could make

Foods I can keep for low energy days



Plan for real life

What makes eating harder?

Time, cost, access, fatigue, appetite, sensory needs, a work schedule, or something else.

What usually helps?

A familiar food, ready made option, support person, reminder, or a flexible plan.

A low energy option

What could you eat with little or no preparation?

A portable option

What could you take to work, school, or an appointment?



Keep what helps

Look back without grading yourself. You may repeat any day or leave any page blank.

I felt more steady when...

A meal, snack, or drink I would repeat...

A barrier I want to plan around...

One small action for the next seven days...

Someone or something that could support me...

Educational sources: USDA MyPlate, myplate.gov; National Institute of Mental Health, nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/eating-disorders.

