



In a rush to eat? A busy life doesn't mean you can't enjoy your meal.

I might be called a bit of a workaholic, but as I move toward a healthier lifestyle, I have discovered some great tips that help keep me from shoveling lunch or dinner into my mouth between events.

Here is a 5-minute checklist I use to help enjoy my meals on-the-go.

5 Minutes to Enjoying Meals On-The-Go

Minute 1: Decide on Texture and Flavor

Take a minute to decide what kind of food you are craving. A sweeter salad? Something salty? Are you looking for something with a big crunch like a crispy taco, or something smooth and creamy like soup?

Being intentional about what you are going to eat can make you appreciate what you have when you finally get it. Then, when your meal is in front of you, you can joyfully exclaim "This is exactly what I wanted!"

Minute 2: Layering your Food

This may seem easier if you're cooking at home, but if you're on the run, get some mini-containers and package your prep separately. Then take one minute to **combine your food right before your meal**. Place your morning eggs on a bed of spinach. Keep rice and stir-fry separate, and plate next to one another.

Take a moment to sprinkle your salad with seeds, or drizzle that sauce on your broccoli. Looking at a layered masterpiece gives your meal a little more dazzle than looking at a mixed mess that has been sitting in one container.

Minute 3: STOP and Take a Look

You have your fork, your meal, your napkin, and your next appointment is only 15 minutes away... now **STOP**. **Take one minute (or less) to simply admire the magnificence put before you**. Whether it's something you made at home, a trip to the salad bar, or your family dinner at the local pizza shop, a deep breath and an appreciative moment goes a long way in curbing a habit of snarfing down your food like a puppy.

Minute 4: Get Descriptive

As you're eating, take one minute to **try and describe what you're tasting**. Either out loud (or to yourself), try to pinpoint the details that you are sensing as your fork makes its way to your lips. The refreshing burst of a cherry tomato, the bite of spicy peppers, or the smooth texture of a creamy sauce keeps your mind focused on your meal rather than your to-do list.

Minute 5: Break it Down

Your tummy is going to do the difficult work, but take one minute after your meal to **give it a mini-review**. Doing this out loud is always fun, but an internal check in on how things went can give you great feedback for meals in the future. Was it delectable? Too much sauce? Perfect crunch? A few seconds thinking about what just happened rather than rushing off to your next thing can give you valuable adjustments you can use the next time you sit down to dinner.

It only takes a few minutes to become more mindful of your meal habits, even with a busy lifestyle. Keep these moments in mind and you can continue to have a satisfying meal wherever life takes you.