

TRIGGERS AND CRAVINGS AWARENESS

The key to figuring out when you experience cravings and what your triggers to overeating are, is to start taking notes of situations when cravings and triggers occur. In this module you have the 1) Trigger and Cravings Awareness Worksheet to help you identify your specific occasions when you experience cravings and the 2) Brainstorming for alternative activities worksheet to help you identify your particular triggers and come up with coping strategies.

But first of all note there are different types of triggers that we get exposed to:

Triggers can be broken down into 5 categories:

- 1) **Environmental**
For example, walking past a bakery, watching a cookery programme on TV
- 2) **Biological**
Physical hunger, cravings
- 3) **Social**
Going to a BBQ, Night out drinking, invited to a dinner party
- 4) **Mental**
Sabotaging thoughts – “I deserve it”, “It’s not fair”, “Ill never lose weight” etc.
- 5) **Emotional**
Stress situations, anger, boredom, hurt, etc.

HOW TO FILL IN YOUR WORKSHEETS

The best time to fill in the Trigger and Cravings Awareness Worksheet is when you are either experiencing a craving or you are experiencing strong emotions. It is easier to capture your feelings and thoughts in the moment you are experiencing a craving, rather than trying to remember what happened during your last craving or trigger situation.

When you are filling in your worksheet, try and fill in as much detail as you can. Take a scientist’s approach and try and collect as much data as possible. Do this every time you experience a craving or a trigger. Once you have collected data on a few occasions, look back at your worksheets and see if you can establish a pattern where your cravings and triggers occur most often.

Once you are aware what your triggers are and when you are most likely going to experience them, use the “Brainstorming for alternative activities” worksheet. Those alternative activities that you have come up with will be your coping strategies.

As you are aiming to unlearn unhelpful behaviours/thoughts and learn new behaviours/thoughts that will enable you to reach your weight loss goals, it is important that you write your coping strategies down and read over them as often as possible.

I recommend writing them on index cards, I also call them “Response Cards”, and have them in your handbag or leave them where you can see them. Another option is to take a photo of them with your phone. That way you can flick through them whenever you get a minute. This will help to rewire your brain and in time you will have established new habits that have become automatic.

EXAMPLE OF AN INDEX CARD/RESPONSE CARD:

SABOTAGING THOUGHTS & RESPONSES - EXAMPLES

Sabotaging thought

I've already blown it today I might as well keep eating. No point in stopping. I'll get back on track tomorrow/Monday/after holiday etc.

Response

There is no such thing as “blowing it for the day” .

Every bite of food I eat adds up to calories, and they will continue to add up.

Get back on track right this minute!

TRAIN YOUR MIND TO RESIST TEMPTATION AND CRAVINGS “THE RESISTANCE MUSCLE”

Temptations are cleverly located all around us. The sweet aisle in the supermarket, the cakes as you walk into the supermarket, ads on TV and radio, the midmorning treats in the office and the list goes on. The good news is though, we are more often than not successful in resisting those temptations and cravings.

BUT there are times where we cannot resist and give in to temptations and cravings. So, what is going on at those times when you keep going to the fridge at night, or give in to the craving of chocolate? Quite simply put, your body is anticipating a sense of physical satisfaction and you are trying to resist that urge to throw the best laid plans out of the window.

One of the ways to overcome giving in to your cravings and triggers is to strengthen your mind – train the RESISTANCE MUSCLE. By training your brain you will create new neuro pathways in your brain. Every time you resist a temptation or craving, you are strengthening your RESISTANCE MUSCLE. Convince yourself that a brief reward of giving in to the temptation is not as satisfying as reaching your weight loss and fitness goals. Believe in yourself and tell yourself that your mind is strong enough to resist.

In this module you will create your “Craving & Temptation Plan”. How you do this is very simple. First of all complete the worksheet “Trigger & Cravings awareness worksheet” which will help you identify your particular triggers.

It might be coming home from work, sitting in front of the TV, stress or muffins/donuts are brought into your office for break time. Write down as many triggers as you have

