

## SNACK ATTACK

--Kori L. Propst, On the Run Fitness Trainer and National Figure Competitor

We all get them- those attacks of snackiness that send us out on a frenzied hunt for something sweet, salty, crunchy or greasy! We dive into our co-worker's office when no one is looking, 007 music playing in the background of our mind, and scavenge through her well-stocked chocolate stash to find that just right piece of dark chocolate candy with nougat nestled into the center....

Okay, perhaps this is a tad bit dramatic, but you know what I'm talking about. We get urges to nibble, grab something quick that we are well aware is not the healthiest of choices, and oftentimes regret ever having eaten it once it goes down the hatch. Well, there is a method to this munchy madness. By getting on the offensive and being prepared, your cravings do not have to get in the way of your nutritious eating plan.

Follow these tips for making it though the day in health-happy style:

- ✓ **PLAN AHEAD:** Know what your day has in store, the night before! Always err on the side of caution and pack more food than you think you might need throughout the day. Unexpected events come up, you have to run somewhere, pick someone up, make an extra trip...Have healthy snacks packed that will prevent you from going through the drive-thru or grabbing something from the vending machine. Too many times to count, I have been headed home to eat, feeling that rush of hypoglycemia coming on, and I can't make it there like I thought I'd be able to. Now I always have my lunch box with me, stocked up with things like yogurt, string cheese, rice cakes, almonds, carrot sticks, and an apple.
- ✓ **HYDRATE:** Your body is 70% water. By the time you feel thirsty you are already dehydrated, so drink up! Water keeps you feeling full. Oftentimes when I think I'm hungry, I'll grab by Nalgene, tell myself to take 10 big gulps, and by the time I'm done drinking, I'm not hungry anymore! Keep a water bottle with you at all times, and develop a "drinking problem!"
- ✓ **EAT BREAKFAST:** Yes, you read this correctly. I know there are plenty of you out there who skip this lovely meal (it happens to be my favorite) because you think that it will help you lose weight, or (and this is the all-time most common excuse) because you "just don't have time." By eating breakfast you are decreasing the likelihood that you will feel like you want to gnaw off your arm later! You also spark your metabolism when you eat breakfast—your body just fasted for about 8 hours. For goodness sakes, you don't have to have a gourmet omelette-- grab a piece of string cheese, a slice of bread, and an apple, and feed the machine!
- ✓ **EAT SLOW BURNING CARBS AND PROTEIN:** Protein takes longer to digest, helping you to feel fuller longer, and it doesn't spike your blood sugar like a piece of fruit by itself or a candy bar would. You want the energy you consume to carry you through the day. Hypoglycemia is the enemy. With our hectic schedules, we need long-lasting energy. Have a whole grain carbohydrate along with some protein. For example, one of my favorite snacks is a whole wheat tortilla with some tuna salad in it. The tortilla, since it isn't made with white flour, will take longer to digest because the grains are

more intact rather than processed down to their simplest form and easily absorbed into the blood from the gut. The tuna salad (see recipe below) provides complete protein to help you feeling full, feed your muscles, and slow the digestion of the tortilla down even further (READ: slow burning energy).

- ✓ **MONITOR YOUR FEELINGS:** I know quite a few individuals who eat not because they are hungry but because they are experiencing stress, sadness, anger, anxiety or some other emotion that food seems to quell. It isn't actually the food that helps them feel better but the association they have made with the food and the feeling. They have gotten into the habit of connecting comfort with food and use it in times of tension, whether positive or negative. Like any habit you want to break, recognition is the first step. You must take note of what your pattern is. Logging your eating and its associated feelings is a good start, and from there you can begin to identify alternative behaviors to eating. Oftentimes we grew up with food serving as a reward for something done well, as a symbol of love, or even observed our guardians' unhealthy food habits that became ingrained into our behavior.
- ✓ **GET YOUR Z's:** Studies continue to come out showing a relationship between lack of sleep and obesity, as well as other health problems like diabetes, heart disease, cancer. The decrease in the amount of sleep that most Americans get each night has been correlated with decreased sensitivity to hormones that regulate appetite and blood sugar.

You have more control than you realize over your body's well-being. Your mind is just as much a part of the picture and requires nurturing and attention also. By becoming more tuned in and aware of your feelings and taking time to listen to what your body is telling you, healthier choices will follow. Try the recipes below to welcome those snack attacks. Each contains beneficial carbohydrates, fats, and proteins.

#### Tasty Tuna Salad

1 can chunk light tuna in water (drained)

½ chopped apple

1 tbsp fat free mayo

1 tbsp chopped walnuts

1 oz feta cheese

Mix all ingredients together; spread half of mixture in 1 whole wheat tortilla

#### Body-Building Bean Dip

½ cup fat free refried beans

¼ cup low fat mozzarella

Sprinkle mozzarella over beans and microwave briefly to melt

¼ cup chopped tomatoes

¼ avocado (diced)

Sprinkle tomatoes and avocado over beans and cheese