



# HOW TO STOP STRESS EATING

the busy mom's guide to drastically reducing your  
stress eating this week...

no food guilt, no restrictive diets, no BS

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# who is this ebook for?

If you're a mom who ever finds herself overeating or stress eating this is for you. And um... even if you previously haven't struggled with stress eating, 2020 is kind of the perfect storm for stress eating. You have a million things on your plate + you're stuck at home without your usual stress relievers.

I totally get it.

If your idea of a good time is plopping down on the couch with some snacks after your kids go to bed... this is for you.

If you wish you had a better relationship with food (and want to break your old patterns so your kids can have healthy habits) this is definitely for you.

For moms who want to STOP emotional eating + stress eating...

**Because life is too short to go on another restrictive diet or feel guilty about eating dessert!**





# Meet Cassie.

Hey mama! My name is Cassie and I'm a certified nutrition coach. I have a Bachelors in Public Health and a Masters degree in Health Promotion and Education, and a few nutrition certifications too. I say this because there are A LOT of people with no education/credentials offering up incorrect info that is doing more harm than good.

I've been helping people create healthy habits for almost decade. I've worked in corporate wellness, health insurance wellness programs, and most recently clinical pediatric nutrition helping kids and families improve nutrition and physical activity habits.

**But my pride and joy is helping moms learn how to stop emotional eating and have a healthy relationship with food.**

**After working in pediatric nutrition for 2 years, I saw first hand the impact that moms had on their kid's eating habits. It all starts with mom!**



*let's get to it....*

In this ebook I'll cover 4 basics for overcoming stress eating:

- **understanding hunger**
- **wtf do I eat??**
- **why willpower isn't the answer**
- **understanding the emotions that are making us eat**

# Part One: Understanding Hunger

This might seem obvious. Duh, Cass. I know about hunger. But noticing our hunger and fullness cues takes paying CLOSE attention to our bodies. Something we generally aren't doing when we are chasing babies around and trying to survive on little sleep.

Heck, we can barely drink our coffee when it's hot, let alone stay in tune with our hunger all day.

Hunger cues like tummy growling and an empty ache in the belly are actually LATE signs of hunger. And when we wait for late signs of hunger, our body's natural response is SHOVEL the food (mostly carbs) real quick. And then probably feel a little sick.

**Really noticing your earlier hunger cues is crucial in overcoming any type of emotional eating (including stress eating, bored eating, etc.)**

If you aren't sure how to tune into your hunger cues... you aren't alone.

**Studies say kids as young as age 3 lose touch with noticing their hunger and begin to eat for other reasons** (i.e. I'll give you a treat if you go potty, you'll get dessert if you finish your dinner, you HAVE to clean your plate, etc.)

The hunger scale is a tool that can help you tune into your hunger cues and learn about how your body tells YOU that you need food.

# the hunger scale

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
starving, weak, dizzy, hangry	low energy, irritable, stomach growling, emptiness in belly	pretty hungry, stomach beginning to ache or growl	beginning to feel hungry	satisfied, neither hungry nor full	slightly full. pleasantly full	beginning to feel full	beginning to feel uncomfortable	very uncomfortable.	Stomach is very full, feeling sick.

This is the hunger scale. This is simple enough for you to teach your kids, and gives a great language for discussing hunger. And it doesn't involve using signals like "clearing the plate" as an indicator of being done ;)

Let's start with ten. This is STUFFED. Like thanksgiving level, I'm going to be sick kind of feeling. You may want to lay down or take a nap, and might even want to vomit. The goal is to never feel like a 10.

One is on the opposite end. It's HUNGRY. Hangry even. Grumpy, tired, maybe even passed the point of a tummy ache and just feeling lethargic and starving.

It's important to avoid getting TOO hungry because as anyone who's ever gone to a restaurant hungry (and promptly ate the whole bread basket or basket of chips and salsa) knows... it's HARD to get your body to slow down at this point. And before you know it, you might end up overfull.

**The goal is to stay in the middle, which is easier said than done sometimes. It involves learning to pay attention to your body.**

# Tuning into your body + why restrictive diets don't work

And if you've ever done any type of restrictive diet, meal plan, cleanse, etc. THIS is why you felt miserable. And THIS is why super low calorie diets backfire. You are able to skip meals or eat low cal for only so long... then a deep dive into the pantry and repeat. Yikes.

So yes, you may end up "sticking to" 1200 calories a day all week.. But come the weekend, you're eating out, drinking alcohol, and having dessert and eating 4000 calories a day...

Aka no weight loss. **(and trust me when I'm saying alcohol and dessert are NOT a bad thing... the bad thing is the restrict/overeat cycle).**

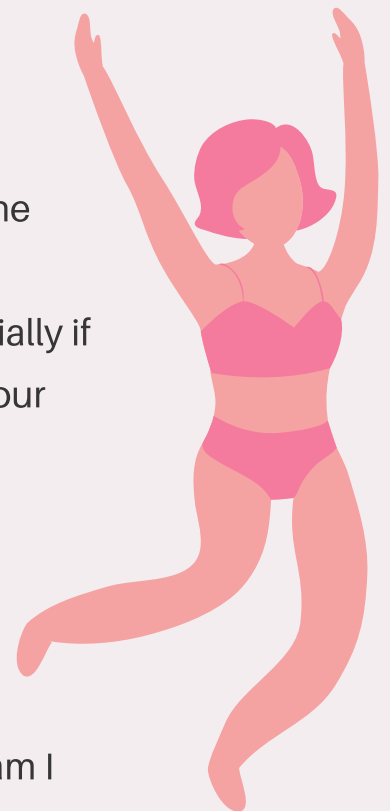
Getting used to using the hunger scale and putting the fork down when you are satisfied is the answer. Part of the way I help my clients avoid this cycle is, teaching them to understand early hunger cues AND the power of noticing satiety.

This doesn't mean having a meal every 1.5 hours. It means eating until you're satisfied and not waiting until you're starving to eat. But that's easier said than done for a busy mom, right? It's not like you WANT to skip meals, but when you're packing backpacks and lunch boxes (or maybe in 2020 it's monitoring zoom meetings and cooking and cleaning and working nonstop) and keeping up with your own schedule + doing approximately 20 loads of laundry and 100 loads of dishes a week... we don't notice the hunger cues until they are screaming at us.



# strategies to help you tune into your body's cues

- Stop eating in front of the screen. Close the laptop, turn off the tv, and put down the phone!
- Put your fork down between bites
- Count your chews
- Engage in conversation during family meals. This is helpful for the kiddos too!
- Don't force yourself to clear your plate! This is a hard one, especially if you grew up with that rule. Part of modeling healthy habits for your kids will also be teaching them to notice THEIR fullness cues, so avoid telling your kids they need to eat everything. If you are concerned about food waste, start with smaller portions.
- Stay hydrated. Our body's sometimes confuse hunger and thirst
- Aim to stop at 80% full. It will take practice!
- Before you start eating, ask yourself "Am I hungry? Which level am I on the hunger scale?" This can help you notice if you're eating because you're hungry or if you're just bored/emotional, etc.



**Noticing fullness cues after a lifetime of fast eating and emotional eating is a learning process. Take it one meal at a time, and don't beat yourself up!**



# Part two: Food

## How the food we eat impacts our hunger cues

Unfortunately the hunger scale doesn't really "work" if all you eat is refined carbs/sugar or fast food. Womp Womp. Those foods are not satisfying, and are actually created to leave you wanting MORE. That's why it's so easy to eat a bag of chips or bowl after bowl of sugary cereal, or a huge fast food meal without feeling stuffed.

They are not nutrient-dense foods. (But don't worry, I am NOT saying you need to stop eating your favorite foods).

### **So what SHOULD you eat (most of the time?) I call this the PFF method.**

Most meals should contain protein, fat and fiber. This combination of nutrients leaves you feeling satisfied. You can also utilize this method whether you have food allergies, are vegetarian, etc.

**Protein:** Meat, eggs, protein shakes/powder/bars, beans.

**Fat:** fat comes from avocado, oils, nuts/ nut butter, cheese, egg yolks, etc.

**Fiber:** this comes from fruit, vegetables, beans, legumes, and whole grains

# [THE PFF METHOD]

## **PROTEIN: MOST WOMEN NEED AT LEAST 100G/ DAY**

Many people say they have a difficult time getting in a lot of protein. If that's you, try for a small amount at each meal and snack. For quick protein I like boiled eggs, greek yogurt or cottage cheese, or a protein powder to blend into a smoothie.

If you're cooking any type of meat, add a little extra so you can use it as leftovers for lunch the next day.

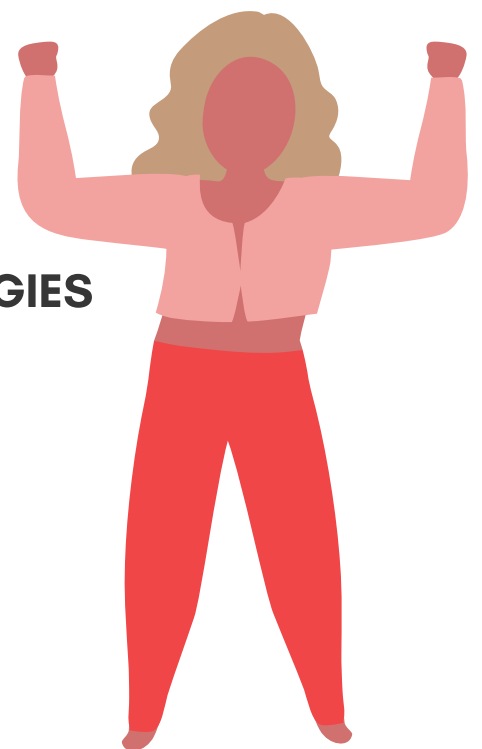
The deli section of many grocery stores have great pre-cooked/shredded meat options. I also love using rotisserie chicken for anything from quesadillas to salads. Of course lunch meat or tuna are quick options as well.

## **FAT: AIM FOR MOSTLY UNSATURATED FATS i.e. avocado, fish, olive oil**

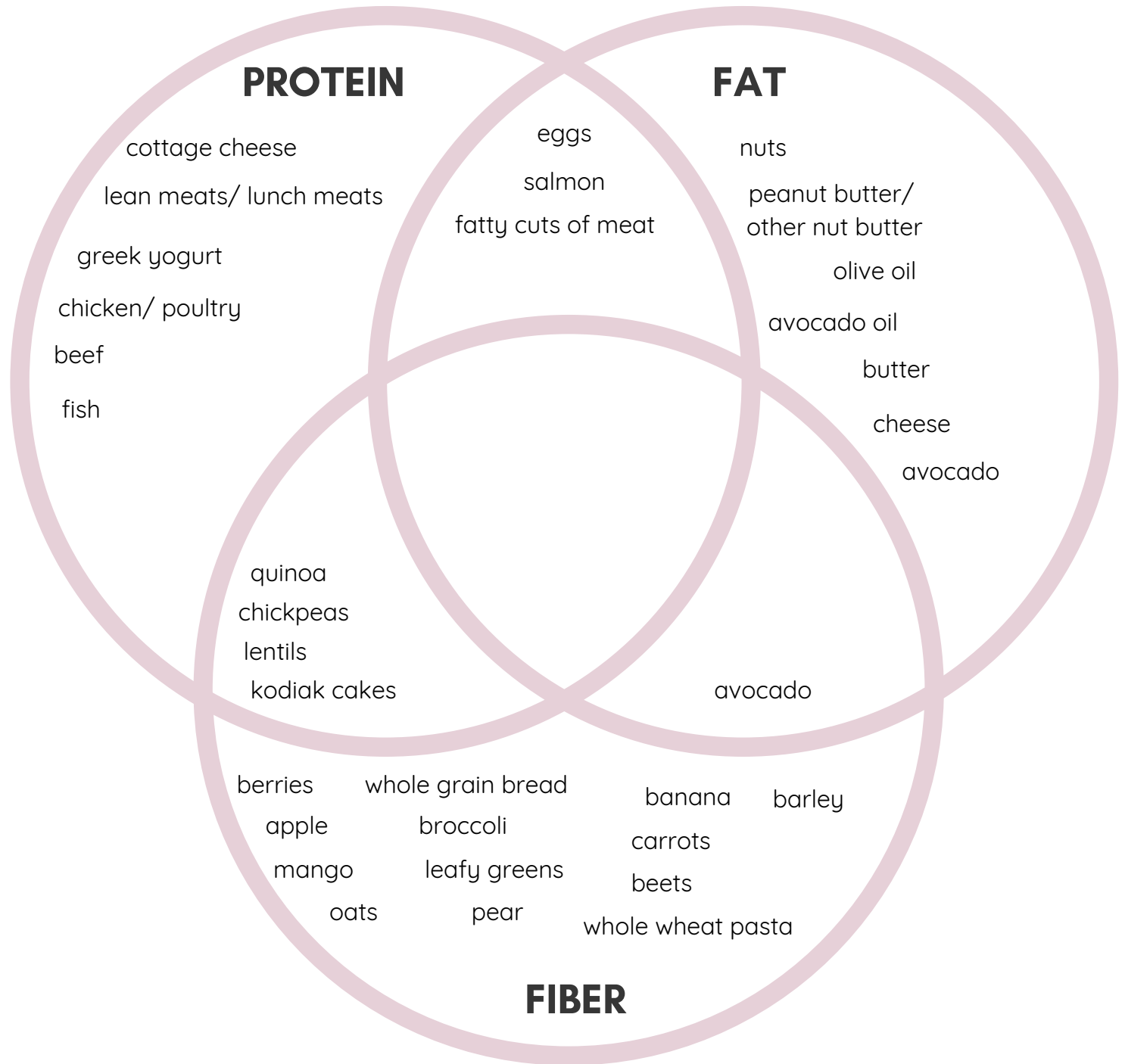
No harm in having fats from fatty meats or cheese, but try to get most of your fat from unsaturated fats: nuts, avocado, fish, olive oil, flax seeds, etc. Unsaturated fats are protective for your heart. :)

## **FIBER: FROM WHOLE GRAINS, FRUITS, AND VEGGIES**

Whole grain pastas, cereals, and breads are high in fiber, as are beans, leafy greens, and fruits and veggies. Aim for around 25g per day. Too much fiber can cause tummy troubles, so don't increase your fiber intake too fast!



# [THE PFF METHOD]



# what about the "junk" food?

***Repeat after me. THERE IS NO BAD FOOD. No foods are off limits.***

This type of food labeling is what gets us into trouble and creates food obsessions in the first place.

If you LOVE chips, serve a portion on the side with your sandwich as opposed to cracking open a bag and having just the chips for lunch.

If you love mac and cheese, include some shredded chicken (rotisserie = super easy) + a veggie or salad on the side.

Same goes for things like mashed potatoes or pasta that sometimes get a bad rap. Eat it with a protein of choice plus a side salad or roasted veggie and BOOM. A balanced meal that also satisfies your cravings.

## **What about desserts?**

When it comes to desserts, it's super important to utilize the methods for mindful eating. Slow down and ENJOY it. Standing at the counter taking bite after bite is NOT enjoying it. ;)



**Aim for PFF meals most of the time. Don't stress about the occasional treat or "less healthy" holiday dish. Eat the food you love and ENJOY It!!**

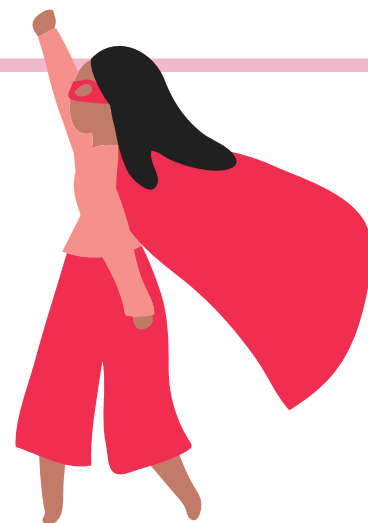


# Part three: why willpower isn't the answer

I've been there. Trying to WILL myself to lose another pound, to eat a smaller portion, or to avoid the "bad" food in the house. Or throwing the bad food away, then going and buying more :-O

Or beating myself up for going back for more cookies or going over my calorie allotment for the day... I was miserable and I was always thinking about food and whether I was on track or not. Here's the thing. Beating yourself up isn't the answer and neither is having more "willpower".

**It's not your fault you're having major cravings and overeating every night when you're barely eating all day. You're just hungry!! By noticing your hunger and fullness cues + eating PFF meals, you won't have to rely so much on willpower!**



# FYI: You need to eat more than you think

Somewhere along the way, women have internalized that eating 1200 calories/ day (or thereabouts) is sufficient.

## **News flash: It isn't.**

Unless you are VERY petite, or hardly get any movement during the day, you probably need closer to 1700-2000+ calories per day. Even more if you're pregnant, breastfeeding, or if you workout a lot.

In general I don't love focusing on calories/ macros, but I use this example to show you that you don't need to starve yourself... even if you want to lose a lot of weight.

Rather than focus too much on calories, notice how you FEEL before and after each meal. **Eating until 80% full at every meal for a week can teach you SO much about your body, your personal needs, and puts the focus on YOU versus an external metric (i.e. calories or macro breakdown).**

# part four: then wtf am I supposed to do when I feel stressed?

## Let's start with noticing your emotions

Emotions are the core of emotional eating/stress eating. There are many reasons we eat. We celebrate with food. Parties, birthdays, and holidays, each have their own traditions and foods in our families. Foods that evoke memories and good feelings.

Some of us eat when we are sad, mad, anxious, scrolling social media, etc.

As moms we feel DEEPLY. Our emotions are powered by hormones in early parenthood. And our hunger is also impacted by our lack of sleep.

Food can also become a way we self-comfort when parenting feels hard or our kids are having a hard time. It can be a way to connect with a sad friend, or numb the stress you are experiencing.

Tuning Into these emotions Is KEY for reducing emotional eating. If you'd rather eat than FEEL, you will continue overeating.



# when you feel the urge to eat just because...

1. Get in the habit of naming your emotion and sitting with it for a moment. A feeling is just a vibration in the body. How does it FEEL? Are you avoiding FEELING something and eating instead?
2. Set a timer for 20 minutes. Take a walk, get some water, send an email, do a chore, etc... Just walk away from the food for 20 minutes.
3. Twenty minutes has passed. Are you actually hungry? Notice where you are on the hunger scale. If you're actually hungry- then eat! Eat slowly and mindfully.
4. If you aren't hungry, great job noticing your urge! Continue to sit with it. Plan on when you'll eat the food at a later time.
5. If you still want the food later, eat it. Sit down, turn off your distractions, and eat it slowly. If you don't want it anymore, then carry on. Avoid restricting access to certain foods- it will just make you want them more!





# back to the hunger scale...

Regardless of your emotions, the point of the hunger scale is to really tune into your body.

Yes, sometimes foods just sound good. Sometimes it's a celebration and the food is delightful and you are enjoying eating it (maybe past the point of being full). But the point of the hunger scale is to be able to stop when satisfied MOST OF THE TIME.

Because if you put a pumpkin pie in front of me, especially with some ice cold whipped cream, I probably won't stop when I'm full ;)

Let's revisit the hunger scale....

## *the hunger scale*

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# Putting it all together

*Whew. That was a lot!*

Let's review...

1. Notice where you are on the hunger scale. Aim to eat to 80% full In general.
2. Eat mostly PFF meals to keep you full. Don't forget to stay hydrated and eat enough throughout the day!
3. Notice your emotions when you feel an urge. Name the feeling and sit with it.
4. Wait 20 minutes and revisit the hunger scale. If you are hungry- Eat! Slow down and stop at 80% full.





**Need more tips and tricks  
for mindful eating and  
modeling healthy habits for  
your kids??**

**Follow me on Instagram  
[@cassandrapadgett.co](https://www.instagram.com/cassandrapadgett.co)**

*xoxo,  
Cassie*